

ODU Students

Computer Dances To Artists' Tunes

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NORFOLK — Two Old Dominion University art students have put down their pens and plugged in their computer to punch out an intriguing assortment of computer drawings.

At first glance, their works look like ordinary abstract drawings or prints. But take a closer look, and you find they are composed of hundreds of thousands of numbers or symbols.

One work, filled with geometric diamonds and star shapes, is formed solely from the letter E. Another, an assortment of intermingling ovals and circles, is the product of about 112,000 threes and fours.

Robert McCullough, 24, and Will Galloway, 21, have a stack of works coaxed from a computer that helped them win top prizes in a scholarships competition for ODU art students. McCullough took the top prize of \$700 and Galloway won one of two \$300 prizes.

McCullough learned to manipulate computers during a stint in Army intelligence and now works part-time as a computer operator.

About six months ago, the two decided to try their hand at computer art.

They maintain that their work differs from computer art being done elsewhere because that is simply programmed into the

computer, but they manipulate the paper through by hand, producing a variety of effects, including graceful, wavy lines.

First, they work out a general pattern, then make up a regular deck of punch cards, and put them through the machine. They get different colors by changing ribbons, as with a typewriter. They usually run their drawings through 10 at a time, a process which takes about 6½ hours.

"Computer art is usually hard and cold," McCullough noted. "This is more humanistic. You're not plugging in an equation and having a drawing come out. You're responding to a machine, and, as you change, the machine will."

Said Galloway, "You get in tune with the machine and sort of dance with it."

One of their art professors, Faye Zetlin, herself an artist, explains, "This doesn't mean the computer will take over. It's just become a major tool." For instance, McCullough indicated one of his drawings, did some hasty computations, and determined it was composed of about 112,000 figures. "If I had to do each one by hand, it would never be done," he noted.

The drawings are a colorful lot, done in blues, browns, greens, reds, tans, and black and white. Some are formed of the same number or symbol, others are a combination of two

or several symbols or numbers.

Galloway has black and white drawings, one done entirely with a check-writing symbol (a small, hollow square), that supports his contention that he dances with the machine. The drawing moves up and down in graceful folds.

Both students paint and McCullough also is interested in

sculpture and Galloway in print-making.

"We're very pleased with what the kids are turning out," Mrs. Zetlin said. She said ODU students stack up well with those that she and other ODU professors have seen traveling around the country.

Many of the students will dis-

play their works at a student show April 26 through May 10 in the Norfolk Museum.

Other scholarship winners were Ted Metz, a junior who won a \$300 scholarship for his sculpture and prints, David Haywood, Duke Doniphan, and Jerry James, who won \$200 scholarships each.



Virginian-Pilot Photo by William Abourille

No programming here: McCullough is seen through one of his colorful metal sculptures.