



September, 1994

Volume Two, Number Eight

Production Manager's Note:

This month we welcome the Seattle Audubon Society to host our monthly meeting. The Audubon Society has a huge arsenal of images and sounds relating to birds and other natural phenomenon, and they are looking for artists and technologists to explore new ways to bring this material to the public. As Production Man-

ager of Northwest Cyber Artists, I am excited about the possibilities our group has to offer them. When we think about "interactive multimedia" we often think of people interacting with sound and images. But what if animals played the role of both the "interactors" and the "media"? For example, my dog always howls when the National Public Radio "All Things Considered" theme plays on the radio. What if I set up some triggers that fire in response to birds singing or moving, and tie these triggers to a MIDI sampler that plays the NPR theme? When the birds set off a trigger, my dog will howl. My dog's howling will piss off the birds and cause them to chirp and move even more, causing the NPR theme to continue, causing this little dog-bird system to continue indefinitely. This is pretty stupid, but it shows that there is more to Cyber Arts and interactive multimedia than synchronizing MIDI notes and pixels. I look forward to discussing all kinds of nutty ideas with the people from the Audubon Society. In the accompanying articles, you'll get a taste of where they are coming from today. Please join us at the meeting on September 12th, and let's conjure up all kinds of crazy stuff for them to play with in the future!



## The Miracle of Migration

# ONE-OUNCE BIRD FLIES THOUSANDS OF MILES

Every fall billions of birds (about 330 species) migrate from their North American breeding grounds to their winter refuges in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America. Some travel a few hundred miles. Others, powered by a few grams of fat, climb to altitudes of 15,000 feet and complete 80-hour marathons between the United States and South America.

These migrations first began about 30 million years ago, when North America's climate changed from sub-tropical to cool and seasonal. But this age-old pattern is in jeopardy. In the mid 1980s, a radar study of migratory flights over the Gulf of Mexico recorded one-half the volume of a similar study in the 1960s.

Several factors account for the decline, the most important being the loss of habitat due to logging and development. To learn how to help migratory birds call the Audubon Migratory Bird Committee at 523-4483.

The fact that today Bald

Eagles are not just pictures on postage stamps and in children's books attests to the success of the Endangered Species Act. Don't let anyone fool you; we need the Endangered Species Act, and endangered species need us. For more information call the Endangered Species Act Coalition at 720-4928.

**1250 kids in 23 Seattle Public Elementary schools discovered the world outdoors in the Finding Urban Nature (FUN) Program. 150 volunteers chalked-up 10,000 student contact hours of hands-on science education.**

**Kids learned to observe, sort data, and document their discoveries during isopod races, spider web collection, and radish seed roots and shoots plantings. Problem solving by hypotheses and field observation were taught during neighborhood birding and seed dispersal activities.**

**Darigold Dairy donated 1500 milk cartons for bird feeder construction, Stadium Cleaners contributed 750 wire hangers for the feeders, Weyerhaeuser printed the activity sheets and field notes, and the radish seeds were donated by Sprouters Northwest.**

**To volunteer for next year's FUN, call Seattle Audubon at 523-4483.**

## BALD EAGLES NOT EXTINCT

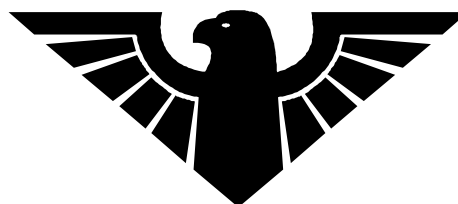
### An American Success Story

In 1974, the Bald Eagle stood on the brink of extinction. That year there were 791 nesting pairs counted in the

September Meeting:  
Monday the 12th

the art institute  
of Seattle  
room 608  
2323 Elliot Avenue  
7:30pm

September's Guest:  
Audubon Society



KIDS HAVE FUN AT SCHOOL

by Steve Turnidge

## The Grand Unified Theory of the Mind.

There is a dualism in the mind. There is reason and thought. There is logic and intuition. There is left brain logic and right brain creativity. In order for a totality of mind, these traits must be in balance.

Here's a metaphor: Consider the falling of a leaf. It sways from side to side, it flutters and falls, eventually coming to rest on the floor of the forest with all the other fallen leaves.

Now consider that leaf to be an idea. It falls on our consciousness, and with reflection, and thought, we begin to understand it. With more thought, eventually that idea becomes ours.

It comes to rest on the forest floor of our mind, just as the leaf did – laying on the foundation of all the other leaves that

have fallen. And our idea rests on the fertile ground of all the other ideas which are ours.

Not all leaves that fall are just leaves. Some are seeds, dropped into fertile territory to grow as plants and trees. In our mind, ideas can be seeds, growing into concepts in the soil of our mind.

For the plants to grow, the environment must be right. A plant shouldn't have too much water or too much light, but a balance of these. With too much water, the land becomes swampy – too much light, an arid desert.

In our minds, I see these elements as well. We have the pure light of reason and clear pools of thought. With too much reason, our minds become as an arid desert. Too much reflection, a swampy place.

If your mind feels swampy, add reason. If you feel unproductive, add thought.

I find both of these traits necessary for a healthy, creative mind. 🐿

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the idea and the realization are brought into alignment.

In this process, quite a bit of both your original idea and original realization can be transformed or discarded. At the end,

creativity  4

## Some Thoughts on Creativity and Meta-Creativity

By Bret Battey

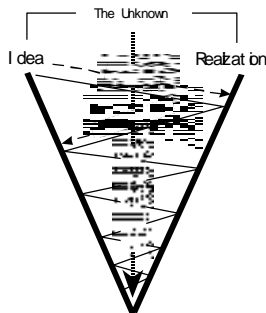
The popular understanding of the creative process is that it flows from idea to realization, meaning that someone gets a creative idea, executes it, and the process is finished, like so:



With this kind of idea floating around, it is not hard to understand why so many people do not see themselves as creative, or find creative tasks emotionally bruising. Anyone who tries to create with an expectation of a straight line from an idea to realization is set up for failure.

It is important to realize that there is rarely a single idea or a single realization involved in a creative work. Creativity is, in fact, a feedback process characterized by oscillating stages of action and

assessment. A more accurate portrayal of creation than the straight line might look like this:

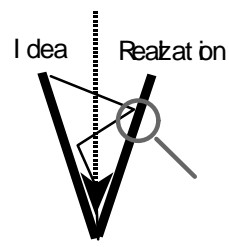


In this diagram, the creative act occurs in the area between two poles: idea and realization. Between the idea and its realization there is an area

which I have labeled "The Unknown". The tools for bridging the unknown are action (attempting a realization of your idea) and observation (assessing your realization in comparison to your idea). Based on your assessment of your first attempt, you adjust the idea and engage in action again to attempt a new realization. Action and observation oscillate, the idea and realization are adjusted and changed repeatedly until, ideally,

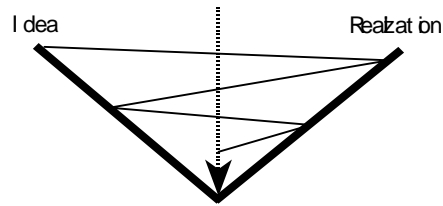


however, the gap between the idea and a means of realizing it has been closed or narrowed. Now, given the same basic idea for a new creative act, one would find The Unknown to be less of a chasm:



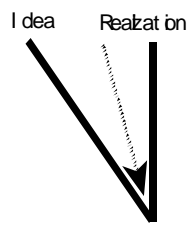
This is largely the case in 'popular' or established art forms, where both the idea and successful means of realization of that idea are within the vernacular of the culture. However, the magnifying glass in the above diagram serves as a reminder that for art forms in which the gap between idea and realization is quite narrow, often high value is placed on very fine details in the realization. The value here is on virtuosity — on having the highly refined skills and automatic knowledge needed to provide very tight turnaround between and idea and realization.

New art forms tend to present a different picture:

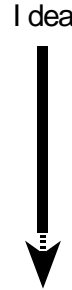


Here, there tends to be a wide gap between the idea and the realization, because the idea itself is further from the cultural vernacular, and/or its means of realization are more difficult to establish. Here the value is not on virtuosity and precision as much as it is on the intellect and stamina needed to identify and negotiate a broad expanse of the unknown through many oscillations of action and observation.

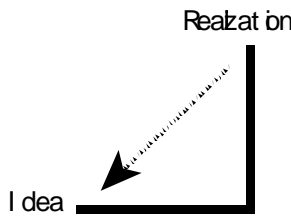
One pole or the other can have greater weight. For example, in a case where someone has donated a lot of equipment towards an art project, the availability of the equipment might carry more weight than the original idea, and the idea will conform to the implications of the equipment:



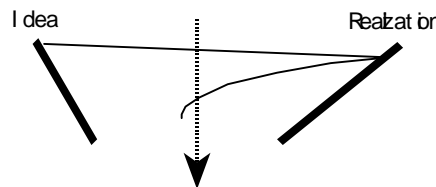
On the other hand, it is common in the experimental art world for the idea to have greater weight than the realization. In their extreme, conceptual artists seek to remove the distinction between idea and realization altogether. Consider, for example, Takehisa Kosugi's 1965 Fluxus score **Music for a Revolution:** "Scoop out one of your eyes 5 years from now and do the same with the other eye 5 years later." The mode of creation might be represented in the diagram below, where realization of the score would likely be terminal:



One can go to the opposite extreme: start with a very vague idea, execute it with raw intuition, then decide what the artwork is about. This is called 'publish or perish' or 'grantsmanship'. It is a common phenomenon in cases where people are asked to write or talk about their artwork after creating it:



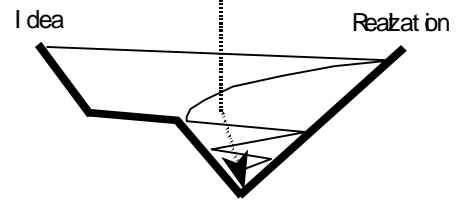
Going back to more conventional creative processes, sometimes the tension between the idea and the realization is too strong. We analyze and observe and think "It is NOT good." This looks something like:



The inner, critical voice is saying that there is no point in continuing given how far the realization is from the idea. With no fortitude to cross The Unknown, the creative process dies.

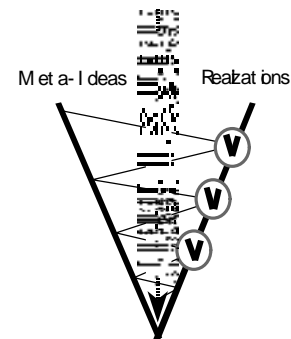
Sometimes, instead of exerting the fortitude to cross what seems like a very large chasm, we may choose to engage

in a quantum shift of either the idea or the means of realization:



Here, for example, rather than giving up because of the width of the gap, the idea was shifted radically to bring it closer in line with the realization. This can be a creative act in itself. Working with rather than against malfunctions and errors in technology is a great example.


Now, what happens if you string together a number of creative acts and consider those as realizations of another idea—as another, larger creative process? You enter what cyberneticists and system theorists refer to a 'meta-change', that is, change that causes a change. By engaging in meta-creation spanning many creative acts, you challenge and adapt the life values by which you form the ideas and evaluations described above.



In other words, each individual act of creation can serve a larger act of creation rather than being an end in itself. In this context, one recognizes each artwork

in a larger context, and art can become an agent of personal, and thereby societal, change. More established or commercial art forms tend to require less meta-creation, because the ideas and means of execution are largely externally defined. For those who have the option of being free from external requirements, meta-creation is not an option because ideas and criterion for evaluating realizations must be personally defined.

In any case, Create.

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## Internet Corner

### How to join the on-line CyberArtists List:

send email to [listproc@u.washington.edu](mailto:listproc@u.washington.edu).  
Leave the subject line blank and include  
only the following in the message body:

subscribe cyberartists yourname

### How to join the on-line Electronic Cafe interest group List:

Same as above with the following in the  
message body:

subscribe ecafe yourname

### How to join the Northwest Elektro-Industrial Coalition List:

Same as above with the following in the  
message body:

subscribe NEC yourname

Call me at work if you have any problems  
getting signed on. Please pass this on to  
all others interested in these topics

Edward M. Galore,  
[lemaire@cac.washington.edu](mailto:lemaire@cac.washington.edu),  
(206)543-5970

For more information on experimental music and conceptual art, try to find Michael Nyman's Experimental Music in a used book store somewhere, read it, and sell it to me (its out of print, and I can't find it).

For more information on 'meta-change', point Mosaic or your favorite web-server to:

<http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/>,  
the Principia Cybernetica web site.

-Bret Battey

## Happenings

### Beyond Fast Forward Update – A Creative Convergence of Art and Technology

911 Media Arts Center and the Northwest CyberArtists will present Beyond Fast Forward (BFF) on the weekend of October 20-23 at The Seattle Center. Beyond Fast Forward will include interactive artists' installations and new technologies workshops presented by regional and national artists working in and outside the high tech entertainment industry.

By bringing together artists, high tech industry & government leaders, and the public, BFF will raise public awareness of the leadership role artists are playing in the development of this region's new high tech industry. The need for universal access to media communication technologies for individual creative expression and education are also underlying themes.

The Allen Foundation for the Arts and the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation provided major grants of \$10,000 each for this event. The Seattle Center is the venue sponsor. Corporate sponsors include US West Foundation, Aldus Corporation, and CellularONE. Waggoner Edstrom Public Relations, Prestige events and Farrier Design are the promotion team. Additional sponsors include The Washington Software association, Seattle Arts Commission, The ACLU, International Interactive Computer Society, Washington Film & Video association, and the Washington State Departments of Information and Community, Trade and Economic Development.

911 and the Northwest CyberArtists have been collaborating for almost a year to present this unique event that is connecting this region's creative arts community with government, education and the high tech industry. "We have uncovered a wealth of creative talent in the Pacific Northwest who represent the true heart and soul of this region's growing high tech industry," says Robin Reidy, Executive Director of 911 Media Arts Center. "As artists, we are proving to be leaders in awakening government and industry to the importance of universal access to technology and all the issues raised by artists and educators surrounding the uses of technology to communicate, educate, and entertain."

### Greg Roach talks Interactive

The September 27 Washington Software Association/Digital Media Alliance dinner meeting will feature Greg Roach, Artistic Director and CEO of Hyperbole Studios as the keynote speaker. His work, first as a filmmaker and now as a multimedia artist, speaks to the exciting convergence of entertainment and software. Roach's talk will be preceded by a cocktail hour and buffet dinner which will provide the audience with time to network and view product displays from Hyperbole and other multimedia companies. The event will be held at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel & Towers from 5:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. The cost is \$30. For more information call 889-8880, press 4.

**Robot Receptionist Needed for Music/Entertainment business opening,  
September 14. No pay, lots of fun. Call Gigi Iob, Insight Records, 623-0525.**

# THE SEATTLE AUDUBON SOCIETY

*Not Just For the Birds Anymore*

Seattle Audubon Society, a 501 (c) 3 Washington non-profit corporation, is dedicated to the appre-

ciation and care of nature in the Northwest. With historical and continuing interest in birds and other wildlife, Seattle Audubon strives to preserve our local natural heritage, to study and enjoy this natural world, and to share the knowledge and enjoyment of nature with others.

Seattle Audubon is affiliated with the National Audubon Society as one of its

locally-autonomous chapters. After 78 years Seattle Audubon is one of the largest and most active environmental groups in the Northwest and, at 5000 +

## AN OPEN INVITATION

Seattle Audubon cordially invites members of Northwest CyberArtists to participate in our annual benefit to be held November 4 at the Daybreak Star Center, Discovery Park, Seattle.

We would be pleased to display your creative work as entertainment or to list any donated artifact for our auction. Birdhouses, bat houses, or any nature-oriented work of art would be great. Bob Moses has allegedly already begun work on his "Ornithological MIDI Generator" (Code named "Bird Brain").

If you have any questions, want to sign-up for the benefit, or would like to talk to an Audubon "expert" about your area of interest, please call Candace Bullard, 284-7880, or Kathy Malley at the Audubon office, 523-4483.

members, sixth in size among the 500+ Audubon chapters in the country.

Activities include field trips, lectures, meetings, and classes- birding by ear, kayaking the Nisqually Delta, the worldview of the Columbia River Indians. Interests range from butterflies, bats, and amphibians to organochlorines, the Peregrine Falcon Research Group, and plucking out the dam on the Elwha River. Seattle Audubon's purposes are three: conservation, education, and

enjoyment. We believe in the wisdom of nature's design. We seek to foster and promote ecological consciousness in our community.

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## Northwest CyberArtists

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