






A Happy Path: Code Art With Processing



About Me

-  Software Developer (~30 years)
-  Chicago, IL, USA
-  Industries: Educational Technology, Entertainment, Marketing
-  My Debut as a conference speaker (Thank you CYC!)
-  Recently (mid-2025) began dabbling with creative coding

What is Processing?

- A software sketchbook and language
 - Sketch – a program written in Processing
 - Sketchbook – a collection of sketches
- Open-Source programming language and IDE
 - built on Java
- Used to create images, animations, and interactions

Is Processing only for beginners?

- Origins in teaching programming basics and promoting:
 - Software literacy in the visual arts
 - Visual literacy in technology
- Students are not its only users
 - artists, designers, researchers, and hobbyists
- Like any good technology, it has evolved
 - A tool for both learning and generating professional creative works

What is Creative Coding?

Creative Coding is...

- A practice that merges programming with artistic expression
- Code as a medium
- Emphasizes expression over utility
- Also called generative/algorithmic art

#GOALS

- Convince you that:
 - You can do it!
 - Processing: a solid tool for creative exploration and having fun with code
 - Basics principles will take you far
- Challenge you to play with code and create a sketch

~~Live Coding – Basics Speedrun~~

- With static demos we miss out on happy accidents
- Glitch Happens!
 - A sketch exploring Interactive Particles
 - While working on it I introduced a bug that caused this glitch

Demos

Goal Check-In

- ☒ You can do it!
- ☒ Processing: a solid tool for creative exploration
- ☒ Basics principles will take you far
- Invitation to play

Challenge

- Download Processing & play with examples
- Create a sketch using your favorite book for inspiration:
 - Use up to 4 colors from the book's cover art
 - Use a favorite/memorable line from the book
 - Add one or more random/repetitive elements
 - Play!
- Not a reader? Use your favorite song/album art/lyric
- Not a music lover?
 - Are you really 4 LLMs dressed in a trench coat?
 - Create a sketch that somehow visualizes your favorite algorithm
- Share! Use #CYC25 #PLAYWITHCODE

Resources

- Main Site / Where to download
 - <https://processing.org/>
- Daniel Shiffman's sites (the “Bob Ross of Processing”)
 - <https://thecodingtrain.com/>
 - Developers: skip the basics and jump to the coding challenges
 - <https://natureofcode.com/>
- Community of creative practitioners using Processing
 - <https://www.creativeapplications.net/tools/framework/processing/>
- Processing Subreddit:
 - <https://www.reddit.com/r/processing/>

Thank You!

- You can find the Demo examples here:
 - <https://github.com/rgroves/cyc-processing-demos>
- These slides are on the CYC site and included in the repo.
- You can find links to where I'm active on the web here:
robertgroves.com
- You can talk to me here:
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