

ÉCART

Matt Nish-Lapidus

A Path

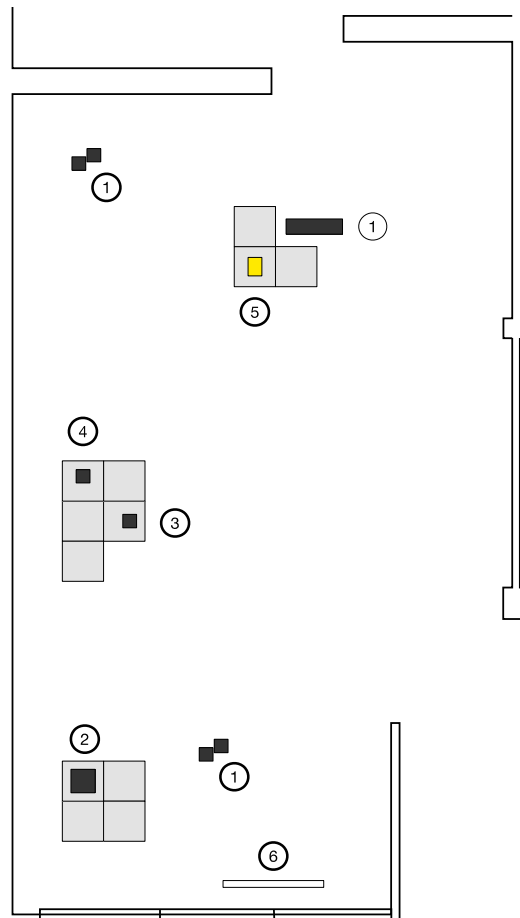
Exhibition 13.04-28.05.23

Exhibition opening 13.04.23 — 5 to 7 pm

In Kabbalah language mysticism a ‘path’ is a unique personal route to wisdom. Different from a road or public walkway, paths are often hidden, forged by each of us as we discover our way through the world, unlocked through language. *A Path* brings together Matt Nish-Lapidus’ recent computational and sculptural works exploring the poetic possibilities of computer processes, language, and material infrastructure. Through the lenses of linguistic mysticism, programming, and a forgotten future of personal computers, these works present a bricolage of artist-written software, poetry, industrial hardware, and sound. Drawing heavily on the work of computer pioneer Seymour Papert, Nish-Lapidus questions the role computers play in our lives and reimagines what that relationship might be in a more human, beautiful, and personal light.

Matt Nish-Lapidus makes software, sounds, and texts probing the myth that computers need to be useful rather than beautiful. Matt’s interests lie in the poetics of computation and its proclivity to create meaningful relations through iteration and recombination, as well as how computation can be a source of identity and resistance. He holds a H.BFA in New Media from Toronto Metropolitan University and a Master of Visual Studies in Studio Art from The University of Toronto. You can find Matt online and away-from-keyboard under various aliases and collaborations including emenel, New Tendencies, and <blink>.

EXHIBITION MAP



1. Breath from Breath:

Matt recorded his own voice saying each individual phonetic sound of spoken English. The system uses these sounds to try to say words from a vocabulary it has written down by trying different combinations of sounds until it finds a good one. In the other speakers, on the floor, a soundscape made of field recordings, old Yiddish pleated music and its own archives responds by creating a sound environment for the disembodied voice. The modified and extended server rack, long blue Ethernet cable and vertical speakers give the room a sculptural presence.

2. Halted Moment, Executable

A short story by Jorge Luis Borges is reinterpreted through an algorithm he wrote based on the experience of the story's main character. Over the course of a full year, the story, which begins scrambled, is slowly reassembled into the original text, one letter at a time. Every 24 hour period, the system tries a new order for the words, but it will take a full year to achieve this. In the story, a playwright from Prague during World War II is arrested by the Nazis and sentenced to death. Before a firing squad, he prays for a year to complete his life's work, a play he has yet to write. The wish is granted and he

remains frozen in front of the firing squad with only his thoughts to finish writing the play. As soon as he finishes time is unfrozen and he is instantly shot and killed.

3. Allegory

He uses vocabulary from *Mindstorms*, the book on LOGO, and Wordsworth's sonnet "The world is too much with us" (which he wrote to lament the Industrial Revolution) to write statements about other ways the world could be. A machine for imagining different futures.

4. DO WHILE TRUE

Mediation on patterns, repetition and time. Created using the LOGO programming language, which is how he learned to code when he was around 7 years old. LOGO represented a very different idea of what computers could be, one that was more about learning and understanding the world around us through creativity rather than the work- and consumer-oriented computing culture that we have NOW.

5. Paths

A book of poetry and collage collecting his thoughts and writings on the ideas of the rest of the works, as well as some of the material from his research while he was creating them.