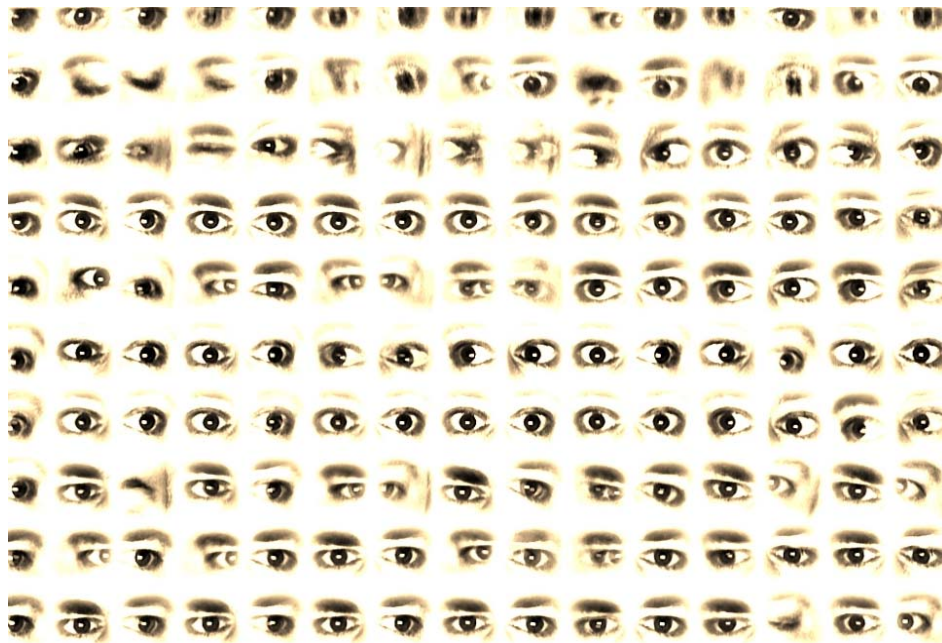




Donald R. and Joan F. Beall
Center for Art + Technology
 University of California, Irvine



EXHIBITION: ***eyecode: Works by Golan Levin***
 Organized by David Familian, Beall Center Artistic Director

DATES: October 5, 2011 – January 22, 2012

LOCATION: The Beall Center for Art + Technology, UC Irvine

EVENTS: **ARTIST RECEPTION:** Wednesday, October 5, 6pm-9pm
FAMILY DAY: Saturday, November 5, 11am-4pm
ARTIST LECTURE: Saturday, November 5, 6pm-8pm
BOXED MUSIC EVENT: Thursday, December 1, 6pm-9pm

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NEW HOURS:
 Sundays & Wednesdays, 12 – 5pm
 Thursday - Saturday, 12 – 8pm
 Closed Mondays & Tuesdays

Celebrating 10 years





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The Beall Center for Art + Technology at the University of California, Irvine exhibits innovative media artworks that use the latest experimental artistic and scientific digital, audio, and visual technology.

***EYECODE: WORKS BY ARTIST GOLAN LEVIN* will be on view at the Beall Center from October 6, 2011 – January 22, 2012. Meet the artist at the public opening reception on Wednesday, October 5, 6pm – 9pm.**

BEALL CENTER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR NOTES

For the past 15 years, Golan Levin's artistic production has ranged from simple interactive works to more complex responsive sculptures and projections. He has pioneered new technologies, using his own computational methods to create life-like interactions with viewers of his work. He explores the formal and conceptual languages of interactivity, and nonverbal communications protocols in reactive systems.

All of Levin's work operates initially on the level of a mirror effect, enticing the viewer into a deeper engagement. For instance, his reactive sculptures like *Opto-Isolator* (2007) and *Double-Taker (Snout)* (2008) are eyeballs that follow the viewer, activated by their specific movements. His projections present whimsical and poetic responses to the viewers' own sounds and gestures. The complex feedback systems in his works create a compelling array of kinetic and visual interactions.

Levin's sculptures expand viewers' awareness of how a machine can react to their body movements. Using techniques borrowed from traditional character animation, but applied to abstract form, many of Levin's works transform and interpret the user's activities into shapes that move with a sense of "liveness." These works create uncanny and sublime interchanges, as a viewer delves into the unique responsive language of each project.

In the early days of computing, the desktop interface was primarily efficient and utilitarian, but not expressive. As Steven Johnson noted in his *Interface Culture* (1999): "The interface came into the world under the clock of efficiency, and it is now emerging—chrysalis-style – as a genuine art form....Our interfaces are stories we tell ourselves to ward off the senselessness, memory palaces built out of silicon and light. They will continue to change in a way we imagine information, and in doing so are bound to change us as well—for the better and for the worse. How could it be otherwise?"

As artists such as Levin continue to develop interfaces with less predictable, more sensitive interactions generated by the viewer's body, they create new feedback loops that access multiple senses. In discussing his work Levin refers to it as synesthetic: a condition that involuntarily combines one sense with the perception of another sense.

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The essence of Golan's work is movement: how it is transformed into a visually engaging interplay of light and sound, and how it creates a new kind of synesthetic effect.

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Golan Levin develops artifacts and events which explore and supplement new modes of reactive expression. His work focuses on the design of systems for the creation, manipulation and performance of simultaneous image and sound, as part of a more general inquiry into the formal language of interactivity, and of nonverbal communications protocols in cybernetic systems. Through performances, digital artifacts, and virtual environments, often created with a variety of collaborators, Levin applies creative twists to digital technologies that highlight our relationship with machines, make visible our ways of interacting with each other, and explore the intersection of abstract communication and interactivity. Levin has exhibited widely in Europe, America and Asia.

Levin's work combines equal measures of the whimsical, the provocative, and the sublime in a wide variety of online, installation and performance media. He is known for the conception and creation of *Dialtones: A Telesymphony* [2001], a concert whose sounds are wholly performed through the carefully choreographed dialing and ringing of the audience's own mobile phones, and for interactive information visualizations like *The Secret Lives of Numbers* [2002] and *The Dumpster* [2006], which offer novel perspectives onto millions of online communications. Previously, Levin was granted an Award of Distinction in the Prix Ars Electronica for his Audiovisual Environment Suite [2000] interactive software and its accompanying audiovisual performance, *Scribble* [2000]. Other projects from recent years include *Re:MARK* [2002], *Messa di Voce* [2003], and *The Manual Input Sessions* [2004], developed in collaboration with Zachary Lieberman, and *Scrapple* [2005] and *Ursonography* [2005]; these performance and installation works use augmented-reality technologies to create multi-person, real-time visualizations of their participants' speech and gestures. Levin's current projects, such as *Opto-Isolator* [2007] and *Double-Taker (Snout)* [2008], employ interactive robotics and machine vision to explore the theme of gaze as a primary new mode for human-machine communication.

Levin's work has been presented in the Whitney Biennial, New Museum of Contemporary Art, Kitchen, and Neuberger Museum, all in New York; Ars Electronica Center in Linz, Austria; The Museum of Contemporary Art in Taipei, Taiwan; the NTT InterCommunication Center (ICC) in Tokyo, Japan; and Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, among other venues. His funding credits include grants from Creative Capital, The New York State Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Rockefeller MAP Fund, The Greenwall Foundation, Langlois Foundation, and Arts Council of England.

Levin received undergraduate and graduate degrees from MIT Media Laboratory, where he studied in the Aesthetics and Computation Group. Between degrees, he worked for

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four years as an interaction designer and research scientist at Interval Research Corporation, Palo Alto. Presently Levin is Director of the STUDIO for Creative Inquiry and Associate Professor of Electronic Time-Based Art at Carnegie Mellon University, where he also holds Courtesy Appointments in the School of Computer Science and the School of Design. His work is represented by the bitforms gallery, New York City.

LIST OF WORKS

The Manual Input Workstation (Golan Levin and Zachary Lieberman, 2004-2006) presents a series of audiovisual vignettes which probe the expressive possibilities of hand gestures and finger movements. The visitors' hand gestures are interpreted by a computer vision system as they pass across the glass top of the overhead projector. In response, the software generates synthetic graphics and sounds that are tightly coupled to the forms and movements of the visitors' actions. The synthetic responses are co-projected over the organic, analog shadows, resulting in an almost magical form of augmented-reality shadow play.

Ursonography (Golan Levin and Jaap Blonk, 2005) is a new audiovisual interpretation of Kurt Schwitters' *Ursonate*, a 20th century masterpiece of concrete poetry in which speech is reduced to its most abstract and musical elements. Here Dutch sound poet/vocalist Jaap Blonk performs the *Ursonate* as computer-based speech recognition and score-following technologies project subtitles linked to the timing and timbre of his voice, bringing forth dynamic typographic transformations that reveal new dimensions of the poem's structure.

Dialtones (A Telesymphony) (Golan Levin et al., 2001-2002) is documentation of a large-scale concert performance in which sounds are produced through the carefully choreographed ringing of the audience's own mobile phones. Before the concert, participants register their mobile phone numbers at a series of web terminals; in exchange, new ringtone melodies are automatically transmitted to their phones, and their seating assignment tickets are generated. During the concert, the audience's phones are dialed up by live performers, using custom software that emits as many as 60 phones to ring simultaneously. Because the exact location and tone of each participant's mobile phone is known in advance, the *Dialtones* concert is able to present a diverse range of unprecedented sonic phenomena and musically interesting structures, such as waves of polyphony that cascade across the audience.

Interstitial Fragment Processor (2007) collects and drops the contoured shapes formed within and between the bodies of its participants. Elastic red and blue animated objects plummet toward the gallery floor, producing audiovisual improvisations on vertical descent and collision.

Yellowtail (1998-2010) is an interactive software system for the gestural creation and performance of real-time abstract animation. *Yellowtail* repeats a user's strokes end-over-end, enabling simultaneous specification of a line's shape and quality of





movement. Each line repeats according to its own period, producing an ever-changing and responsive display of lively, worm-like textures.

Meshy (1998, revised 2006-2010) Two mouse-driven works have been reconfigured for the iPad touch-screen. *Meshy* (1998, revised 2010) is an interactive drawing environment in which the user's strokes scaffold a gauzy mesh of animated elements. The mesh continually bridges the user's two most recent movements; by making new marks, users can tease and torque the mesh in real-time.

Eyecode (2007) is an interactive installation whose display is wholly constructed from its own history of being viewed. By means of a hidden camera, the system records and replays brief video clips of its viewers' eyes. Each clip is articulated by the duration between two of the viewer's blinks. The unnerving result is a typographic tapestry of recursive observation.

Eyeshine (Golan Levin and Kyle McDonald, 2011) captures, records and replays the retro-reflections (red-eye effect) of the eyes of its observers, producing a virtual world populated solely by its viewers' ghostly traces.

Messa di Voce (Golan Levin and Zachary Lieberman with Jaap Blonk and Joan La Barbara, 2003) is a video of a performance by Joan La Barbara and Jaap Blonk that augments the speech, shouts and songs with real-time interactive visualizations. The project touches on themes of abstract communication, synaesthetic relationships, cartoon language, and writing and scoring systems, within the context of a sophisticated, playful, and virtuosic audiovisual narrative. Custom software transforms every vocal nuance into correspondingly complex, subtly differentiated and highly expressive graphics. *Messa di Voce* lies at an intersection of human and technological performance extremes, melding the unpredictable spontaneity and extended vocal techniques of human improvisers with the latest in computer vision and speech analysis technologies. Utterly wordless, yet profoundly verbal, *Messa di Voce* is designed to provoke questions about the meaning and effects of speech sounds, speech acts, and the immersive environment of language.

Universal Adapter Brick (Golan Levin and Shawn Sims, 2011) enables complete interoperability between ten popular children's construction toys.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, IMAGES, AND RESOURCES

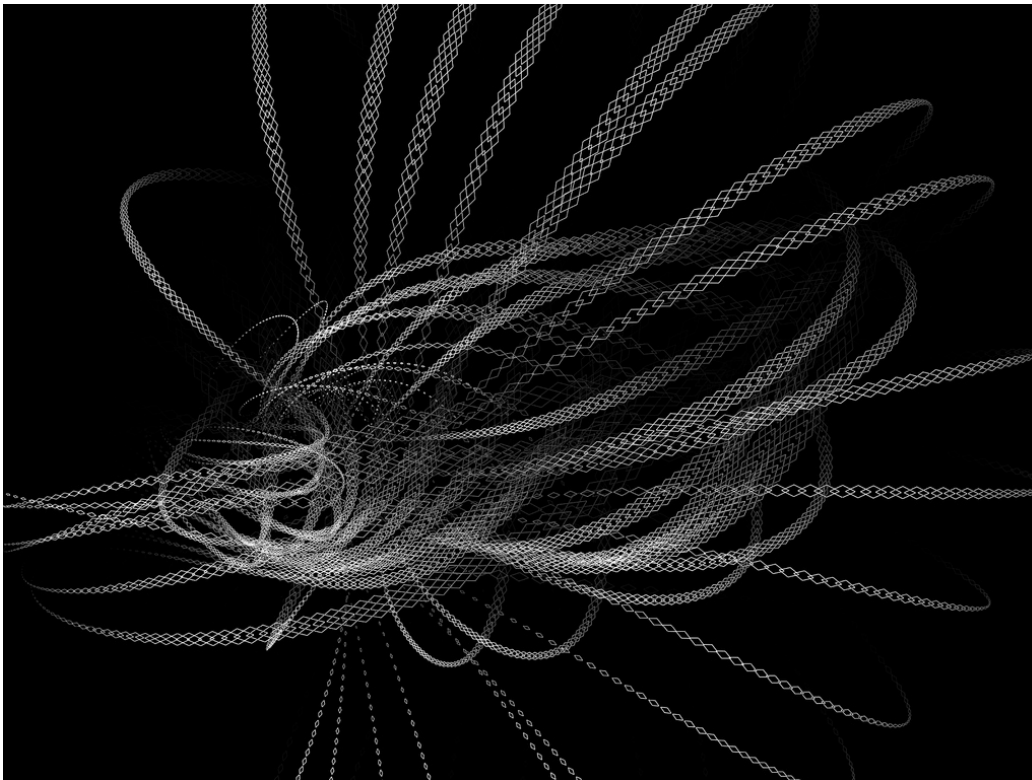
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Tours by Beall Interns are available free of charge during business hours.

Private group tours available by appointment: contact the Beall Center at (949)824-6206.





Meshy (1998, revised 2006). Photo: Golan Levin, Fluong.com



The Manual Input Sessions (2004) Tmema performing the Manual Input Sessions at the RomaEuropa Festival, Rome, on 28 November 2004. Photo: Golan Levin, Fluong.com