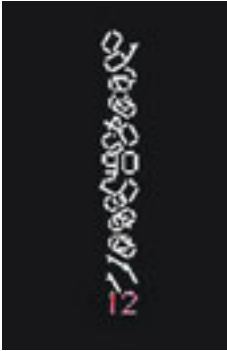

The Five Reactive Books



The Five Reactive Books are editioned books with both digital and print components. Using a conventional computer as the Medium, Maeda has created a total of 52 compositions that demarcate the expressible spectrum of interactive media.

Created over a period of five years, the influence of the *Reactive Books* is seen clearly on the web and other new media work today, where many of the themes pioneered by Maeda have been emulated. A style of simplicity, tempered with technical harmony has been the signature of Maeda's style in an age of over-excessive technology usage to achieve what eagerly aspires to be classified as art.

The computer is a multi-dimensional canvas, manifested as projected light or a printed surface, over which we can exercise complete expressive control in one of two ways. First, through some direct physical

means, such as hand-to-mouse, where there is a one-to-one correspondence between our gestures and change on the canvas. This approach is closest to the traditional process of visual expression—applying pigment to paper through physical interaction with the medium—and is thus the most natural of means. On the other hand, there is the decidedly non-physical mean of expression called computation, where a computer program, defined by a programmer/artist, explicitly instructs the canvas on where and how to apply virtual pigments to itself. The artist makes no physical contact with the medium, aside from the process of inscribing the program instructions onto the computer.

The process for each book has been a year's worth of idea development on paper, and then a week of creating the work on the computer as a program. Technically, the work itself is not difficult to create; the essence, not the technology, are Maeda's sole message.

PRINT
ON
SCREEN

