

Good Show - Thought you might like to

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Arts spotlight

New wave: Computer art

By John Halladay

Tribune-Star

It just *could* be the wave of the future: art that *moves*. You don't hang it on your wall; you slip it into your computer.

Computer-generated artworks by Leroy Lamis of Terre Haute are on display through Aug. 30 in the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

A retired professor of art at Indiana State University, Lamis is no stranger to the art scene. This nationally known artist's earlier works can be found in collections in Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum at Washington and the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Whitney Museum of American Art, both in New York. His "Construction No. 46" was included in the Museum of Modern Art's 1965 exhibition, "The Responsive Eye." The Indianapolis Museum of Art says Lamis "is best known for his clear plastic Constructivist box sculptures produced from 1960 to 1972."

But he's come a long way, baby, since then.

An interest in computers spread from his youngest son like — well, like a computer virus.

"My youngest son, when he was in junior high school, got me started in computers. I wasn't really interested in them at all, but he wanted one. And we got one for him. And then one day he left me a note, said 'Dad, don't do *this*,' which obviously was an invitation to do it, you know. And when I did it, this *circle* appeared on the screen. So, that was all it took: I was just absolutely hooked on it after that. And then you have to learn this language, which is BASIC, but then you have to learn how to find a way to do the things that you want to do. And you just never learn enough: It just keeps going."

He starts one of his computer programs running.

Forms appear on the screen and intersect each other. Sine-wave curves define areas of changing color. Straight lines multiply until you realize they are tangents defining a circle. Checkerboard patterns appear and then metamorphize into other patterns. The program never ends: Wait long enough, and you recognize you've seen a sequence before. The sequences run three to five minutes.

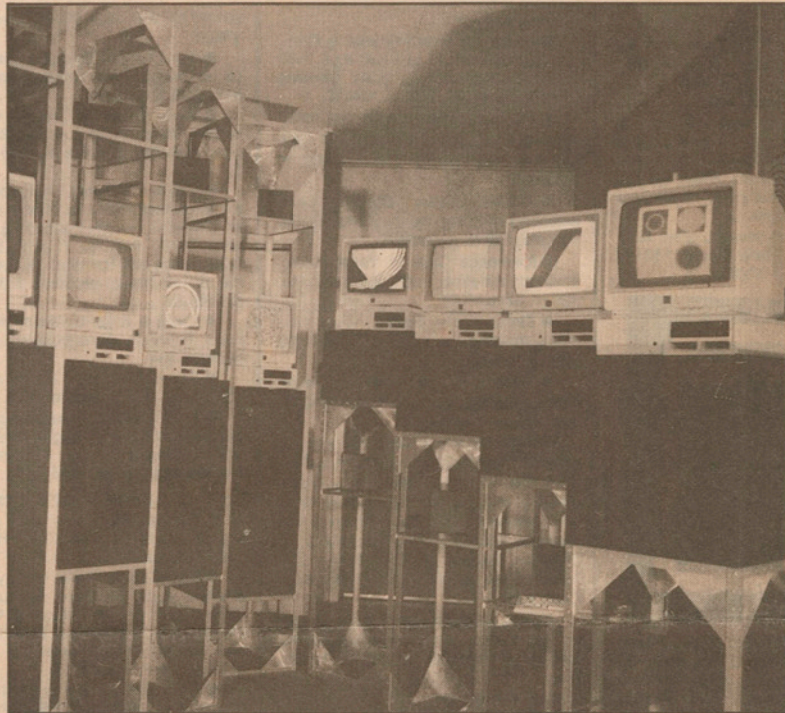
"In a way, this is what I'm thinking; this is what's happening in my brain," he says.

"For years, I worked with plastics," he says, showing you one of his earlier sculptures. But, "How much of that can you do? So I got out of that."

Returning to his newer work, Lamis says, "I love it because it *moves* — it has this action to it. All you've got to do is figure out how to make it *do* the thing that you'd like to make it do."

That's time-intensive.

"If I can get 15 seconds of visual time out of five or six hours, I feel like



Computer art

Leroy Lamis, left, shows some of his work that is on display in the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

I've accomplished something."

Programming a computer takes math skills. Lamis is self-taught, with some help from his sons. "My oldest son is an architect; my youngest son is an engineer. So between them, what I don't know they can tell me about. But I have learned. It was very challenging."

His creations can use 16 different colors.

Lamis said, "The lady at the mu-

seum was very enthusiastic" when he took some of his creations over to show her what he's been doing.

The Indianapolis Museum of Art at 1200 W. 38th St. is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Thursday; and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. It is closed Monday and major holidays. For more information about the museum, call (317) 923-1331.