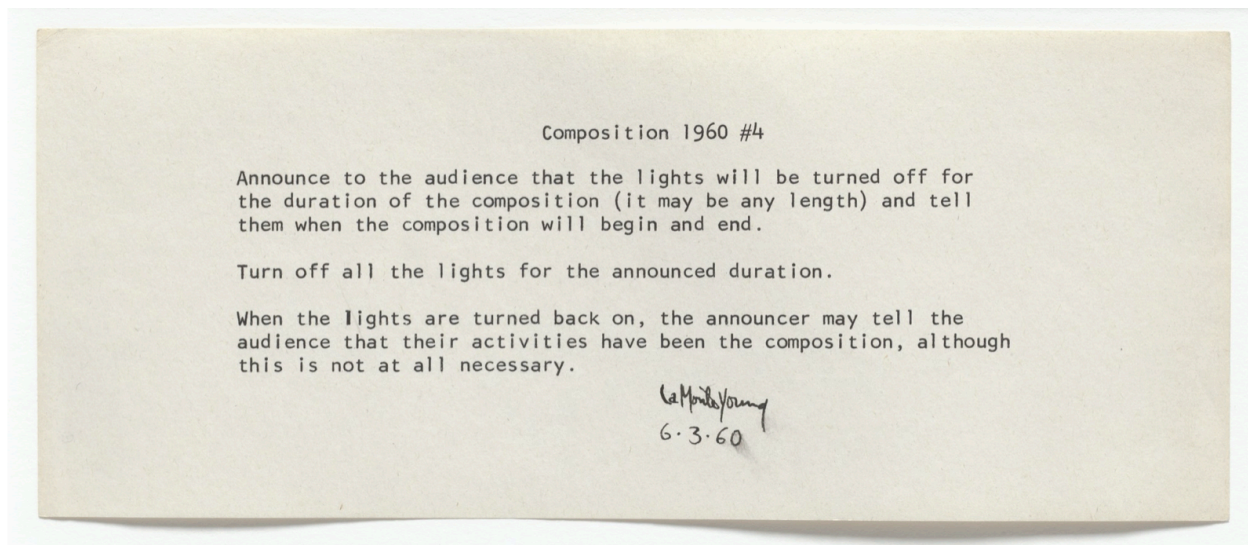Devon Carlson
Artists Lab IV
July 20 2020
Task 5

Algorithms in Art

In looking at the artworks shown in this presentation, a number of the artworks seemed quite easy to produce. Two of them in particular stuck out to me, the first of which being La Monte Young's 1960 compositions. Each of his writings stuck out to me as absurdist ramblings, the kind of ideas that a group of stoned college kids would come up with while joking around with each other, proposing more and more bizarre scenarios.

Composition 1960 #4

Announce to the audience that the lights will be turned off for the duration of the composition (it may be any length) and tell them when the composition will begin and end.

Turn off all the lights for the announced duration.

When the lights are turned back on, the announcer may tell the audience that their activities have been the composition, although this is not at all necessary.

La Monte Young
6.3.60

Perhaps I should keep In mind that these "composition ideas" were documented 60 yeas ago. Today I see them as silly and nonsensical, but maybe these were considered innovative as would-be performance art in the time of their creation. Young's writings are a reminder to me that art can have a very subjective definition.

My undisputed favorite work from this presentation was Yanick Fournier's 2002 masterpiece that is Interface. This work was undoubtedly incredibly easy to produce,

yet it brings me so much joy. One of my favorite genres of prank are those conducted in public, where passersby are the unknowing victim of harmless but funny pranks. Yanick Fournier's work reminds me of this, where he stood centered on a busy sidewalk in the way of foot pedestrians with his arms fully extended, creating an awkward barrier for those unsuspecting people trying to pass by him. It's so simple and so absurd, but it's in the angle that the video is shot where the algorithm reveals itself. Yanick stands in the sidewalk like a large boulder in a busy river, and all of the people are forced to flow around him in a way that shows the natural flow of human traffic. Some collide with him, others take their time to move around him. By acting as a human traffic cone Yanick manages to force all others in his proximity to adapt to his presence, in a way that is very funny to watch.


In terms of artworks in this presentation that felt too easy, Herman De Vries's 1974 Random Color Dot Fields strikes me as incredibly simple and rather lazy. With that

being said I don't want to be taken as dismissive. 1994 was a different time, and perhaps this was one of the first works that aimed to capture randomness shown in a visual form.

HERMAN DE VRIES, random color dot fields, 1974
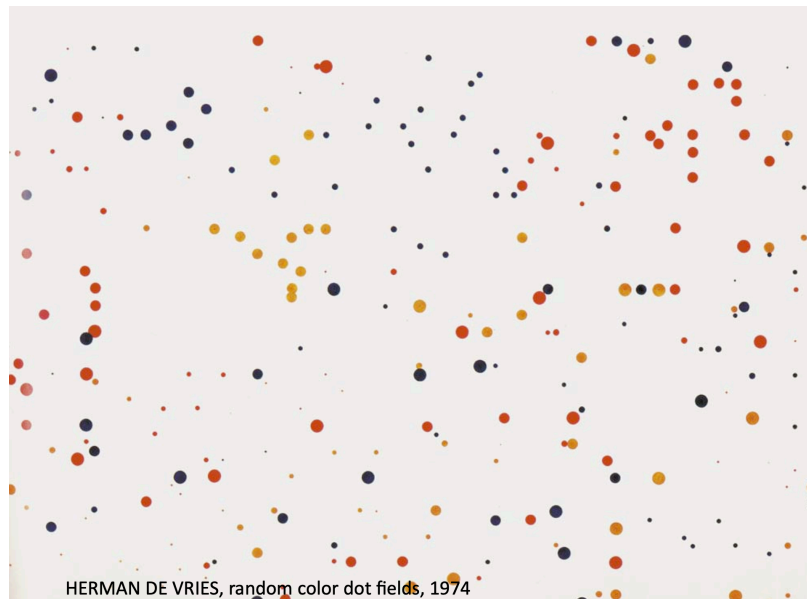
This is the work that I have recreated. Rather than using only three colors, I used a random color generator to produce 9 unique colors that I would have never possibly wanted to combine. I then recreated De Vries's Random Color Dot Fields in my own composition with my own randomly generated colors. The resulting image is rather strange, but I find that it's generally well balanced, despite its arbitrary randomness.
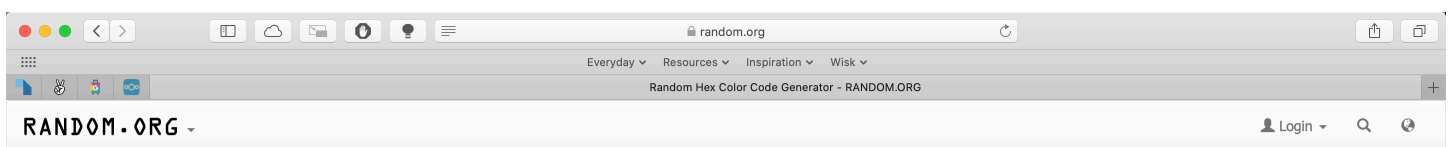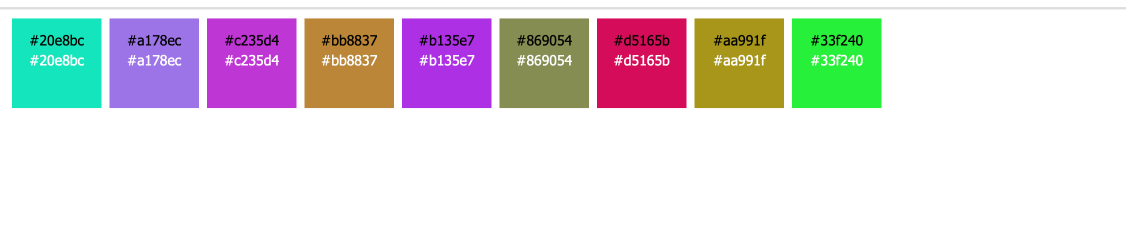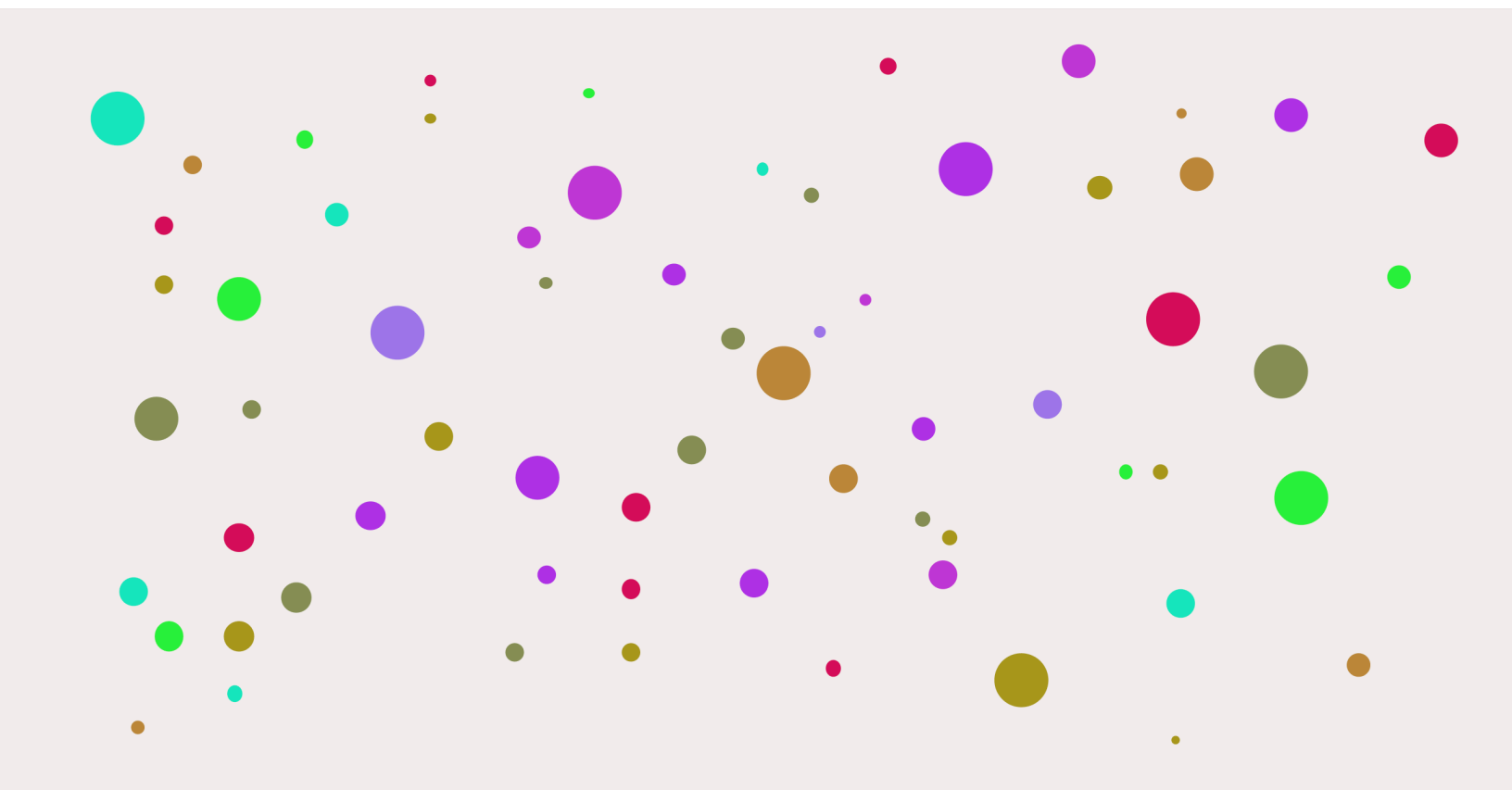
Even More Random Color Dot Fields - Devon Carlson, 2020