

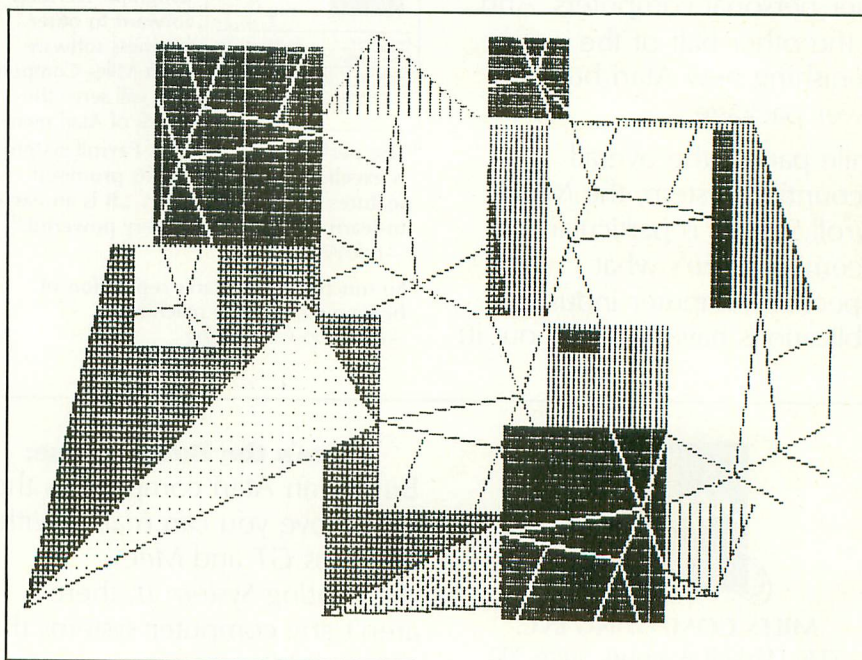
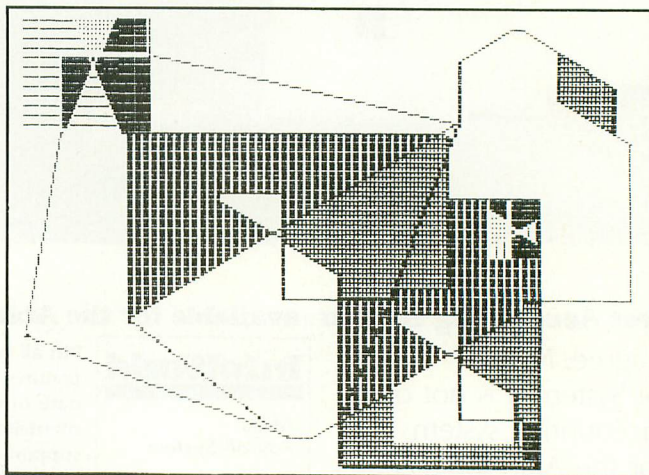
ATARI ART

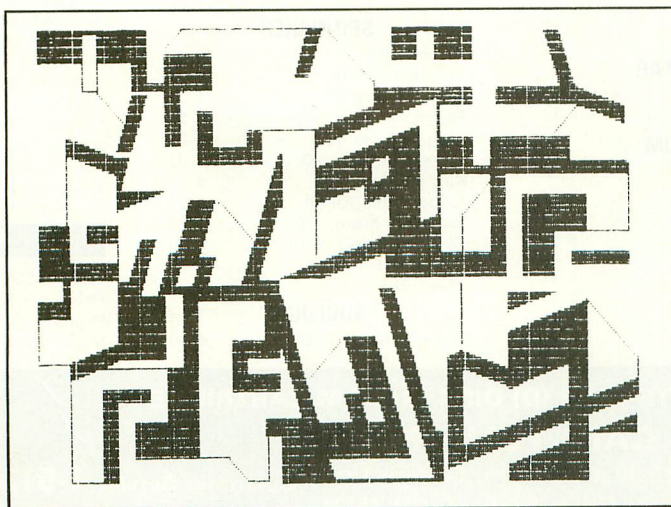
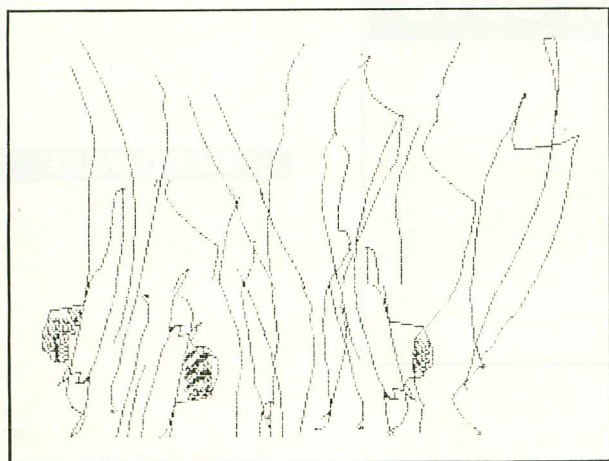
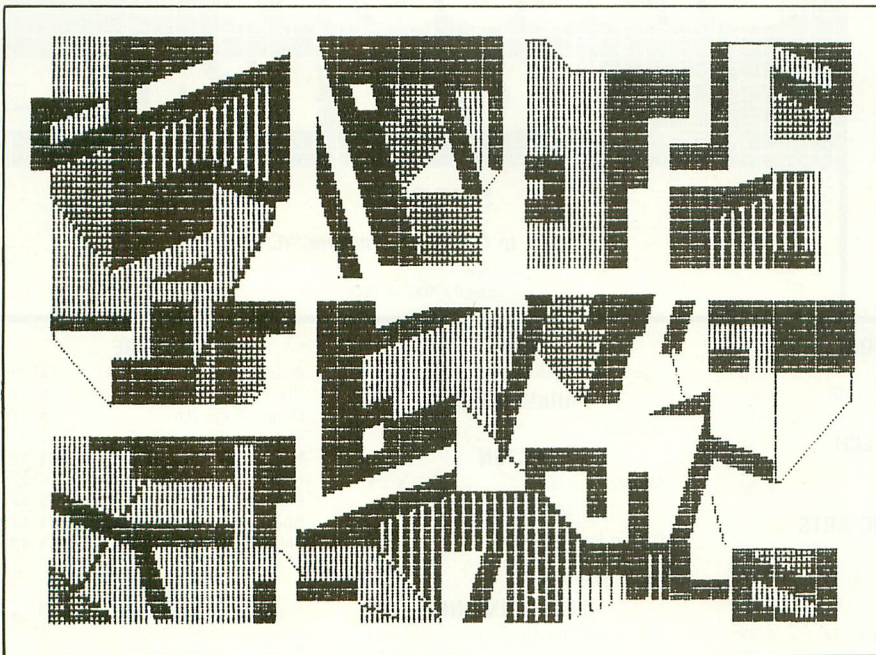
Modern art on a dot matrix printer

by JOSEPHA HAVEMAN

Computer art is usually identified with video screen displays. But dot matrix printers and color plotters can be effectively used by artists to produce computer generated pictures on paper. Unfortunately, only a few graphics software packages offer a built-in screen dump utility which would allow the artist to send the image currently on the screen directly to a printer. But if your favorite graphics program does not include this very important option, you can usually save the finished image to disk—from which the pictures can then be loaded into another program for dumping to a printer.

Because each graphics software package offers different drawing and painting features, many computer artists have several graphics programs around to provide a variety of features. Most high resolution Atari graphics programs allow only 4 colors on the screen at one time. Some programs offer the use of texture patterns, which provides an additional variety of picture options.





TEXTURE IN HARD COPY

For hard copy printout the texture patterns provide greater variety on paper than different screen colors do. An interesting problem here, is to compose pictures with the computer, viewed and edited on the CRT, while trying to predict how the printer will interpret each color, line and texture element. To accurately predict the effect takes considerable practice.

The best way to get to know these variations, is to create a test print for each software package and printer. Colors may print out with the same or similar textures in a black & white picture, making adjacent areas indistinguishable from one another. Suitable textures, rather than colors, must be programmed in such areas.

To get the most out of your Atari and your graphics printer, work with several compatible programs, using each for their best, or unique, features.

With the right programming and careful study and testing, excellent prints can be produced on dot matrix printers. True to its origin, this art bears the mechanical look of the medium in which it is produced. However, with the proper control of the printer's capabilities, a high quality can be maintained in the work. And these stylistic features become merely representative of the techniques of our era, not too different from those of medieval woodcuts 500 years ago.

Creative tools change with the times, as do the superficial appearances of artworks. The essence of art, however, remains pretty much the same.

Berkeley computer artist and photographer Josepha Haveman is an associate professor at California College of Arts and Crafts. She holds an Atari Fellowship Grant and this April exhibited computer prints at the Cory Gallery in San Francisco.

The pictures shown here were created on an Atari 800 and printed with a Gemini 15X. The artist uses the following compatible software at various stages of drawing and dumping an image: Micro Illustrator on KoalaPad, Micro-Painter and Graphic Master. 