Computers

in Art and Design

Edited by Isaac Victor Kerlow

The quotes presented here are representative of the varied–sometimes contradictory–feelings that artists, designers, programmers and engineers have towards using computer graphics technology in art and design. This is the framework in which many of the works shown here were produced.

For the Record

Artists who can grasp the new technology may have a much more direct opportunity to redefine our idea of nature than they did when their media were limited to painting and sculpture. [...] The natural world was never before overrun with the kind of artificiality that now permeates it, but one's conception of it has always been a man-made construct.

Jeffrey Deitch and D. Friedman, ed., *Artificial Nature*, Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens, 1990.

Women use computers at work **more than men** (41% versus 30%). 46% of all American children **are using** computers at school or at home. In *1984*, 30% of kids between 3 and 17 years old used **computers**.

Census Bureau Data, *Newsweek*, April 8, 1991, p. 8.

Technological splendor did not always bring graphic *progress.*

Estelle Jussim, "Changing Technology Changes Design," *Graphic Design in America*, Harry Abrams, Inc., New York, 1989, p. 113.

I have a fine arts background and I enjoy putting my hand to a piece of paper. I don't believe the computer will ever replace an original rough sketch. I cannot see myself just sitting at a computer and punching numbers.

Luckily we have reached a point where almost all media are computer processed in some way or another–if not by electronic pre-press system then by a time base corrector. Now everybody is a computer artist whether **he or she wants**

to be one or not.

Joann Tansman, in "BBDO: Art Directing Crosses Tech Threshold," *Art Direction*, August 1990, p. 43.

Judson Rosebush, "The Proceduralist Manifesto," *Leonardo 1989 Supplemental Issue*, p. 55.

For us, the computer **is** a design tool.

It is really an extension of how we see and think,

and of the traditional tools, such as pen, pencil,

brush, grid and T-square, which we use to express

and communicate our ideas. I'm not interested in

the digital imagery of computers that has come to

be associated with 'computer graphics.' It is not a

look, or a style, or a trend that we're involved with

here, but **an engaging**

mental
e x e r c i s e

as we solve communication problems.

One of the products of personal-computer design is the birth of a dense, furiously active look, the antithesis of the cool simplicity that has been considered model design in recent years. And all this visual cacophony is now acceptable because it is not the product of primitive cut and paste but the output of a sophisticated laser printer.

Karrie Jacobs, "Prototype," *Metropolis*, July/August 1988, p. 94.

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John Waters, "A Computer for All Reasons," by Susan Braybrooke, *PRINT*.

I have my hands and my mind

I don't need any equipment

Distressed artist (identity witheld at
artist's request), 1991.

In the new computer age the proliferation of typefaces and type manipulations represents a new level of visual pollution **threatening** <u>our</u> culture. Out of thousands of typefaces, all we need are a few basic ones, and **trash the rest.**

Massimo Vignelli, invitation for a lecture in New
York City, February 1991.

No one understands the consequences of how com-
puters are going to produce change. They are extremely
clumsy instruments. As a tool-quite contrary to what
people think of their flexibility and their aptitude-
they are v e r y   p o o r   s u b s t i t u t e s
for the archaic, old-time methodology. But they tend to
dominate people's abilities and imaginations, so that in
res p onse to that particular t o o l, t h e y do things they
would not do normally for any other reason. And as a
result of that, there really is going to be a different aes-
thetic in the Nineties because of the computer.
What the aesthetic will be I have no idea.

Milton Glaser, in "Goodbye to the Eighties,
Quotes by Designers," *Metropolis*, October
1989, p. 80.

I am sorry , our compute r is dow n. We have to use the print out.

Overheard telephone conversation
between designer and client, 1991.

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People who work here have to know

computers. Our working pace has

changed now, so I can't bring in a

designer who uses a drawing table—we

don't even have a drawing table.

Javier Romero, in "At Home With High Tech
Designing," *Art Direction*, August 1990, p. 46.

The important point
is to recognize **where**
handwork ends and

Frederic W. Goudy, prolific American
type designer (1865-1947).

machine work begins.

ERROR: stackoverflow OFFENDING COMMAND:

Upset laser printer, 1991
(serial number witheld
at the laser printer's request).

I don't under-stand the technique but I know what I want.

Manhattan Art Director
(identity witheld at art director's request).

The level of work done today with microcomputers is quite

amazing if you

compare it to what could be done three or four years ago.

Optimistic Art and Design Show Chair, 1991.

Without
new design
principles and
concepts we will
be faced with a
multimedia
Tower of
Babel

Muriel Cooper, in an interview by Steven Heller, *Graphic Design in America*, Harry Abrams, Inc., 1989, p. 99.

I know very little about how this stuff actually works. And one **probably** doesn't need to know anymore than most of us really have to understand our automobiles or our television sets. We get by **all right**, so long as there is someone readily available to put them right when they go wrong. It may be partly this fear of having to **really** understand the technology that makes computers appear so hostile to the uninitiated.

John Waters, "A Computer for All Reasons,"
by Susan Braybrooke, *PRINT*.

Computers are like another country. People who design computers and write software are like foreigners. They live there, in the computer country, and speak the language fluently. The rest of us visit, incorporating words from their language into ours, the way we incorporate words and phrases from French. *C'est la vie,* **we say.** *Load that onto the hard drive,* **we say.**

Karrie Jacobs, "Design for the
Unreal World," *Metropolis,*
September, 1990, pp 43-45.

(Thenthereistheeleme
ntofsurpriseacomput-
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thewrongbuttonan-
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ogo.Accidentsareusu
allythebestthingsto-
happentomywork.

April Greiman in *New American Design*, by
Hugh Aldersey Williams, Rizzoli International
Publications, New York, 1988, pp 182-189.

To produce books, ads or magazines with desktop technology often means that electronic files from designers, illustrators, photographers and writers are merged into one huge cauldron of digital data. There is ample opportunity for plagiarism-witting or unwitting-and the near certainty of going undetected.

Catherine Farley, "Electronic
Revelations," *Applied Arts
Quarterly*, p. 29.

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