Cat's Cradle

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ABSTRACT

The earliest networked art was a catalyst for new ways of communing and creating. Within a short span of time, computing and gaming became a social organism built for sharing art and ideas, communicating, and exploring multimedia. It is currently ruled by algorithmic, attention-demanding, low-information content that can make one feel alienated from computing and the Internet, feeling like one cannot change or personalize their experience, and find themselves bound to a small handful of toxic websites. The personalization of ones' computing experience both physically and digitally is an art form in itself; endangered but hanging on. At the same time the Internet changed, so too did gaming. Experiencing video games in person together transformed into large servers of global game play, changing player interaction as often online sessions are brief and ephemeral compared to the couch with one's friends. Despite the negative spaces of the Internet, independent developers of video games, Net Art, and artistic communal websites continue to labor on, attempting to create a dual-powered Internet based on art, creativity, and play, just as networked art started.

The world of computing grows with us and as with all growth its expansion is an act of creation, a game played out with the universe. Much like Vera Frenkel's 1974 piece "String Games", in which games of Cat's Cradle were video broadcast between two Canadian cities in one of the first examples of networked art, our play and interactions now bounce between places digitally. (Vera Frenkel's string games | exhibition | ArtFacts)

Vera Frenkel, rehearsals for String Games: Improvisations for Inter-City Video, 1974

What we create with computers is everything: good, bad, meaningful, so fast as to be unstoppable, social, antisocial, a firehose of life growing in pattern with the world around it, a monster and savior, a comfort and terror, a magnification of human experiences to a degree never seen in our long history. Moore's law, one which has held for decades, states that "computer performance for a fixed dollar cost roughly doubles every 18 months." (Louisiana Tech) This "law" also applies to the rate at which we create with computers and computer-based tools, whether the creations are positive or negative. In 2025, the doomscroll has taken us over, and dark patterns such as tricking users into giving data (Nguyen) reign supreme through the screen.

Yet there were—and are—spaces of joy and comfort, of safety through the screen, of making, that make us come back to technology, despite the Internet and computer and console gaming having become broken and corporatized. These pockets still exist but drowned out by the noise of the largest websites, all of which prioritize content creation on their own terms—as per Statista, Facebook reigns supreme in daily social network traffic (Dixon). But by looking to the past, we can find a future that is

personal, social, and ours to control and create. A slower, more personal technological age is ours if we make it, and we must; creation is an act of rebellion against a bulwark of sameness and fear. As such I have created spaces of both the past of computing that I remember and the future that I will create and will help guide others to create within my thesis project. The best way to figure out how to make things new is to look at how they used to be and gain insight.

We must look back. There were motes of dust in a well-lit hallway in my childhood home dancing in the breeze. I was small, sitting in the hallway, completely entranced by the interplay of dust, wind and light. Years later, video game artists and developers would spend hours of human power and computing trying to replicate this exact feeling through programming particle effects and animation so crisp it felt as real as that hallway. As I tour the random access memories of my past, I view a cozy upstairs bedroom in a house that used to be a fur trappers' cabin and see myself playing games with my father on a hulking, beige computer—named Amiga, already establishing itself as a female friend to the world—this grand and strange object made possible only by elements and materia dug deep from the dark cores of the Earth.

It was deeply magical watching my father play these early games, and when technology and our family's budget moved such that, it was possible to play them on the couch with my family, it became an even more collaborative and natural experience. Gaming and computing became our modern campfire with stories we could see and affect kinetically with our controllers, every input becoming a word made visible. While it is true that for a large amount of the population, computing was simply a way to manage a database at work, it was also an artistic force that has not ceased in relevance or interest since the first computer sang a song in 1961. (Ridley) Computing's very nature hails from the often-gendered fiber art tradition of weaving; Ada Lovelace's work on the Analytical Engine appeared from working with mechanical looms that used punch cards.

Per Encyclopedia Brittanica: "Her detailed and elaborate annotations…were excellent; "the Analytical Engine," she said, "weaves algebraic patterns, just as the Jacquard-loom weaves flowers and leaves." (Encyclopædia Britannica) Appropriately, I find myself using these tools to complete my own work—both the silk mill I get my cloth

from and the tool I use most for making things, the personal computer, are now digitized. Truly Ada's work is felt throughout much of the way makers make today. It is proper that both weaving and computing machines, plus those that make all the ephemera that allow one to make physical art are often the inventions of the marginalized and are themselves surrounded by the energies of labor and change. As Ada Lovelace noted, the loom's patterns are computational in nature, and I celebrate this with a large art piece of 25 silk squares, each with a different piece of my life as a student and artist 'woven' in, and each dyed with a little bit of nature to remind us that this all comes back to natural patterning. I have grown some of the products used to dye these silks thus grounding it to the Earth, while using modern technology to create motion in the silk by adding a motion-activated fan that will let the silk flutter on the wall, animating each square "pixel."

Change is constant. Computing, like these natural experiences, experiences intense degrees of change and has always been a catalyst for both communication and art. As I aged, I changed along with computing, myself a computer of sorts, and found myself at a crossroads—are these machines, their history written not just in code but in riot, in algorithm, in commune—still the ones I remember playing with my father and my friends, and if not, how do we get back there?

As humanity enters a period of environmental, social, and technological transformation, it is important for us to look back and take with us the heirlooms of brighter days as we strive towards a better future; for us to transform these inheritances and give them new life like an old pocket watch with a new mainspring. For me, these heirlooms are digital; the arts and social behaviors of computer enthusiasts, netizens and video game aficionados over the past half century or so, focusing in on my youth—the small digital miracle age that was allowed to exist before the full corporatization of social networking and the art made therein.

Computing and gaming in its early and middle period acted like a social organism built for sharing ideas, chatting, and exploring media. While not without its faults, its tendency to form "walled gardens" of creativity and investigation enabled netizens to make their own decisions about content and culture. One modern definition for a walled

garden speaks to our increasingly money-driven internet: “A walled garden is a closed or restricted environment in which access and interactions are controlled by a single entity, typically a company or an organization.” (Lynch) These companies used to be people self-policing a decentralized Internet and creating healthy spaces. A vast majority of makers now display our art on websites that corporations own, and which are passed around like trading cards (Albanesius), each company developing different rules about what can and cannot be shown rather than creating websites that are art—not just for showing physical and digital works, but the sites themselves working as functional art pieces.

The effect of the Internet streamlining also fundamentally changed the way video game players communicated online—where most communicating about games was done through niche websites, each with their own owners, now such information is often beholden to a handful of conglomerate websites, some of which also technically own the games one plays through digital rights management access control, such as Valve’s Steam service, where many of the games have DRM. The average game player is disenfranchised in this way on both a communicatory and ownership level, leading many in the gaming and art-game making communities to move to smaller, walled-garden type sites aimed at independent and small team creators and their patrons.

The walled garden is my historical Internet, one where an America Online video game message board in the late 1990s could turn into lifelong friendships and companionship; one where the Internet was a galaxy of tiny websites, each as individual as a star. We shared our art on popular medium-scale websites and on tiny personal homepages, creating microcultures and schools of art so ephemeral as to have ceased to exist if it was not for archivists—all without worrying it would be sucked up by the terrible vacuum hose of generative artificial intelligence—only, perhaps, stolen by a bad actor.

Before semi-compulsory digital rights management infected gaming downloads, we experienced hard copies of games; that general excitement of unboxing an item combined with the interesting treats game studios would often place inside, we’d experience the joy of truly playing together, in person, be it arcade or couch, and of

sharing information about them socially through word of mouth, the mail, or Internet forums. We can contribute to bringing back this feeling of community, of remembering the other behind the screen and of communally creating art based on and built for the Internet.

I aim to be the vanguard along with other net artists in reminding people that we can all contribute to the restoration of a free, personalized, truly creative internet without even learning a programming language (or learning as many as one wants and enjoying that toolbox, conversely). It is, at its core, up to us to reject the skinner-box style dopamine bursting websites and games and find and build community, lest the magnificent dream that is the internet become, forever, a sort of archaeological digital superfund site—so hewn to its toxicity that it becomes abhorrent to the user and is shunned. On a personal level, I feel this shunning and exodus happening every day, as of early 2025.

This undertaking is likely to be understood as nostalgia by some and shares some qualities with that feeling. However, nostalgia can skew towards fascistic ideas about how the world used to be better—and really no matter what era I believe we can find little bits of the world that were much better and much worse—maybe not the year Krakatoa exploded and shrouded the Earth in cold cloud, but overall, something somewhere has been wonderful and beautiful even in the most miserable of times.

Within my art and writing, I tend to eschew nostalgia and present narratives that are real and era-appropriate; I tend to eschew nostalgia and present narratives that are real and era-appropriate; I also aim for emotional affection and general ambiguity. I tend to think of my work in a Lynchian manner—as David Lynch explains in an interview with The Guardian: “I do not ever explain it. Because it is not a word thing. It would reduce it, make it smaller.” (Carroll) I find this to accurately describe how I am experiencing building this thesis: if I was to explain too much of it to the viewer, if I was to intentionally take the ambiguity that allows them to dream instead of me, I would not be creating the collaborative, interactive work that I desire, and so I try to imagine what the viewer or reader might ponder rather than explain my own interpretation of my work. However, emotionally, I tend to try to create an affect in the viewer—positive or negative—as to

me the most effective work is that which causes some turmoil in the viewer's mind, something that will stay with them long after they are done viewing the work. Unlike the effect of an algorithmic jump-scare of violence or strange imagery, one enters my space with the knowledge that they will be affected—all art spaces are emotive by nature and hold that expectancy.

I would consider most of what I am creating for this thesis to be an anthropological artistic survey of both the feeling of the web pre-social media and the feeling of my own ontology circa 1997-2004, the world I was seeing both through and off the screen. The only place I liked being as much as "on the computer" was nose deep in a book or outside in nature. Working with natural and fiber reactive dyes and being a relatively nascent painter creates a level of imprecision in my physical pieces that acts as a foil to my digital work and is in a way representative of the folk nature of the early Internet; working with game design enables me to tell bigger stories and push my limits as an interdisciplinary writer, artist, and musician. It also hearkens back to the days in which I was exploring digital culture at the earliest, which I was also spending riding my bike around the railroad suburbs of Bergen County as a latchkey kid, diving into parks in tony neighborhoods completely out of the affordability realm of my multigenerational household. These aspects—the physical, the digital—come together in an effort to say "yes, we can make these wonderful things together, you needn't be an expert and leave it to Instagram or Ubisoft," versus "Official-call-themselves-artists are more special and creative than any of you, my fellow travelers on this strange and uncertain road of the World Wild Web."

Being a child of divorce meant, yes, heartache and confusion, but it also meant that I had both a Sega and a Nintendo video gaming console growing up, making me the video game sage of the playground and enriching my life visually and mentally as the consoles tended to aim at different ideas, one of which was The Sega Channel. The Sega Channel, a little-used subscription game service far before Netflix and Hulu reigned supreme, was what made my grandma's house extra special. This 1990s device, attached to a Sega Master System game console (Yarwood), would collect new games monthly, meaning I was in a veritable buffet of wide ranged gaming, ever

changing and showing me the ways in which game consoles and computers could support both artistic and ludic creativity. As gaming matured in its graphics and processing power from its early days of Pong and Space Invaders, the opportunities for creative storytelling and artistic expression grew significantly.

The Sega Channel was a boon for me and one of the reasons I started looking at games and computing as art at an early age. One of my favorite genres to try out through The Sega Channel was role playing games; those coming from Sega, a Japanese company, are often referred to as “JRPGs” and I will continue using this language throughout the document. These games feature dramatic storytelling, fantastical settings, and often a focus on a large ensemble cast. Their main difference from games made outside Japan has to do with their Anime-style graphics and lack of adherence to Western Medievalism as one might find with Tolkien. While ARPGs (American RPGs) exist, they are often aimed at a more adult audience. Many JRPGs are meant to be played by those of all ages—a famous series, Final Fantasy, even released a specific game meant to teach the rules and general gameplay styles of their regular games.

One of the pieces I am presenting is a full-fledged short “JRPG” (this definition has changed over the years to include games made outside Japan that fulfill the aesthetic and gameplay ideals) that has identity and change at its core. This game is named “Fleeced” as the main character is a shepherdess, and the story mostly concerns wool and sheep—tying textiles into the mix. It is also a reference to stealing—the shepherdess and her neighbors on the small island where they live have all lost their sheep to the hands of a wizard that has been foretold for ages and seems to loop. It is the endless cycle of power corrupting that has caused this, and now our shepherdess has taken up the call to adventure on her hero’s journey.

Of the works I am presenting this game is one of the most concretely personal to me. I have never felt a solid identity past “queer human being,” and in the game several characters shift bodies to try to find their best and most comfortable selves; they are also shifted into uncomfortable versions of themselves. The villain of the game lurks in a tower that corrupts every wizard that sets foot in it, yet the temptation to enter and thus

become corrupted is strong for any wizard that seeks it, be they good or evil to start—but this time talking it out, which is the main weapon in the game, works to help the characters become their true forms (or stay changed).

This work is presented perpetually looping on an old, scratched CRT monitor in a set piece that resembles the room of a tween girl. Rainbows, holographic stickers, and Lisa Frank abound and signs of who this girl wants to be are present in both found ephemera and handmade paintings, done “by her”, that show what she loves (the Internet, art, video games) and are a visionary sign of her own future. Similar (but vacuum sealed) markers used to paint some of the pieces have been included to increase the level of realism. This was inspired by the works of Joe Rodhe, artist and imagineer, who created an incredible scene for the Disney’s Animal Kingdom ride “Everest”. (Celebrate Joe Rohde: The brilliant mind behind Disney Parks)

Disney’s Animal Kingdom Everest Queue

While unfortunately I have no proof of this, having deleted all of my Twitter/X tweets, Mr. Rodhe and I had a discussion about this room (Part of Expedition Everest’s

expansive and culturally-accurate queue) on Twitter once, in which he explained that the entire office was exactly as it was in the Everest area, and he essentially made a copy of it in America to the delight of the business owner who he collaborated with there. I loved this concept so much—the idea of bringing a cultural moment to somewhere else in full fleshed out glory—that I had to grasp on to it to use it to present my work. The computer desks I am using to present my digital work are not just a frame but part of the work itself.

Fleeced is designed mostly for an all-ages set and has character designs I would have (and still do) consider fun. In its own way this game is for and by me. The artists from the JRPG world that most inspired the concept art are Toshiyuki Kubooka, famous for Lunar: Silver Star Story, and Tetuya Nomura, most known for his work on Final Fantasy. Nomura expressed a similar experience to me about his own work in an interview about Final Fantasy 7 Rebirth: “However, players’ feelings and impressions are their own, and if they feel something while playing the game then that is fine. “I tend to look at my work through the lens of simply showing whatever self I am that year’s story to the world and letting them take meaning from it as they need to.” (West)

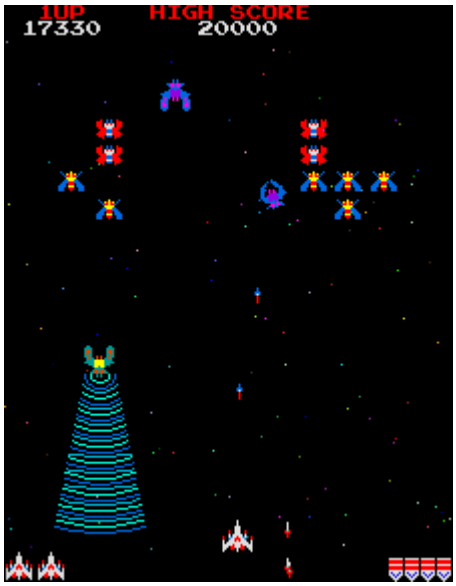
Final Fantasy VII PC Portraits

Pixel art of Game Character "Emerald"

Soon after discovering my joy of gaming my family bought me an early digital painting console that plugged into our grand, heavy wooden CRT television; the plastic hunk of artmaking was placed upon a doily and became my new obsession for months.

It was not a particularly good piece of tech. However, these technologies that almost seem out-of-time gave me access to a world that many may have missed due to happenstance. My family's eagerness to try innovative technologies made me into a similar early adopter (though I do feel pity for my great-grandfather's dusty old Betamax. They cannot all be winners.) A piece I am presenting will remake a CRT TV combined with a hand-dyed rug and couch to create a finished-basement style environment to enjoy gaming.

As part of my thesis depends on a set of invisible-but-there characters (a family of parents and a daughter, seen only through their computers and objects), this television binds them together and will be where the family would have watched their daughter play her favorite game, an ecologically coded space "shooter" game in which an intrepid space pilot clears a path through the solar system by vaporizing space junk and other debris. This game is an example of the edutainment that the early Internet and early gaming was well known for in its mass proliferation—the sort of idea of hiding the vegetables in dinner so the fussy kid will eat it, but with learning and disguised by spaceships.



In this case, the hope is to remind the modern user of space junk, to show my skills as a game designer and 3D artist, and to keep the mind on both fun and the reduction of waste not in space but back home. To make a space game felt imperative because I love space itself and rendering it. To make a thing of aesthetic beauty that I wish to share with the world; a reminder of how small we are in it. The video games I am creating have memories and inspiration bound to them from everything from Galaga to Final Fantasy VII, and the general feeling of newness one got from the curators of the Sega Channel.

If the Sega Channel was specific and curated, the early Internet was anything but. Due to the internet being a place, it had from the very start a growing collection of “anything you could think of.” Everyone from NASA to the Metropolitan Museum of Art were there to peruse and enjoy. From a child’s eye this felt like a place, one not yet fully built but growing visibly, a sort of virtual utopia of ideas. In the home, we even had a book of kid-friendly websites called “1001 Best Websites for Kids” written by educators Lynn C. Gustafson and Deidre Kelly; there were hundreds of websites directed at netizens to be fun, not sell anything, from organizations, media empires, and what we’d now call “creators” available to be found.

While there were, as always, places of hate and violence, they were mostly sequestered into walled gardens of a less pleasant sort than the self-policing ones built around safety and mutual respect—forums behind passwords, revolting websites behind pages of warnings. A scary or unsavory website would usually project itself as such instead of invasively finding its way into your social media feed; part of the impetus for this project was my joining TikTok and being served—without the application having any algorithmic sense of me—gratuitous animal violence bereft of context. Why would this be the first thing a new user on a platform sees? When I was an early Internet user, communities had not yet learned how to use the computer to grow hate out in the open. Those who hated, spread violence, or done things illicit had mostly hidden it behind their thorny walls. Meta admitted to having something similar occur after users “…took to various social media platforms to voice concerns about a recent influx of violent and “not safe for work” content…” they were experiencing on their platform. (Butts)

The dichotomy between being served violence as a sort of emotional trigger as I was on TikTok, which is large websites' modus operandi—anything for an emotional response, even violence, and the Internets that spring up without an invisible hand guiding them towards shock which leaned more heavily on sharing of hobbies and creative arts.

I believe most people making their own websites, even if they delve into violent things like true crime, are not doing it to keep people enraged and watching as the short form media algorithms try to do with their violent or outrageous content. The more outsider and grim websites that were not built on hate were built on the creativity of the initial creator and their expression of worldview and niche interest. I remember very clearly visiting BMEZine, a website devoted to extreme body modification, and it not having the same negative reaction on me that I had with the algorithmic violence as an adult. I have devoted some of the websites I create for my "The Mini Internet" project, based on GeoCities and AngelFire's free public web hosting, to exploring a more intense or outsider topic such as horror or mystery as a reminder that the more subversive side of the web used to be something you had to seek out.

The Mini Internet serves as an actually-accessible group of websites that celebrate GeoCities and its neighborhoods—each of them artistically different, made by a different "person", representing a different relative era of web design between about 1998 and 2005, and will feature backgrounds taken from my textile influence while being topical to both the news of the era and the imagery. It is important to note, as well, that GeoCities was considered such an important piece of folk art and archival content at the time of its closing that multiple websites made preservations of it, as The Internet Archive's Jeff Kaplan notes: "As one of the most popular and oldest (nearly 15 years running) sites for self-expression on the web, GeoCities paved the way for other sites which would offer a sense of community and networking capabilities. As GeoCities and other similar websites were one of the first ways for people to become freely and openly engaged with the internet, GeoCities will always be an important part of web history." (Kaplan)

Part of this web history and self-expression was making imagery for your website. Handmade gifs are made for most of these small websites. This can be accessed through the gallery by watching someone slowly click through a site and can also be accessed traditionally through a web browser with an available QR code. Thirdly, it is accessible on a PC with a Cathode Ray Tube monitor for the dithering qualities and to try to create the truest to life experience of learning about other people possible. This area has been decorated to true-to-life standards including ephemera from the era of GeoCities. It also features a digital art piece made using pixel sorting which shows my childhood home melting away into pixel forms. This is an expression of computational degradation of memory used as a metaphor for my own memories of childhood, which are blurry at best.

By choosing to focus in on the early years of the Internet and gaming I find myself attracted to the animated .gif. An early graphical interchange format, the .gif file allows users to make simple animations that are small in terms of file size. This led to an explosion of artistry across the web. One of my favorite modern gif makers is the web artist and advocate Melonking (Daniel Murray) who has taken the old web to extremes on his website, melonking.net. By stretching the rules of the internet and hearkening back to the old internet, Murray provides a path forward away from algorithmic content. In his essay The Web Revival and the Folk Life of Virtual Worlds, he states on website-making “The Web Revival is about reclaiming the technology in our lives and asking what we really want from the tools we use, and the digital experiences we share. The Web Revival often references the early Internet, but it is not about recreating a bygone web; the Web Revival is about reviving the spirit of openness and fresh excitement that surrounded the Web in its earliest days.” (Murray) This let me know I was not the only person experiencing this feeling and encouraged me to continue creating.

Other net artists and communities that continually feed my inspiration and soul are ones like Ryder Ripps, who is now a bit more of a provocateur than anything else, but created, at one point, dump.fm, a website described by Hyperallergic’s Joe Milutis as “… a real-time imaging sharing site that took its cue from the transmissional aesthetics of radio, perhaps ham radio in particular. …the ragtag group of amateurs and

auteurs of digital junk space who participated fulfilled the site's mission of "talking with images" by adding these images to a single chat stream, much as one would add multiple mixing channels to a single broadcast mix. The .gifs, .pngs, and .jpgs inevitably became spliced, remixed, broken, minced, enlarged, interlinked, and eroded, elaborately arranged in .gif altars, or parsed into animated rebuses by the site's semi-anonymous users." (Leckert and Milutis) This way of talking through gifs both enabled me to access the world of net art and start making friends and colleagues in the world of new and net art and rewired how I could think about a chat room. While sadly dump.fm is now a dead website, it remains in the way people use. gifs to communicate on sites like Facebook and Bluesky.

A different art influence came in the form of playing with others. As I aged into my teenage years, I found myself invited to play "couch co-op" games; ones where all the players sit together in area playing separate roles on a television screen split into two to four panes of game play. We would race, battle as spies, and even work together to solve goals. This later transformed into the LAN (Local Area Network) party, our computers connected in a room, unfortunately eventually became the Xbox server, gigantic and distanced from the user. The LAN hobby persists in the same way as those making art websites—a small but proud subgroup of video game enthusiasts.

I have celebrated the LAN party in two paintings; one of the innards of a personal computer tower that connects to another of a purple cloth rectangle that drips out of the painting. In the background of this painting, we can see small images of triangles and circles representing other users. This is the spirit of how I see the internet as working—a deep black box that we cannot quite grasp. Both pieces attach a spirituality and the experience of 'communing' to computing and gaming. I chose to represent this spirituality by creating a mixed media piece that is a tangle of a computer, both painted and tied with hand dyed cloth, and a void containing a similar fabric which seems to be escaping the painting—perhaps the internet and networked content leaking into reality, like a face-to-face networked LAN party would.

The act of gaming went quite suddenly from solitary to social, and the artistic potential jumped off the page into performance. We inhabited worlds together that

shaped us as much as any traditional form of media—and I felt, at the time, as though I inhabited these spaces. Often, I still do. What we see, feel, and interact with deeply, be it work, play, or careful contemplation, becomes the root from which our humanistic art tradition grows. This was the impetus for having space to view people playing games or experiencing multimedia—to engender that sense of sharing an experience.

Further connecting the networked idea is two large bucket dyed cotton pieces that imagines the almost neural connections computers make with one another, hung so that you can walk underneath them and look up at the connections, becoming a part of them, and a diptych that celebrates the modern Internet that lives in your pocket—all has not gone to pot, happily. This diptych uses the application Merlin to record the spectrogram of bird calls and, with the help of machine learning, matches those calls to their birds. I chose birds that live on opposing sides of North America, ones I have heard when travelling or on my porch. The birds look at one another, never meeting in real life, but their calls pulsate behind them, having been set into the wires and satellite waves that connect us all globally. It is important to show that the internet—and machine learning, when used for science or small-scale goals versus art theft and generative AI—is not all bad, and can create moments of real, in-person beauty.

Central to this piece, essentially a full-wall collection of pieces, is a dyed cotton quilt with a grid of LED lights that I have sewn into chaotic forms in the batting and then programmed to reflect both dyed pieces and bird pieces coming together. To me this is the fullest representation of networking and ties all five pieces into one whole wall. Surrounding this piece, like the wings of a bird, are walls with six “pixels” on them, each a 22x22 piece of silk dyed in a naturalistic or traditionally modern way, sorted by this. The “Family Computer” side gets the warm, gentle colors of natural dye works, reflecting both the style of the time and the general mellowing of one’s home décor color spectrum as they age, and the modern dyes are vibrant and playful, wrapping the “wing” of childhood. These pixels bind the room into a sort of embrace.

Silk shows up again in two sculptures, one a red silk cloth draped on a doily, a personal work relating to having a difficult surgery in which a large tumor was removed, the other a playful experience of glowing fiber optic sprites creating tiny pixels over silk

and sheer synthetic fabric, inspired by the heavy emphasis placed on fiber optics as an aesthetic in my youth and their ability to carry data through light. They are placed appropriately to each wing of the exhibition, the sparkling pixels a representation of youth and the red silk a representation of the reality of adulthood, grounding the exhibition even as much of it focuses on the non-physical-feeling black box of the Internet.

The warmth of these birds and their networked calls is what I hope viewers will experience last—this interaction with nature, their calls as mysterious to us as the inner workings of a computing device are to the average person. I have cracked open the mystery box of the Internet and what I came out with was folk art, play, writing, and, as much as possible, “everything”. This is also reflected in my personhood. To combine my true loves and get to the person I am right now is the closest to personal truth I can get, and that is what I will have achieved here.

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Ludography

Final Fantasy 7. Developed by Square, Playstation, Sony Computer Entertainment, 1997

Galaga. Developed by Namco, Arcade, Namco, 1981

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Image 1

Vera Frenkel's rehearsals for *String Games: Improvisations for Inter-City Video, 1974*

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Image 2

Disney's Animal Kingdom Queue

https://dvcshop.com/expedition-everest-overview/

Image 3

Final Fantasy 7 Character Sheet

https://www.spriters-resource.com/fullview/39057/

Image 4

Emerald Portrait

Image 5

Space Sweeper

Image 6

Galaga