Code Chronicles

Curated by Aleksandra Artamonovskaja
March 3 - April 15, 2023

Ana María Caballero   Maya Man
Sarah Friend   Sarah Ridgley
LIA   Helena Sarin
Sara Ludy   Ivona Tau

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March 3–April 15, 2023

Opening reception: Friday, March 3, 6–8 PM
Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday: 11 AM–6 PM

Code Chronicles examines how generative systems mediate continuity with artworks from eight pioneering artists: Ana María Caballero, Sarah Friend, LIA, Sara Ludy, Maya Man, Sarah Ridgley, Helena Sarin, and Ivona Tau. Exhibited works riff on interdisciplinary themes of perception, impermanence, obscurity, and memory, plotting a collection of points whose coordinates satisfy a given relation to one another. *Code Chronicles* is curated by Aleksandra Artamonovskaja, a creative producer whose work explores manifestations of digital identities and the role of art in the digital future.

The internet began as a collection of networks, and matured into a tool for personal expression. Now in its third iteration, web3 intends to allow users to carry information across discrete platforms and form a unified identity based on their interactions. Likewise, progressive art forms engaged with blockchain technology encourage audiences to co-create with artists through parameters encoded into artistic media. These artist-collector relationships occasionally supplement generative systems based on a minter's timezone, latitude, wallet address, or other objective datapoint.

In part, *Code Chronicles* focuses attention on chance iterations enabled by generative processes. Although AI and generative practices are both forms of computational art, generative art dates to the mid-twentieth century, while AI has emerged by leveraging advancements in machine learning. Since generative art typically relies on mathematical algorithms or rule-based systems, it tends to offer artists more control over the outcome and provides a determined aesthetic. Artificial intelligence, however, learns patterns in a given dataset to render imagery. The fidelity of AI outputs are determined by a recursive combination of created or found image-data, and artistic instruction.

Ana María Caballero's *Things I Am Saving to Write* is a media-rich poem inspired by Ernest Hemingway's story "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," in which the main character is unexpectedly and irrevocably faced with his imminent mortality. As a poet, Caballero uses words to create images within people's minds. By using the imagery of her verse as the foundation of AI prompting and then creating a visual narrative from these images, Caballero brings our visceral, collective unconscious into direct dialogue with language's unspoken connotations, calling forth the entanglements of meaning-making.

Sarah Friend continues her interest in simulations and mathematical games with *gentle automata (touching grass)*. A swamp-like moire of grass images pairs with a touch-sensitive recreation of John Conway's *Game of Life*, an early cellular automata that allows patterns that seemingly grow without limits. The patterns are born from simple rules, but evolve in complex surprising ways - visually evoking microbes or soil markets.

LIA's *ProximityOfNeeds 20210428* was the second title after the working title, *YCAGWYW*, which stands for "you can't always get what you want" – if you know the song by the Rolling Stones, then you know that the lyrics continue with "but if you try sometimes, you just might find, you get what you need". All the black and white circle elements are finally "getting what they want"–the red circle. The screen-recorded version of the work stems from *Proximity of Needs* (2008), an interactive web-based work accessible at liaworks.com.

Sara Ludy's *Somewhere between flatworms and computers* is a reflection on the boundaries of intuition and materiality. Ludy's practice approaches material with an instinct that dismisses categorization by medium and the hierarchies of evolving technology. In this work, the artist explores the context of generative procedures through painting, AI, and planarian worms—an invertebrate with regenerative and precognitive abilities.

Ludy's practice is largely rooted in ideas of painting. This work started as a digital painting that was augmented to fit a 16:9 ratio using the prompt "torn edges" in Dall-E 2's outpainting. Once a standard screen-size ratio was achieved, the painting was further developed while the AI contribution remained unchanged. In regard to the aforementioned worms, Ludy found a parallel between the intuitive capabilities of the animal to sense danger to that of ancient, terrestrial wisdom. The final work is a nod to the nature within us, the untapped and forgotten intelligence that can be more technologically advanced than any computer or AI. *Somewhere between flatworms and computers* situates AI as another strata of history, no more or less important.

Maya Man's *Trust Exercise* is a generative, two-channel installation focusing on beauty, labor, and the relationship between audience and celebrity on the internet. Situated in the context of a "get ready with me" makeup tutorial, the piece features excerpts from both the transcripts and comments on Vogue's entire "Beauty Secrets" YouTube series catalog. The installation mimics the arrangement of YouTube's interface, exposing the parasocial dynamic that emerges between viewers and the featured star. It leaves its audience to reckon with this new form of advertisement. A heartfelt scene of intimacy, always appended with a delicate nudge: Peek between the video frame and comment section to "shop this beauty routine below."

Sarah Ridgley's *Nymph, in Thy Orisons* Flowers bloom then fade, inscribing and overwriting themselves in a constant attempt at a permanence that can never be found. In the same way the blossoms eventually wither, our own efforts to imprint code into permanent form risk becoming an illusory gesture, eventually to be overwritten by the relentless progress of technological development.

For the last 5 years, **Helena Sarin** has been organizing her work within a grid format where output samples generated by AI models are combined into a collage programmatically. The artist's process began as a method to alleviate low resolution and later evolved into a signature artistic style. Inspired by Jack Whitten's definition of the grid as "DNA of the visual perception," Sarin approaches the grid as a metaphor for the learning process of neural nets, specifically the visual representation of their lower layers. Neurons in these layers of the grid are responsible for detecting simple features in the input data, such as edges, lines and colors. The completed artwork acts as a snapshot of basic shapes and patterns layered with increasingly complex elements. As visible in the diagonal corners of the composition, these areas eventually become an AI etching, a technique referenced by the artist as a latent doodle. The final artwork title adds a necessary verbal dimension*, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Grid.*

Ivona Tau's *The Late Memories of the Algorithm, the Beauty of Forgetting* liberates decaying states of memory through algorithmic recollection. The work pulls from previous AI and GAN models that have been trained on datasets of several thousand photographs each from the artist's personal archive. Tau positions this vast scale of data as algorithmic memory, a digital comprehension of a lifetime's worth of experiences. The addition of a model trained on a "destructed" dataset, created programmatically by applying digital manipulations to photographs, symbolizes the fleeting sense and eventual decay of remembrance. The beauty of this ephemeral sentiment is captured and immortalized as a representation that spans across the artist's personal experiences.

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Ana María Caballero
Things I Am Saving to Write, 2023
Video (color, sound)
2 min 7 sec, loop
NFT included
Edition of 1

ETH 1.11

Sarah Friend
gentle automata (touching grass), 2023
Custom software (color, silent)
NFT included
Dimensions variable, portrait or landscape orientation
Edition of 1, 1 AP

ETH 1.75

LIA
ProximityOfNeeds 20210428, 2021
Video (color, sound)
11 min 31 sec, loop
NFT included
Edition of 1, 1 AP

ETH 6.00

Sara Ludy
Somewhere between flatworms and computers, 2023
Digital painting
NFT included
Landscape orientation, 12000 x 6750 px, 300 dpi
Edition of 1

ETH 4.50

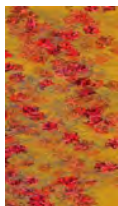**Maya Man**
Trust Exercise, 2023
Two-channel custom software (color, silent)
NFT included
Dimensions variable
Edition of 1, 1 AP

ETH 4.44

Sarah Ridgley
Nymph, in Thy Orisons, 2023
Custom software (color, silent)
NFT included
Dimensions variable, portrait orientation
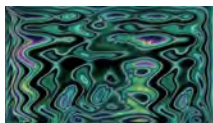Edition of 1

ETH 3.50

Helena Sarin
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Grid, 2023
Digital image
NFT included
Edition of 1

ETH 6.00

Ivona Tau
The Late Memories of the Algorithm, the Beauty of Forgetting, 2023
Video (color, sound)
1 min 2 sec, loop
NFT included
Edition of 1

ETH 4.00

Ana María Caballero
Things I Am Saving to Write, 2023
Video (color, sound)
2 min 7 sec, loop
NFT included
Edition of 1
ETH 1.10

Description

Things I Am Saving to Write is a media-rich poem by award-winning poet and artist Ana María Caballero inspired by Ernest Hemingway's story "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," in which the main character unexpectedly and irrevocably faces his imminent mortality.

As a poet, Caballero uses words to create images within people's minds. By using the imagery of her verse as the foundation of AI prompting and then creating a visual narrative from these images, Caballero brings our visceral, collective unconscious into direct dialogue with language's unspoken connotations, calling forth the entanglements of meaning-making.

AI is a database of our shared, digital memories, which is a reflection of both our private experience and of our ceaseless communal consumption of external stimuli. By using the symbolism of her poem to plumb this database and then coupling the ensuing visualizations with her words, Caballero blurs the line that separates the literal from the imagined, the figurative from the verbatim.

The notion of "prompting" is deeply tied to poetry–poetry workshops give students prompts to inspire poems–but, in this artwork, a poem provokes visual prompts. In her image curation, Caballero evinces the wide array of emotions that stem from words as well as the tensions between the private and the public, between the mythical and the historic, between the representative and the surreal that hide within the layers of crafted verse. Caballero's exploration of the poetics of prompts distills the materiality of language and invites others to contemplate their visceral reaction to words and the vastness of our imagination.

This poem was originally published by Salamander.

Sarah Friend
gentle automata (touching grass), 2023
Custom software (color, silent)
NFT included
Dimensions variable, portrait or landscape orientation
Edition of 1, 1 AP
ETH 1.75

Web documentation: https://touchinggrass.isthisa.com/

Description

Continuing her interest in simulations and mathematical games, Sarah Friend pairs a swamp-like moire of grass images with a touch-sensitive recreation of John Conway's *Game of Life*, an early cellular automata that allows patterns that seemingly grow without limits. The patterns are born from simple rules, but evolve in complex surprising ways - visually evoking microbes or soil markets. This work is made with generative software that incorporates HTML, CSS, GLSL and Javascript.

LIA
ProximityOfNeeds 20210428, 2021
Video (color, sound)
11 min 31 sec, loop
NFT included
Edition of 1, 1 AP
ETH 6.00

Description

ProximityOfNeeds 20210428 was the second title after the working title, *YCAGWYW*, which stands for "you can't always get what you want" – if you know the song by the Rolling Stones, then you know that the lyrics continue with "but if you try sometimes, you just might find, you get what you need". All the black and white circle elements are finally "getting what they want"–the red circle. The screen-recorded version of the work stems from https://www.liaworks.com/projects/proximityofneeds/, which is not for sale but publicly accessible, at least in 2021. This work is accompanied by a non-fungible token.
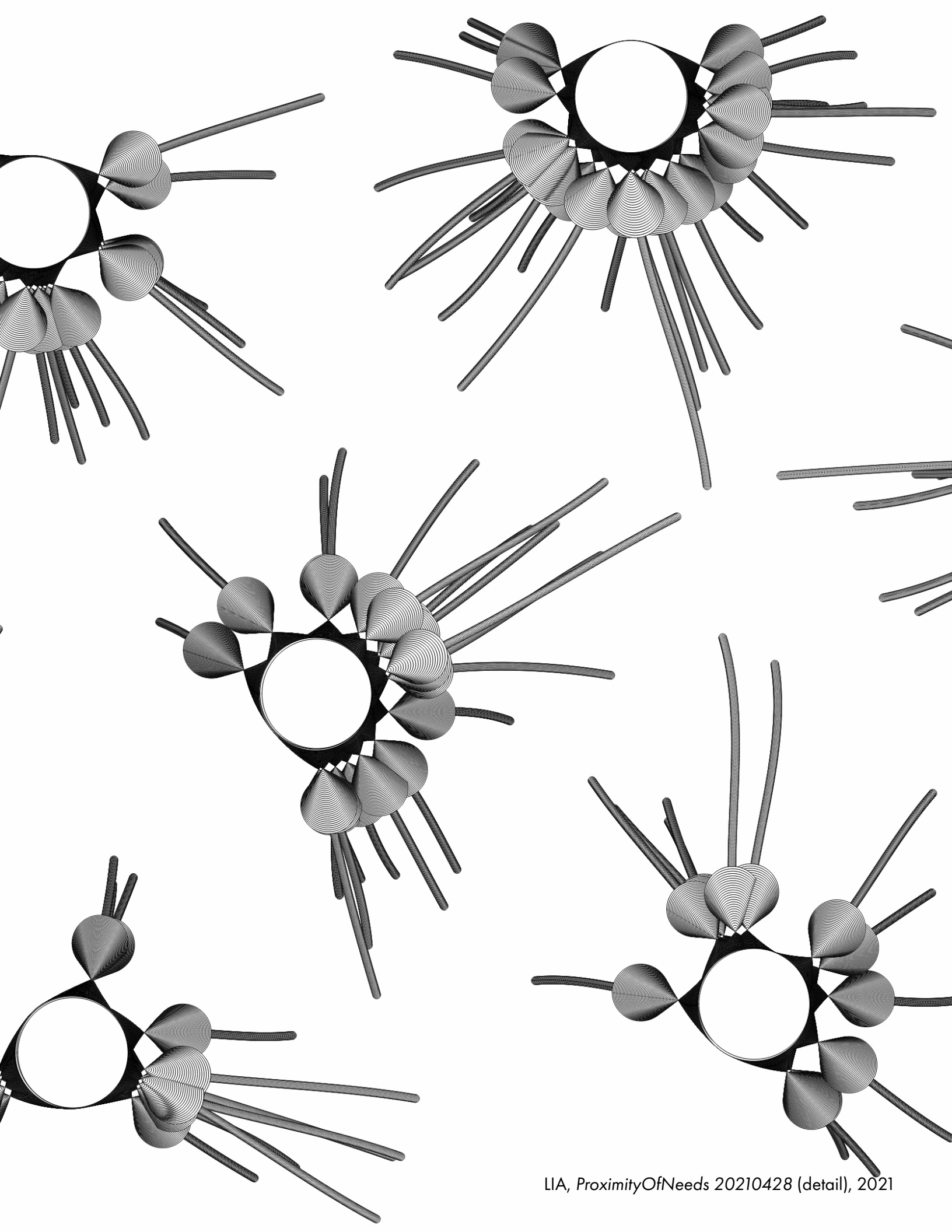
LIA, *ProximityOfNeeds 20210428 (detail)*, 2021

Sara Ludy
Somewhere between flatworms and computers, 2023
Digital painting
NFT included
Landscape orientation
12000 x 6750 px, 300 dpi
Edition of 1
ETH 4.50

Description

Somewhere between flatworms and computers is a reflection on the boundaries of intuition and materiality. Sara Ludy's practice approaches material with an instinct that dismisses categorization by medium and the hierarchies of evolving technology. In this work, the artist explores the context of generative procedures through painting, AI, and planarian worms—an invertebrate with regenerative and precognitive abilities.

Ludy's practice is largely rooted in ideas of painting. This work started as a digital painting that was augmented to fit a 16:9 ratio using the prompt "torn edges" in Dall-E 2's outpainting. Once a standard screen-size ratio was achieved, the painting was further developed while the AI contribution remained unchanged. In regard to the aforementioned worms, Ludy found a parallel between the intuitive capabilities of the animal to sense danger to that of ancient, terrestrial wisdom. The final work is a nod to the nature within us, the untapped and forgotten intelligence that can be more technologically advanced than any computer or AI. *Somewhere between flatworms and computers* situates AI as another strata of history, no more or less important.

Maya Man
Trust Exercise, 2023
Two-channel custom software (color, silent)
NFT included
Dimensions variable
Edition of 1, 1 AP
ETH 4.44

Web documentation: http://trustexercise.watch/

Description

Trust Exercise is a generative, two-channel installation focusing on beauty, labor, and the relationship between audience and celebrity on the internet. Situated in the context of a "get ready with me" makeup tutorial, the piece features excerpts from both the transcripts and comments on Vogue's entire "Beauty Secrets" YouTube series catalog. Through JavaScript, HTML, and CSS, this installation mimics the arrangement of YouTube's interface, exposing the parasocial dynamic that emerges between viewers and the featured star. It leaves its audience to reckon with this new form of advertisement. A heartfelt scene of intimacy, always appended with a delicate nudge: Peek between the video frame and comment section to "shop this beauty routine below."

o refreshing to s

"Some people say I look sweaty, it's just healthy skin babe

She's just so cool

She is

heard

She is so outrageously pretty to me that it almost hurts to look at her for too long. What I would give to hav beauty and adora has anyone here Baccarat perfume🥰The price of such a small bottle makes me want to faint but I hear so much about it and I'm dying to know if it's wort the price.

just s

Y♥U are so adorable & unique🎶 Love that you Love your beautiful eyebrows,

I apprec

She ack

also own

looks great, love a

Literally every celebrit their own skincare lin new celebrity fragran re liter

I Love her especially how she shares her opinions and just isn't afraid to show her true personality.

🙋🏼‍♀️💕💕💖✨💘💘

heard!!!!! lov

She's so perfect! li makes me wanna

side and ou

any

pores and li

y have t

celebs

Only models can can get away

l say you have Botox I can tell you ery little moveme

fying

air and

ke

Sh

Her beauty fascinates s

makeup

you're go

look at her all day! Lol
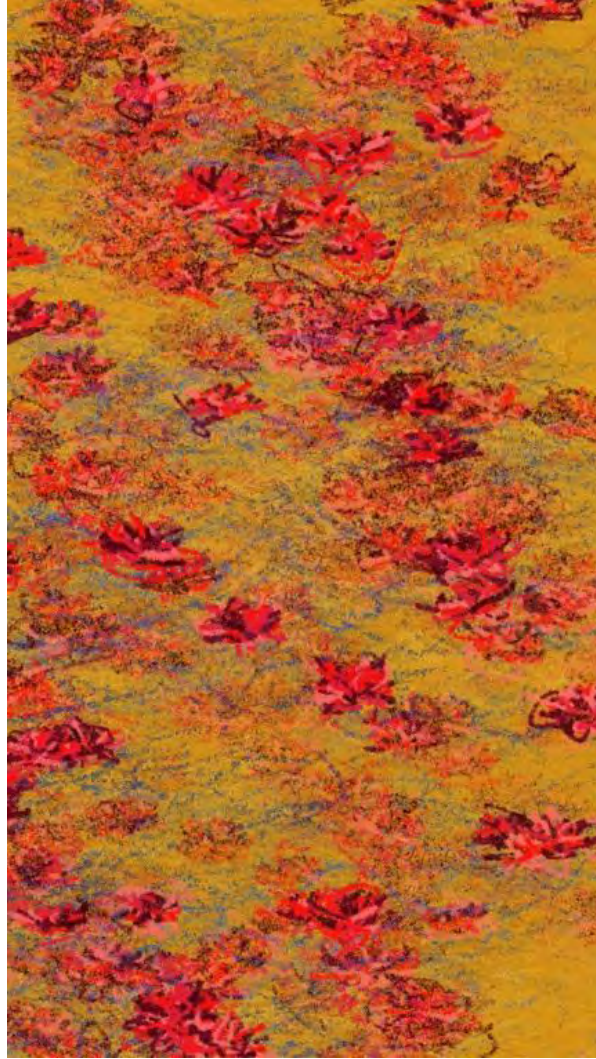
fashion

video wnere a celeb

umble!

Sarah Ridgley
Nymph, in Thy Orisons, 2023
Custom software (color, silent)
NFT included
Dimensions variable, portrait orientation
Edition of 1
ETH 3.50

Description

In Sarah Ridgley's *Nymph, In Thy Orsions*, flowers bloom then fade, inscribing and overwriting themselves in a constant attempt of permanence that can never be found. In the same way the blossoms are eventually erased, our own efforts to imprint code into permanent form are at risk of becoming an illusory gesture—eventually overwritten by the relentless progress of technological development. The artist uses Javascript, HTML & CSS to achieve this constantly evolving composition.

Sarah Ridgley, *Nymph, in Thy Orisons* (detail), 2023
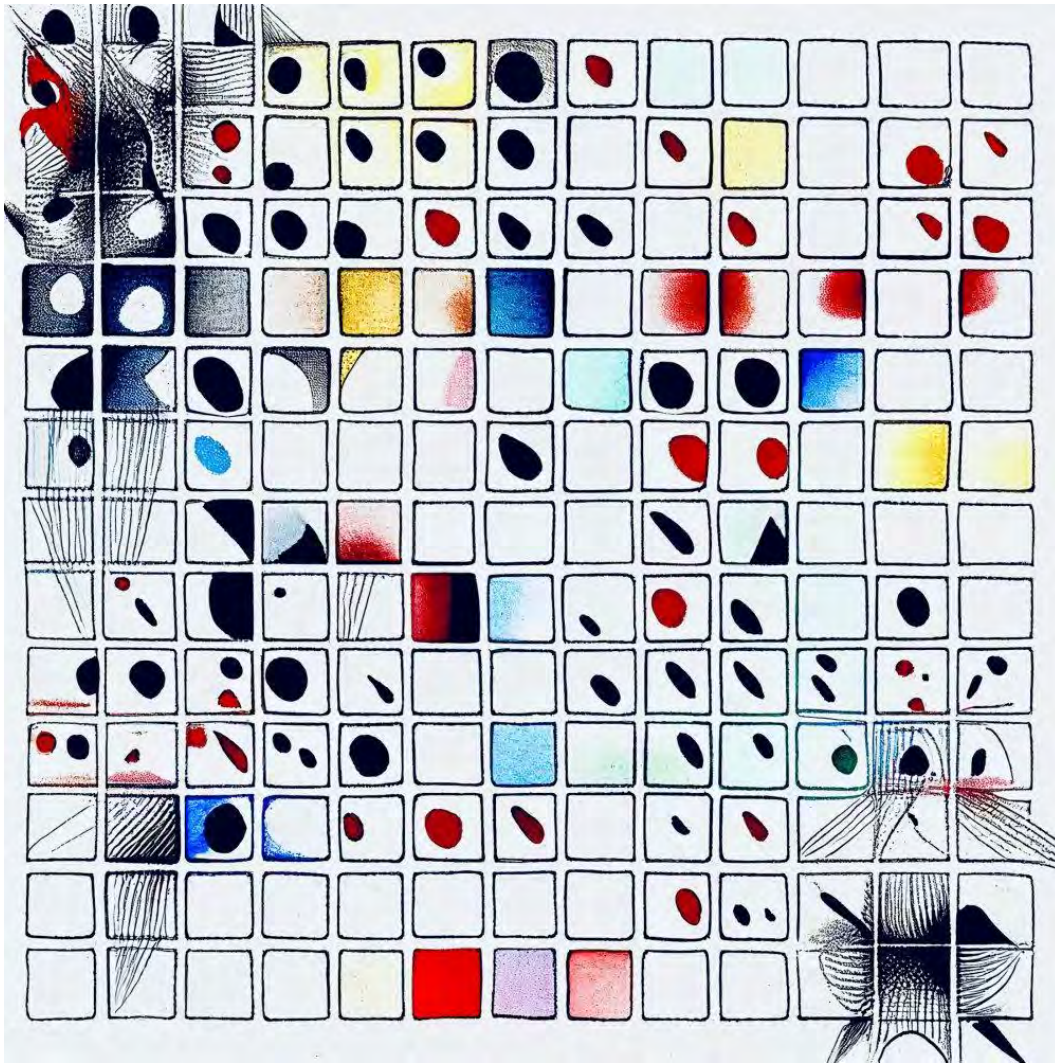
Helena Sarin
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Grid, 2023
Digital image
NFT included
Edition of 1
ETH 6.00

Description

For the last 5 years, Helena Sarin has been organizing her work within a grid format where output samples generated by AI models are combined into a collage programmatically. The artist's process began as a method to alleviate low resolution and later evolved into a signature artistic style. Inspired by Jack Whitten's definition of the grid as "DNA of the visual perception," Sarin approaches the grid as a metaphor for the learning process of neural nets, specifically the visual representation of their lower layers. Neurons in these layers of the grid are responsible for detecting simple features in the input data, such as edges, lines and colors. The completed artwork acts as a snapshot of basic shapes and patterns layered with increasingly complex elements. As visible in the diagonal corners of the composition, these areas eventually become an AI etching, a technique referenced by the artist as a latent doodle. The final artwork title adds a necessary verbal dimension, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Grid.*

This work was made with generative procedures, including AI models and Python.
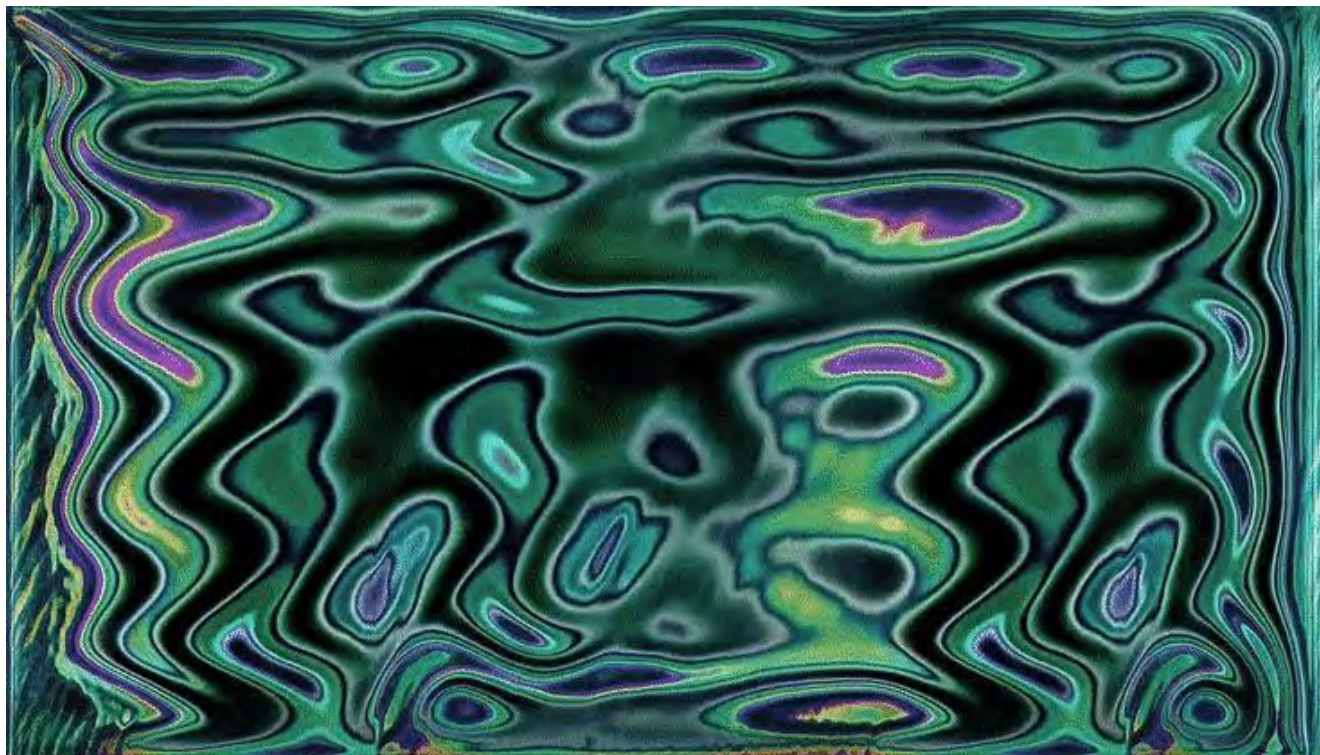
Ivona Tau
The Late Memories of the Algorithm, the Beauty of Forgetting, 2023
Video (color, sound)
1 min 2 sec, loop
NFT included
Edition of 1
ETH 4.00

Description

The Late Memories of the Algorithm, the Beauty of Forgetting liberates decaying states of memory through algorithmic recollection. In this work, Ivona Tau pulls from previous AI and GAN models that have been trained on datasets of several thousand photographs each from the artist's personal archive. Tau positions this vast scale of data as algorithmic memory, a digital comprehension of a lifetime's worth of experiences.

The addition of a model trained on a "destructed" dataset, created programmatically by applying digital manipulations to photographs, symbolizes the fleeting sense and eventual decay of remembrance. The beauty of this ephemeral sentiment is captured and immortalized as a representation that spans across the artist's personal experiences.

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Ana Maria Caballero is a first-generation Colombian-American poet and artist. Her work explores how biology delimits societal and cultural rites, ripping the veil from romanticized motherhood and questioning notions that package a woman's sacrifice as a virtue. She's the recipient of the Beverly International Prize, Colombia's José Manuel Arango National Poetry Prize, the Steel Toe Books Poetry Prize and a Sevens Foundation Grant. Her work has been widely published and exhibited internationally and is part of GAZELLiO, where she's been an art resident.

Sarah Friend is an artist specializing in blockchain and the p2p web. She is a participant in the Berlin Program for Artists, a co-curator of Ender Gallery, an artist residency taking place inside the game Minecraft, an alumni of Recurse Centre, a retreat for programmers, and an organizer of Our Networks, a conference on all aspects of the distributed web.

Friend was the recipient of the 30 Under 30 Developers in Canada award and the GDC Scholarship for Women in Games. She has had work commissioned by Furtherfield, London; & NEoN Festival, Dundee; as well as the HEK Basel, Basel; & Unfinished, NYC. She has spoken at Transmediale, Berlin; The New School, New York; and Interaccess, Toronto, amongst others. Her work has been featured in The Art Newspaper, Art the Science, Motherboard and Spike Art Magazine.

LIA is considered one of the pioneers of software and net art and has been producing works since 1995. Her practice spans across video, performance, software, installations, sculpture, projections and digital applications. The artist's primary working material is code, which consists of LIA translating a concept into a formal written structure that then can be used to create a "machine" that generates real-time multimedia outputs. Since her concept is fluid – opposed to the formality of the written code that requires engineered precision – the translation process between machine and artist can be viewed like a conversation. The process is repeated until LIA is satisfied with the machine's interpretation; at which point the generative framework, in which the artwork can develop, is considered finished.

LIA's works combine traditions of drawing and painting with the aesthetics of digital images and algorithms, characterized by a minimalist quality and by an affinity with conceptual art. She focuses on the translation of certain experienced principles into abstract forms, movements and colors in order to allow the viewer to explore the same on a subconscious level.

Sara Ludy is an American artist working in a wide range of media including video, sound, animation, VR, AR, websites, audiovisual performance, sculpture, painting, photography, and installation. Through an interdisciplinary practice, hybrid forms emerge from the confluence of nature, being, and simulation; questioning our relationship to immateriality and space.

Previous exhibitions of Ludy's work include the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Vancouver Art Gallery, Whitney Museum of American Art, Berkeley Art Museum, bitforms gallery, and Künstlerhaus Bethanien. Her work has been featured in Modern Painters, The New York Times, Art Forum, Art in America, and Cultured Magazine.

Maya Man is an artist whose work considers the computer screen a space for intimacy and performance, focusing on the phenomenon of translating our offline selves into online content.

She has exhibited internationally at spaces including SOOT Tokyo, Vellum Los Angeles, Power Station of Art Shanghai, Times Square, and Feral File. Her work has been featured in Art in America, Forbes, Refinery29, Dance Magazine, and more. Maya holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Computer Science and Media Studies from Pomona College. She is currently pursuing an MFA in Media Art at UCLA in Los Angeles, California.

Sarah Ridgley is an internationally exhibited generative artist who has experimented with Blockchain since 2019. Her work focuses on blurring the boundaries between the hand-drawn and the computer-drawn, reflecting human touch in machine-made work. Ridgley uses Processing (p5js) and JavaScript to build her programs, and designs her own algorithmic brushes to complete each piece. There is also a frequent tribute to poetry in her work, including her exhibited work which references Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* "Nymph, in Thy Orisons, Be all my sins remembered."

Helena Sarin is a visual artist and software engineer who has always worked with cutting edge technologies. First at Bell Labs, designing commercial communication systems, and for the last few years as an independent consultant, developing computer vision software using deep learning. While she has always worked in tech, she has moonlighted in the applied arts like fashion, food and drink styling and photography. But art and software ran as parallel tracks in her life. Save for the occasional foray into generative art with Processing and computational photography, all her art was analog... until she discovered GANs (Generative Adversarial Networks).

She found that working with generative models is not only challenging but above all exhilarating. With GANs, there is the adventure of new models and new datasets. There is an element of surprise, unlike with any other digital tool. There is a certain unpredictability that inspires, unblocks, and creates something special — something that goes far beyond Instagram/ Photoshop filters or ordinary style transfer. Recently she founded Neural Bricolage Studio to demystify, promote and display AI assisted artwork.

Sarin's AI art was featured in several publications including BBC Futures: The A-Z of how artificial intelligence is changing the world under I, i is for... imagination!

Dr. Ivona Tau is a generative A.I. artist from Vilnius, Lithuania, who works with neural networks and code as a medium in experimental photography and motion painting. Her goal is to find and evoke emotions through artificially intelligent tools. She creates universally relatable memories by transforming her experiences captured on analog and digital film through generative neural networks (GAN).

Tau's work has been auctioned at prestigious auction houses, such as Sotheby's New York, Duran Arte y Subastas, Fauves Paris, Pandolfini Florence, and Poly Beijing, as well as showcased worldwide, including The House of Fine Art, CAFA, Frieze LA, Art Week Shenzhen, Vellum LA, CAWA, ADAF, Ars Electronica Garden, Museum of Applied Art in Frankfurt am Main, POSITIONS Art Week Berlin & many more.