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Evolution of Soft Robots by Novelty Search

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Advanced Concepts Team

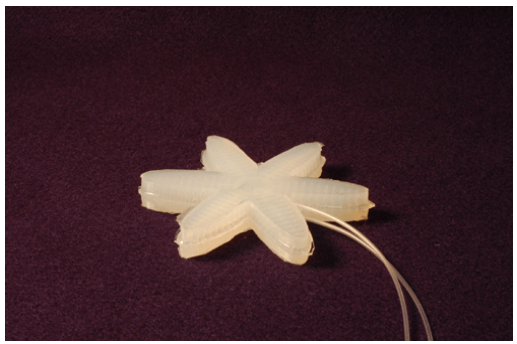
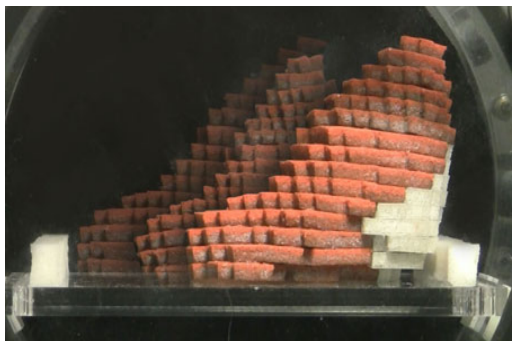
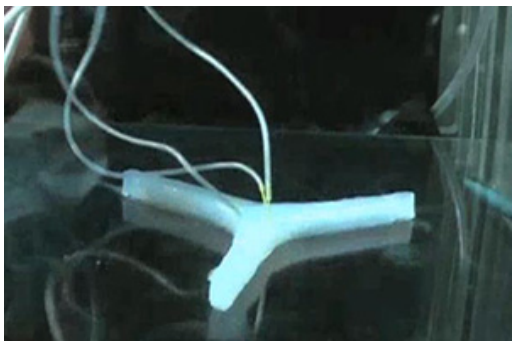
OUTLINE

OVERVIEW

SOFT ROBOTICS

Soft Robots

- Inspired by nature
- Completely soft bodies
- Capable of developing new kinds of locomotion

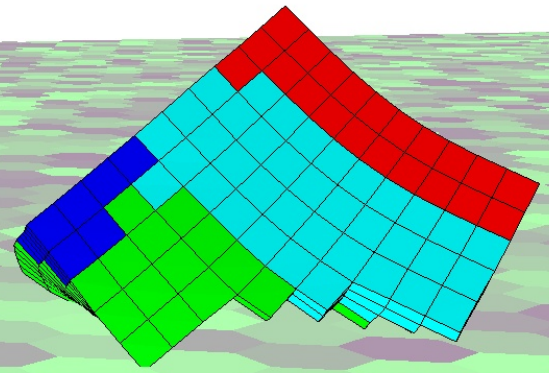
Soft robots can be actuated through air pressure tubes, environmental changes (temperature, pressure), even explosions.

SOFT ROBOTICS IN SIMULATION

VoxCad Simulator[1]

- Created by Jonathan Hiller and Hod Lipson
- Voxel modeling and analyzing software

- Lattice
- Voxels
- Structure
- Materials



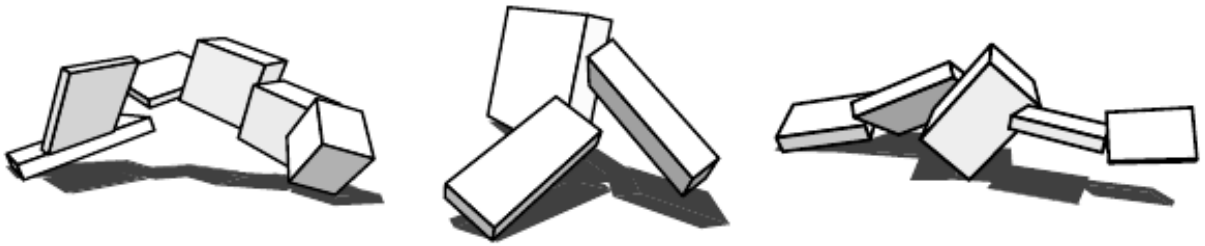
[1] **hiller2012dynamic**.

OVERVIEW

RELATED WORK I

Evolving virtual creatures[2]

- Rigid body parts, joints
- Evolution of the morphology and the control



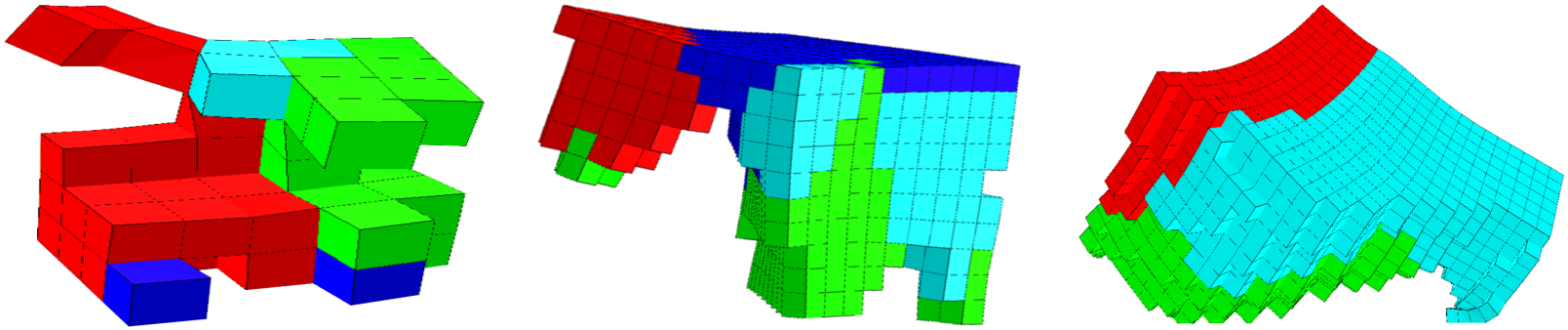
Evolving a diversity of virtual creatures through novelty search and local competition[3]

- Same experimental framework
- Novelty $<$ Fitness
- Novelty search with global competition has the best average fitness.

RELATED WORK II

Evolving soft robots with multiple materials and a powerful generative encoding.[4]

- Generative encoding, Compositional pattern-producing network, CPPN.
- Neuroevolution of augmenting topologies, NEAT.



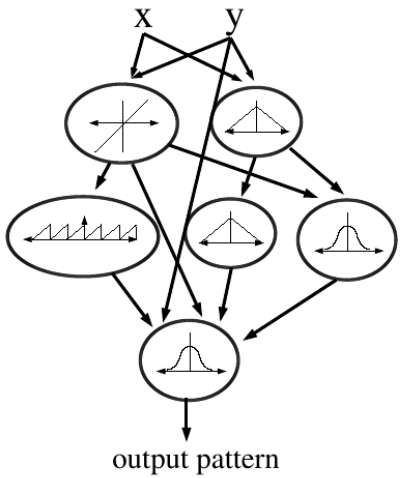
[2] **sims1994evolving**.

[3] **lehman2011evolving**.

[4] **cheney2013unshackling**.

COMPOSITIONAL PATTERN-PRODUCING NETWORK[5]

- Similar to artificial neural networks
- Different set of activation functions



- Produce symmetrical and repetitive patterns
- Appropriate for problems with geometrical structure

[5] **stanley2007compositional**.

NEUROEVOLUTION THROUGH AUGMENTED TOPOLOGIES (NEAT)[6]

Some key points of this method are:

- Evolving neural network topologies along with weights
- Crossover between different topologies
- Structural innovation through speciation (New species have time to improve)

[6] **stanley2002evolving**.

NOVELTY SEARCH

What is novelty search:

- Traditionally fitness measures how good an individual is (Objective function).
- Objective function can prevent evolution reaching the global maximum.
- Abandon the objective.
- Try finding novelty in behavior space.
- Random?

Definition (Sparsity)

$$s(x) = \frac{1}{k}\sum_{i=0}^{k} dist(x, b_i)$$

OVERVIEW

RANDOM SOFT ROBOTS

Random

Assign materials to voxels randomly.

Generative encoding

Only two parameters can change in this encoding.

1. The probability of adding a new voxel into the structure.
2. The probability that the new voxel introduced will use the same kind of material as its connection.

Random CPPNs

Evolution with high mutation power and no fitness information.

SIMPLE GENETIC ALGORITHM

- GAlib C++ library
- Each genome is represented by a stream of real numbers in $[0, 1]$.
- The length of this stream is equal to:

$$l = n \times (m + 1)$$

, where n, is the number of total voxels and m is the number of materials.

- For a lattice's dimensions of $10 \times 10 \times 10$ and 4 materials the length of the genome is 5000.
- Simple genetic algorithm fails to produce locomotion.
- No structure knowledge.

CPPN-NEAT

- HyperNEAT C++
- Each genome is represented by a CPPN.
- This CPPN is queried for each input coordinate to output the existance and the type of the material.
- NEAT evolves these CPPNs.
- In each generation, speciation. Population is split into species, new species can survive easier than old.

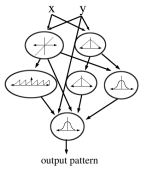
CPPN-NEAT WITH NOVELTY SEARCH[7]

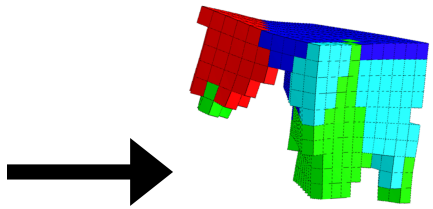
- Same code base
- Novelty takes the place of fitness
- Novel individuals stored in a list
- For each new individual in the population, check its novelty in respect to the stored novel individuals.
  - Sparsity

[7] **lehman2011abandoning**.

BEHAVIOR

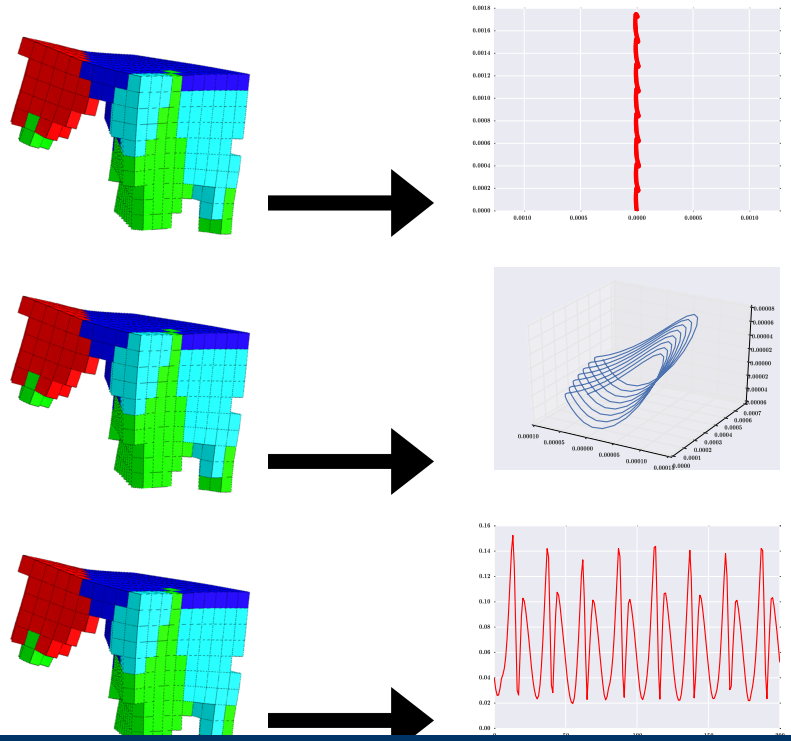
How can we go from fitness to behavior:





$$\longrightarrow F(x) \longrightarrow B(x)$$

Examples:



BEHAVIOR

Behavior types can be used:

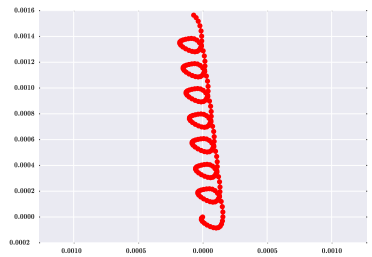
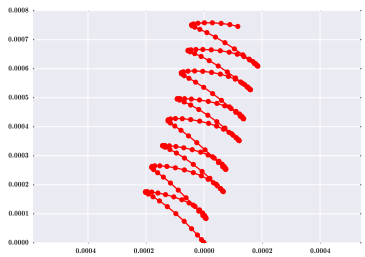
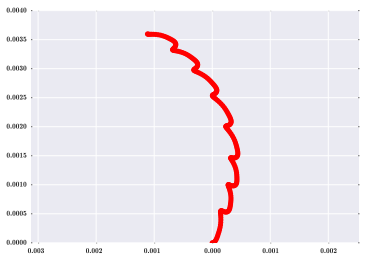
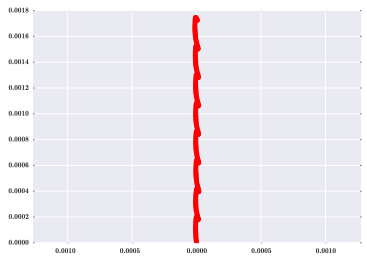
- Trajectory 3D, 2D
- Pace
- Voxels touching ground
- Kinetic energy
- Maximum pressure

Behavior similarity can be computed:

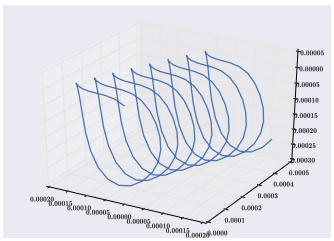
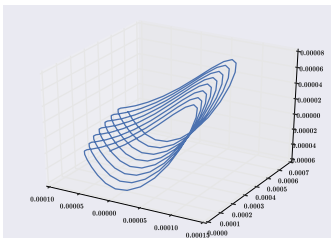
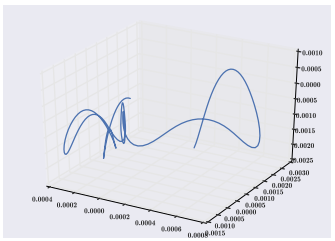
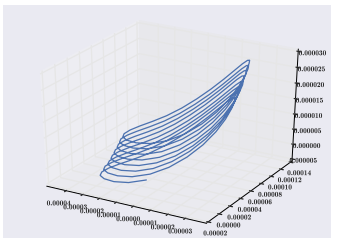
- Sum of Euclidean distances per timestep
- Cross-correlation

BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES I

2D - Trajectories:

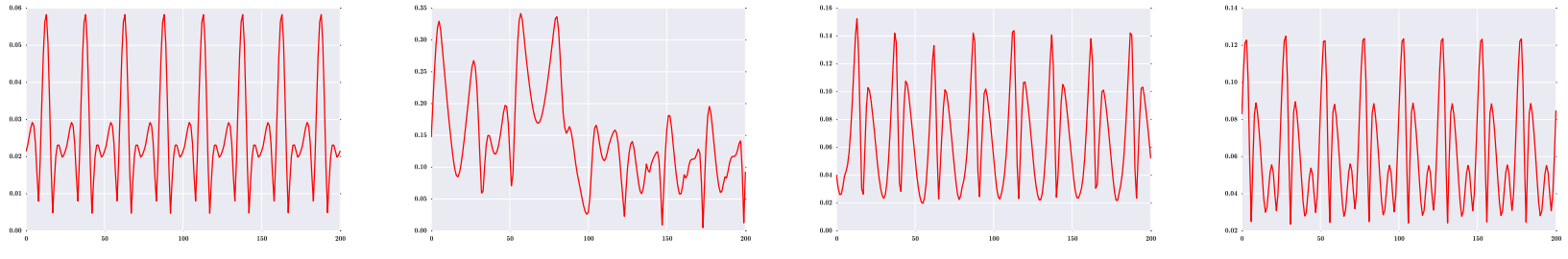





3D - Trajectories

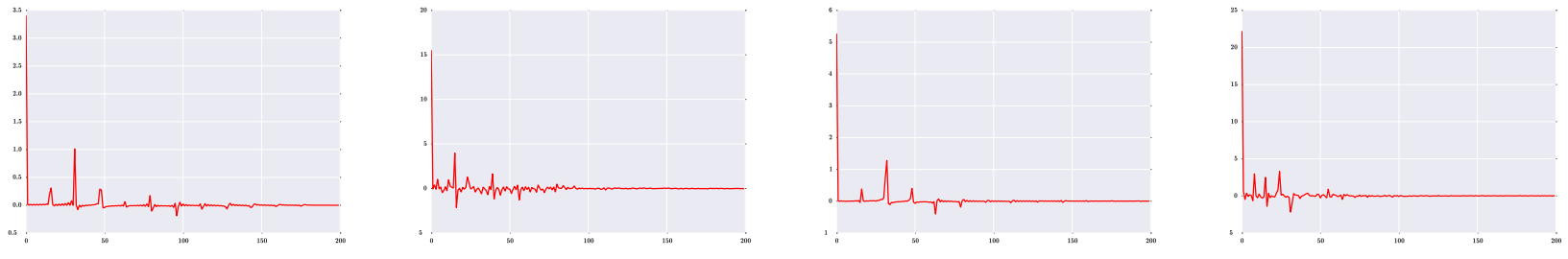





BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES II

Pace per timestep

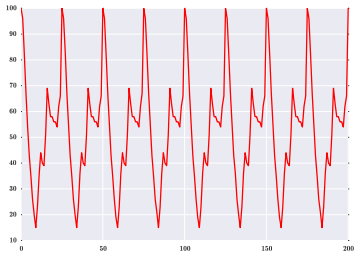
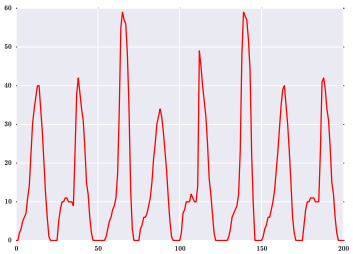
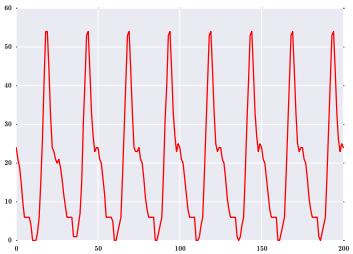
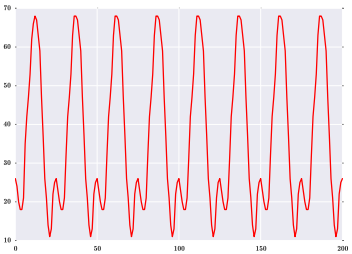


Pace - DFT

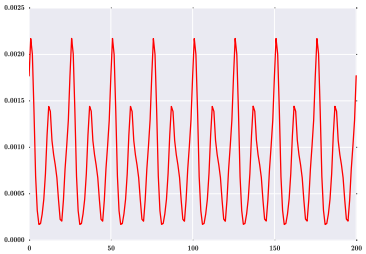
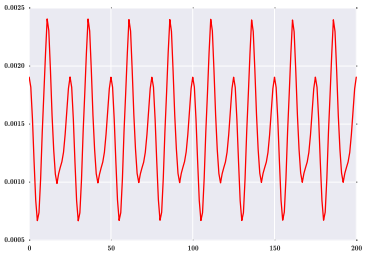
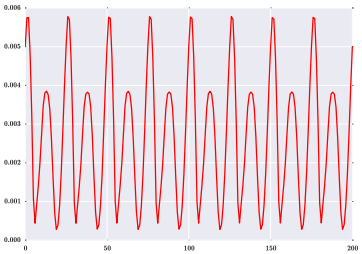
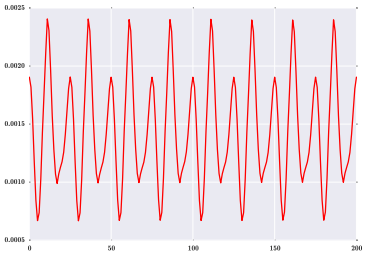


BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES III

Voxels touching ground per timestep

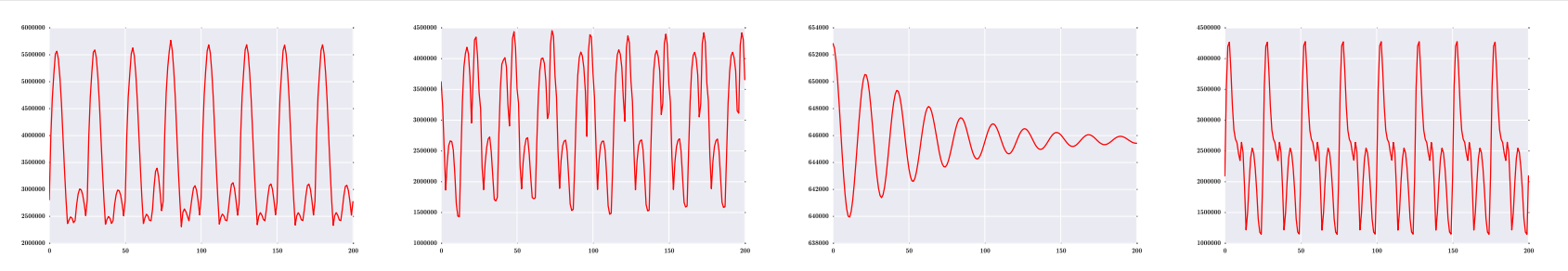





Kinetic energy per timestep

BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES IV

Maximum pressure per timestep

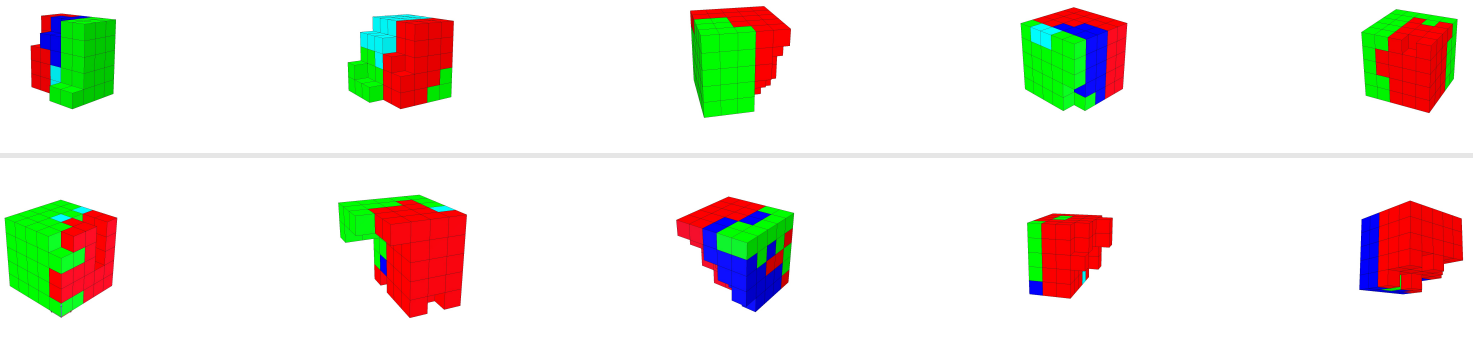


OVERVIEW

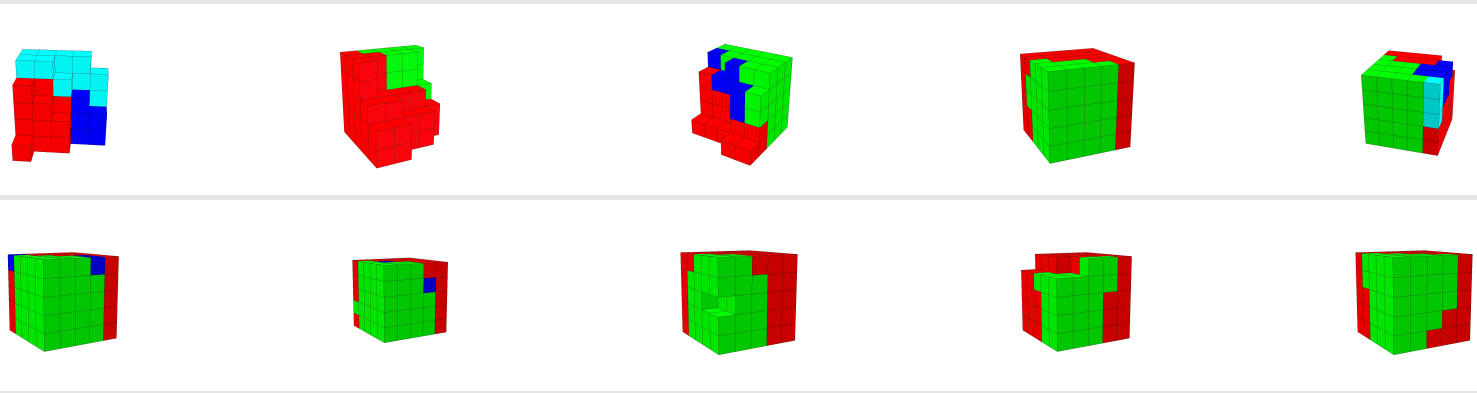
RESULTS I

RESULTS II

Novelty Search - Champions every 100 generations:

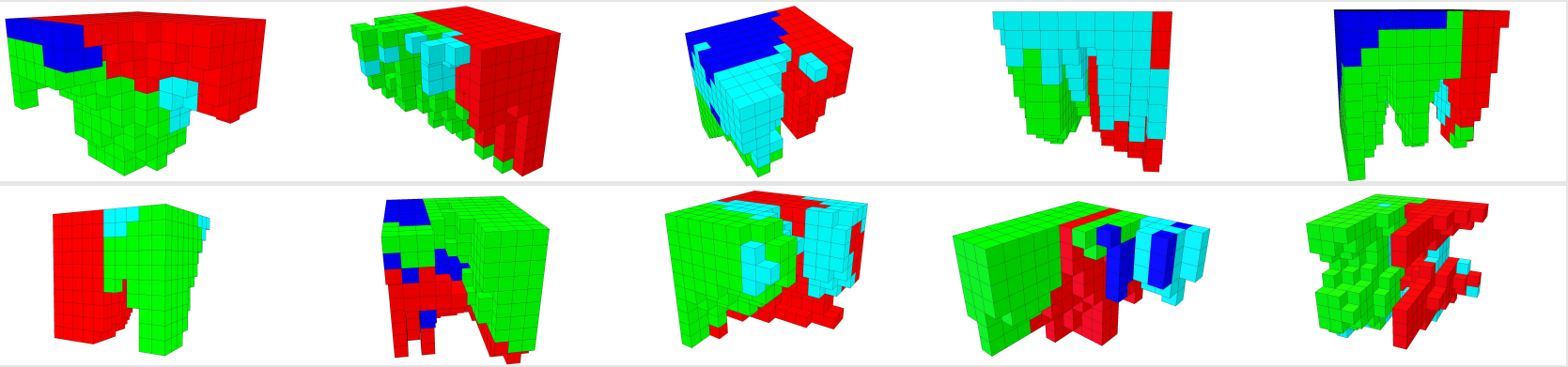


Fitness-based Search - Champions every 100 generations:



RESULTS III

Novelty Search - Champions every 100 generations:



Fitness-based Search - Champions every 100 generations: