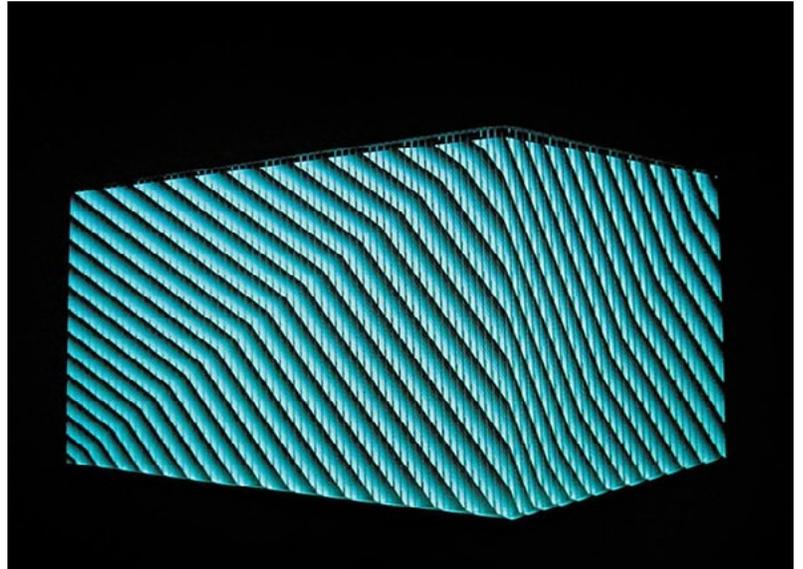




"Review: *Void Loop*"

D. Eric Bookhardt
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We usually think of computers as logical, soulless devices that excel in manipulating vast troves of data without a trace of human whimsy. But digital artists developed ways to make computers improvise, and *Void Loop* at Antenna Gallery features works that were co-created by computer programs in much the way surrealist artists, or maybe even jazz musicians, have traditionally collaborated in free-associative frenzies. One of the artists in the show, Casey Reas, invented an open source program for that purpose. Called "Processing," it is used to create works like *MicroImage*, an abstract animation displayed on a monitor in a booth. Reminiscent of a nascent tropical storm at first, it looks nestlike on closer inspection, as thin, interwoven lines endlessly meander and curve back upon themselves. In Reas' program, the artist creates the original pattern and the computer generates variants in motion — in this case like a time-lapse video of an undulating abstract expressionist vortex.



Far larger is a wall-size video projection (pictured) by Annica Cuppetelli and Cristobal Mendoza. Here infinitely variable bars of light march across rows of string stretched vertically before a geometric backdrop in patterns that play hypnotic mind games with the viewer. More minimal is a nearby sound sculpture by Greg Pond consisting of a single large sheet-metal rectangle mounted on a pair of tapered wooden pediments. Up close, it sounds like hearing the sea in a conch shell, only it's more of a spacey electronic drone, perhaps a computer simulation of the sound of the universe on a calm day. Compared to these cybernetic extrapolations from the far horizons of the senses, Ashley John Pigford's electro-mechanical devices exploring "the intersection of technology and typography" exhibit the reassuring Rube Goldberg-like presence of inventions cobbled from garage sale components. But don't be fooled: Devious computer codes lurk within. Computer codes now envelop the world the way cat's claw vines envelop New Orleans, and their presence is no less inexorable. — D. ERIC BOOKHARDT