Brian Evans

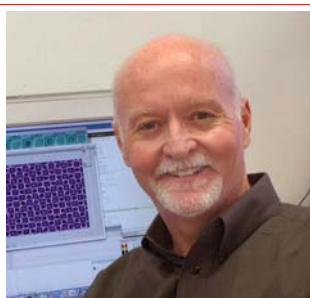music/animation:
cartographs: Coding Metaphor in Visual Music

Topic: visual art, music, metaphor, data mapping, computation

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References:
[1] Evans, B., Loop Theory, *The Wig: Journal of Experimental Scholarship*, Indiana University, 2009.

[2] Evans, B., Simple Mapping and the Aesthetic Dimension, *Matematica e Cultura 2007*, ed. Michele Emmer, Italian trans, Winter 2007 Springer-Verlag Italia: Milan..

Abstract:
The visual music composition *cartographs*, is a audio-visual work in three short movements. Each movement is an abstract animation—a visualization of a numeric process—that then is also mapped into sound. Through the process of data mapping we hear and see a process unfold, each sense simultaneously experiencing a map (a metaphor) of what the other sense is experiencing.

Artist statement:
Maps are metaphors. Through metaphors we connect what we experience to what we remember. We create knowledge by connecting the new (the present) to what we know (the past) and so maybe predict what happens next (the future).

Our desire to predict is fueled by our desire to live, to survive. Desire is the foundation of narrative. Narrative reduces to desire, action and result—the structure of story. We exist in endless loops of desire—layer upon layer of stories of varying temporalities and shifting priorities—all synchronized to rhythms of breath and heart. [1]

I make maps, in and out of time. I start with raw digital code—simple numeric models. As all is number in the computer I can map the numbers to the senses—turn numbers into tangible experience? [2] The maps might loop in time. There is synchrony in the sensory vertical and the temporal horizontal as image and audio derive from the same numeric source. Each maps the other in the moment and through time. It's a visual music in a synæsthetic counterpoint.

Musical narrative developed over centuries, moving the listener through time with the Pythagorean struggle of harmonic conflict—dissonance seeking consonance, number seeking a simpler and simpler ratio. My little loops and images engage that struggle at various levels. Color shifts. Composition flows. Image and sound agree, complement, disagree and resolve.

Perhaps it's abstract expressionism, true to its digital materials, founded in musical traditions and Modernist formalism. But it's loosened a bit. It's jazz in color, shape, sound and computation. Relax. Hear the colors. Listen with your eyes.
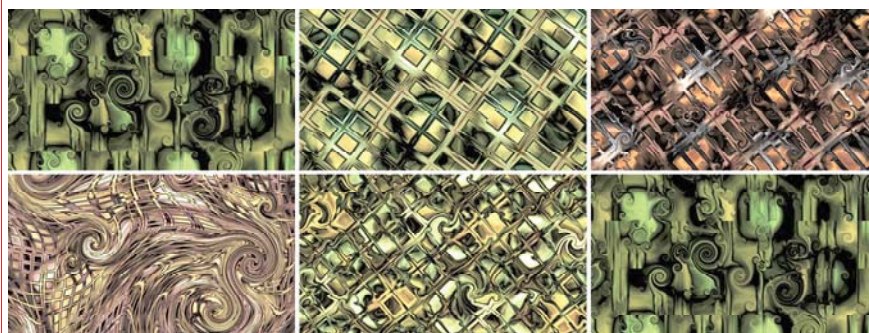
This stroryboard of "calidri" (first movement of "cartographs") shows a loop, with the last frame of the animation the same as the first frame.

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Keywords:
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