From Video Games to Video Art
An installation at:
The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
September 2 to October 12, 1980
By Copper Giloth and Tom DeFanti

Giloth and DeFanti, Chicago computer designer/artists have specially modified a small computer system for use by visitors to the Museum. Instead of using video as in the popular game "Space Invaders," the adventurous museum goer, commanding a joystick and buttons, can design a rich variety of symmetry designs of textile-like patterns and watch them build up instantly on the video screen. This system is typical of what will be readily available to artists in the near future. The second aspect of this installation is a selection of textile patterned drawings, programmed by Giloth and generated on a computer "plotter." In addition, award winning video tapes made on this computer equipment by several Chicago video artists will be shown continuously in order to illustrate the potential of the medium.

1. SYMMETRY DESIGN PROGRAM:
   The textile design program in this installation is one specific application of an extremely general purpose computer system for production of visuals. The program runs by itself, randomly generating patterns within certain constraints until you start to use it. To make your own images, push the Start Up Button. You can draw an image on a 32X32 grid with the joystick and buttons. When you are satisfied, choose a sequence of symmetry operations for the creation of a composite 6X7 pattern. You can then choose a different sequence of symetries, draw a new pattern, or let it revert to automatic operation. By making several drawings you will be able to learn about the many capabilities of this system for creating interesting images.

2. PLOTTER DRAWINGS:
   The images produced on the video screen can be transfered to paper by a computer-driven mechanical scriber called a "plotter." Additional modifications to the images (size, type of pen point, ink color, paper texture, and montaging) can be made during this transfer. Seven drawings are included in the installation.

3. VIDEOTAPES:
   Works by Rick Frankel, Frank Dietrich, Zsuzsa Molnar, Raul Zaritsky, Jay Fenton, Phil Morton, Jane Veeder, Mimi Shevitz, Tom DeFanti, and Copper Giloth are included in the continuously running videotape.

4. TECHNICAL INFORMATION:
   The computer graphics system is called the UV-1 ZGRASS System. Its hardware was designed by Jeff Frederikson of Dave Nutting Associates, a Bally Comapany. The ZGRASS language was written by Tom DeFanti, Nola Donato, Jay Fenton, and Steve Joyce. It uses a Z-80 microprocessor with 64K bytes of memory, and has custom integrated circuits for graphics functions. It is a system specifically designed for use by artists.

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