Introduction

In this article, an artist, Harold Cohen introduced computer programming (Aaron) and computer-driven machine to his art activities instead of conventional tools, for example, hands, brushes, and pencils. After reading this article, two issues came into my head; one, can we call paintings by computer programming or the traces left by machine as a creative work of art? Two, what is the role of artist in this artistic activity? In other words, does artist still have something to have to do? In this paper, I will describe my thinking about two issues briefly.

Can we call paintings by computer programming or the traces left by computer-driven machine as a creative work of art? What is the role of artist in his work?

At first my answer is “yes” Because the idea of art has been changed in modern era, and modern technology including computing has a lot of potentiality in art world.

First, the idea of modern art is wider than that of the past, in that, modern art allows artists to many possibilities – throwing dyestuffs on the canvas, only choosing “ready-made” and putting in gallery, using a lot of multimedia (TV, video, computer), and playing the cello(by Mooreman) - which are not able to do in the past. Harold Cohen’s art activities reminded me my past experience. Because I received similar impressions when I met some works of modern art, for example <Fountain> and <Bicycle Wheel> by Marcel Duchamp and <Composition V> by Kandinsky. My first feeling about these works was confused or abstruse to understand them. Because I thought that art represents the nature, external worlds, like the sentence in this article, I thought that “Representation was one of the essential things art was about”. But two artists didn’t represent the nature in their works. Kandinsky pursued “inner necessity” on canvas itself with introducing musical graphics method to his paintings, in that regardless of external world, he tried to compose his strokes on canvas for getting visual harmony and order in canvas. Even Duchamp only chose a ready-made instead of drawing paintings with brush or carving bronze and wood with chisel. In other words, the action of discovery is artistic activity to him and he gave aesthetic meaning to “ready-made”. These works was so shocking to me that my idea of art and artist was changed and extended.

In this article, Harold Cohen said “art is in the most general and universal sense, a kind of meditation on the power of human mind to symbolize” and “what the computer provided was a way of externalizing, stabilizing my speculations about image-making behavior......”. Judging from Harold Cohen’s comments and my past experience, I got to know that important thing is not the fact that artificial tool as computer, machine was used mainly in his art activities but how well artist’s aesthetic intention or his mind was expressed and satisfied in his works with these tools. So if computer is a tool to be able to satisfy Cohen’s aesthetic intentions or his mind, in modern art world he can use computer for his art activities. And series of his works are works of art. And I think that role of artist cannot be limited by only drawing paintings, graving, and modeling. Like the above mentioned words, choosing something and giving it aesthetic meaning like Duchamp and playing
the cello in almost nude like Mooreman, and using new various media like Harold Cohen are all artists’ roles.

Secondly, I got to know the potential of computing in design area after reading an article, “A new Agenda for Computer-Aided Design” by William Mitchell. Before then I thought that computer’s function was only saving, communicating, and calculating data, and using computer is lacking a kind of creativity. But he focused on “the roles of ambiguity and discontinuity in shape interpretation, instability in the rules for carrying out shape computations, and nonmonotonicity in critical reasoning to determine whether or not a design proposal is complete and satisfactory” in his article. Judging from my personal experience in design process, it is true. So I think that computer has a lot of possibilities in creative design. In conclusion, I think that computers open a new way for designers and artists in their creative activities.

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