Yes, But Is It Art?

Computers can be programmed to produce graphics, but are these graphics art? Is Art a purely human construct? Can computers be creative?

Food For Thought…

Think about all you have learned and know about how computers work:

- Can a computer be creative? Why or why not?
- Can a computer create art? Why or why not?
  - Discuss these two questions with the person next to you.
  - Write the answers for your group on a single sheet of paper with all your names on it.
  - Turn in at the end of class

Did a Computer Do This?

Or This? (2)
Or This? (7)

Or This? (8)

Joseph Albers (1888-1976) (1)

Joseph Albers (2)
Joseph Albers (1888-1976)

Albers was fascinated by the ambiguities of visual and spatial perception. This preoccupation is central to his famous Homage to the Square series begun in the 1950s and continuing until his death. In this series, color assumes the main role of producing deceptive and unpredictable effects, causing multiple readings of the same hue depending on what colors surround it. Albers did not mix colors, putting the colors on the painting right out of the tube. He forced his viewers into a changing and dynamic relationship with his work, rather than accepting one visual truth.

(http://sheldon.unl.edu/HTML/ARTIST/Albers_J/AA.html)

Also see http://www.sylloge.com/5k/entries/176/1.html

Henri Matisse (1869-1954)

“The paper cutouts allow me to draw with color. For me, it is a simplification. Instead of drawing an outline and then filling in with color -- with one modifying the other -- I draw directly in color...It is not a starting point, it is a completion.”

(http://www.gregkucera.com/matisse.htm)

AARON (a robot)
A Java Applet:
Written by a guy named Ritchie

http://www.netlabs.net/hp/richieb/java/Mondrian.htm
Piet Mondrian (1872-1944)

"Mondrian has arrived at [the design] 'by feel,' and must have undergone agonies of trial and error. How often, we wonder, did he change the dimensions of [a rectangle], to bring it and the other elements into self-contained equilibrium? Strange as it may seem, Mondrian’s exquisite sense for non-symmetrical balance is so specific that critics well acquainted with his work have no difficulty telling fakes from genuine pictures."

(Janson, “History of Art,” p. 689)

AARON, by Harold Cohen

http://www.kurzweilcyberart.com/aaron/
Write a 2-3 paragraph discussion of your experience expressing creativity through computation. For example, you might compare your experience of visual creativity in writing this program with other sorts of creative activities and visual media (e.g., paint, pencil, photography) you are familiar with. Also consider the more general question of whether, in your opinion and based on your experience, computation could be a viable medium for artistic expression.

Let's look at a simple "art" program

Or, at least you will after lab today and tomorrow.

How to:
- Write procedures
- Write procedures that use parameters
- Write a procedure that calls another procedure
- Use iteration (Do-While Loop)
  - Your loop body can contain a procedure call that will be executed every time the loop runs
- Use conditionals (If-Then-Else)

How to:
- Color
- Make shapes (lines, boxes, rectangles, circles)
- Color in shapes
- Use a random number
- Convey a sense of motion/animation