

COMPUTER ART VS. COMPUTER MUSIC. DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ART & TECHNOLOGY AT THE 1970 VENICE BIENNALE

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My paper will consider two experimental Biennale's events, i.e. the 1970 International Art Exhibition and the 1970 International Music Festival, to discuss to what extent the institution reflected different approaches to computer art and music in the early 1970s. What consequences did these events bring about to the Biennale?

1970 was a crucial year for the development and acceptance of computer art at the Venice Biennale. Between May and October 1970 the Venice Biennale organised two parallel events. One was the International Art Exhibition, held at the Giardini, which included the first computer art show at the Biennale; the other was the International Music Festival, held at the Fenice Theatre, which included the First Symposium of Avant-Garde and Computer Music.

Despite the presence of a number of international computer art pioneers such as Herbert Franke, Georg Nees, Frieder Nake, Auro Lecci, and the Computer Technique Group, the experimental art show at the Giardini was disappointing for several reasons (limited selection of computer artworks and lack of communication between the curators and a number of participating artists, to name a few). On the contrary, as I would like to argue, the Music Festival offered artists more opportunities to communicate and disseminate their work. A series of debates, laboratories and round-tables created a prolific interdisciplinary environment where composers and theoreticians in the field of computer art and music could meet. Participants to the Symposium of Avant-Garde and Computer Music included, among others, John Cage, Earl Brown, Pietro Grossi, Morton Feldman, and Alan Sutcliffe (Computer Art Society, London).

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