

Casey Reas on Chance Operations

Class Discussion led by Vee Nis Ling

Casey Reas

- Co-creator of Processing
- Professor in the Department of Design Media Arts at UCLA
- Work in collections at the Centre Georges Pompidou and SFMOMA
- <http://reas.com/>



Some Takeaways & Quotes

- Described as: “A lot of order...with some parameterized change”
 - “It’s never a blind chance. It’s a chance that is always planned, but also always surprising.”
— Gerhard Richter
- Emergence and the relinquishing of total control
- The rise of chance operations in art as a response to increasing chaos
 - Rebellion against the state (“Homage to NY”: self-destructing machine)
- Randomness can help us “get outside of our preconceptions/remove ourselves from the process” (why might we want to do this?)

Questions for Discussion

- As a creator, how has randomness materialized in your work? What does it mean to you to incorporate randomness in your work?
- As audience members/viewers/listeners, how do we create meaning from randomness or chance operations? Does knowing that chance was involved in a creative piece lead you to perceive it differently?
- Towards the end of the talk, Reas mentions artworks that incorporate human interaction. How does interaction play into randomness? Is interaction a type of chance operation?
- Reas speaks about the “space between order and chaos”. How do we identify this space? How are order and chaos balanced in some of the works Reas mentions?