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# Active Score Music

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The idea of a synaesthetic bonding of sound and image is a recurring motif in artistic work; the possibilities currently afforded by computer technology make available fascinating tools with which to implement that idea. Masaki Fujihata and Golan Levin— independent of one another—have confronted this problem and come up with ingenious solutions including *Scribble* and *Small Fish*.

Ars Electronica has invited the two artists to premier their installations and software modules as digital media instruments in a concert performance.

*Scribble* combines elements of graphical and music software in a dynamic and highly expressive way, and enables this artist/musician quartet to perform orchestrated as well as freely improvised music.

*Small Fish* is primarily an interactive picture that produces music. In this concert performance, it is used as a digital instrument.

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## Golan Levin Scribble

The Audiovisual Environment Suite (AVES) is a set of five interactive artworks that allow people to create and perform abstract animation and sound in real time. Each system is an experimental attempt to design an interface that is supple and easy to learn, yet can also yield interesting, infinitely variable and personally expressive performances in both the visual and aural domains. Ideally, these systems permit their interactants to engage in a flow state of pure experience.

The AVES systems are built around the metaphor of an inexhaustible and dynamic audiovisual “substance,” which is freely deposited and controlled by the user’s gestures.



Each artwork situates this substance in a context whose free-form structure inherits from the visual language of abstract painting and animation. The use of low-level synthesis techniques permits the sound and image to be tightly linked, commensurately malleable, and deeply plastic.

Each of the instruments presents a different variety of audiovisual substance. The *Aurora* system, for example, permits the user to create and manipulate a shimmering, nebulous cloud of color and sound. This glowing formlessness rapidly evolves, dissolves and disperses as it follows and responds to the user’s movements. The *Floo* system, by contrast, disperses and deflects soft-edged tendrils in response to the user’s movements; sound granules sonify the



growing tendrils with chorused drones. The entire suite of instruments is used in */Scribble/*, a color-music composition developed in collaboration with Scott Gibbons, Ben Lapidus, and Greg Shakar. In this performance, a quartet of artist-musicians brings forth sounds and visuals which are at times carefully scored, and at other times loosely improvised.

The AVES systems inhabit a domain at the juncture of art, design, and the engineering of tools and instruments. As artworks, they extend an established twentieth century tradition in which artworks are themselves generative systems for other media. As a set of tools, the AVES work represents a vision for creative endeavor on the computer, in which uniquely ephemeral dynamic media blossom from a close collaboration between a system's user and designer.

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Performers/Composers: Scott Gibbons, Benjamin Lapidus, Gregory Shakar