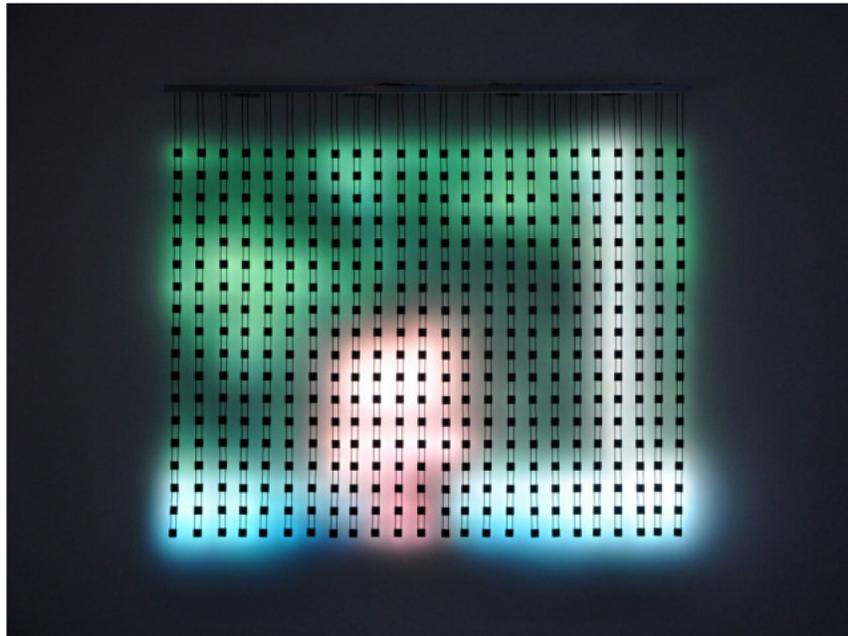


## 'Luminous Flux' exhibit features computer-driven art

By Jackie Jadrmak

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"Home Movies, Pause," 2014, by Jim Campbell is made of LEDs, metal, wire and custom electronics. It measures 66 by 76 by 3 inches. (Courtesy of Bryce Wolkowitz)

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Not many artworks take your pulse and incorporate your fingerprint into its abstract imagery.

Then again, not many art exhibits showcase works from a single collection of private collectors.

Both can be found at Art House at 231 Delgado St., Santa Fe, just off Canyon Road, where the current exhibition "Luminous Flux" features contemporary pieces involving computer, digital, electroluminescent and related forms from the more than 500 works of art collected by Carl and Marilyn Thoma and presented through their foundation.

And one of those works, by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, entitled "Pulse Index," does indeed scan the fingerprints of viewers and record their heartbeats, offering an individual's numeric and graphic pulse rate. That reading is temporary; the spiral image of the fingerprint stays until 509 more are added.

Talk about participatory art.

Of course, one of the downsides of computer-driven art is that a program can develop a glitch and shut down.

But Kathleen Richards, registrar of Art House, also demonstrated the upside — she could call for help to the artist's technician in Montreal, who was able to fix the problem remotely.

"You can troubleshoot a piece from anywhere in the world," she said.

While the art is new, its Santa Fe home is newer. Art House opened in September with this inaugural exhibit.

The Thomases split their time between Santa Fe and Chicago, where Carl Thoma formed a venture capital firm, according to Mira Burack, the foundation's associate director. The couple, both from

### If you go

**WHAT:** "Luminous Flux"

**WHEN:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; other days by appointment through March 21

**WHERE:** Art House, 231 Delgado St., Santa Fe

**HOW MUCH:** Free. Call 505-995-0231

Oklahoma, attended Stanford University's business school and probably started collecting art not long after graduation, she said.

The open-mindedness of the collectors can be inferred from one of the works on display: Federico Solmi's "Douche Bag City" – a critique of capitalism – includes 15 screens, each surrounded by a black laser-cut frame with Gothic or Baroque undertones, that use video game imagery to follow Dick Richman, "a Wall Street capitalist with greed and anger issues."

The organization's conference room has a coffee table with a digital video surface, Anne Morgan Spalter's "Topio," which uses Chicago's buildings, beaches and lake to create a morphing kaleidoscope.

Richards said one viewer found it reminiscent of a black hole absorbing an old universe and then bursting forth with a new one as the kaleidoscopic image disappears into the center and then spreads out anew.

Many of the works, the women said, operate from computer programs that constantly change the images, so that a particular artistic design you see one moment may never exist again. So the color combinations that border squares within squares in Leo Villareal's "Double Scramble," for instance, may not appear more than once.

While the exhibit's title, "Luminous Flux," refers to the light energy perceived by the human eye, it also could incorporate the shift of color and brilliance from some of the continually morphing works. Or the light that is not visible to the eye, Burack added.

Some pieces are static, while others have a repeating image, such as Peter Sarkisian's "Ink Blot," which all writers no doubt can identify with. On a table holding a spill from an ink bottle on one end and a notepad on the other, a projection traces the path of a crawling, writhing man struggling to make his way from the ink to the paper.

The four rooms of the exhibit each have a theme, Burack said. The first is about light and color, and different ways of presenting them, from paint to computer algorithms.

The second room, the one with the man crawling from the spilled ink, focuses on anxiety created by technology in this digital age. It also includes Sarah Frost's "Buy 5 yr," a mosaic of keys from discarded computer keyboards.

From there you move on to different "virtual bodies," featuring Solmi's violent animation in contrast to Jim Campbell's gentle presentation of softly blurred home movies.

The final room, "The Mechanical Hand," includes works from some of the grandfathers of computer art, such as Manfred Mohr, some of whose images use computer algorithms to create small designs inked up and down a white page with a mechanical hand.

"The program created its own individual designs," Richards said, adding that they are like snowflakes in their individual uniqueness.

While this exhibit presents some of the more contemporary art, the Thoma collection includes other types of art, mainly Spanish Colonial, Japanese bamboo baskets and New Mexico modernism, Burack said. Future exhibits may combine examples from different categories, she added.



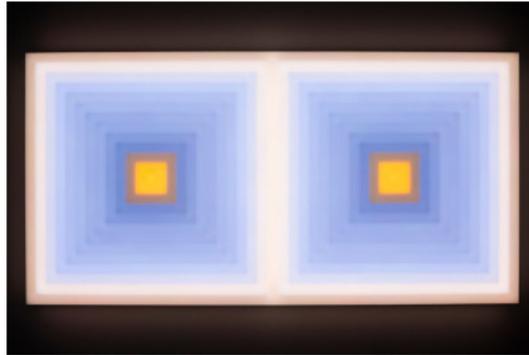
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's "Pulse Index," 2010, involves a plasma screen computer, digital microscope, industrial camera enclosure and custom software. (Photo by Antimodular Research)



"Douche Bag City," 2009-10, by Federico Solmi consists of 15 LCD screens and video. (Photo by Kim Richardson)

Art House probably will have two different exhibits a year – this one is slated to run through March 21. The Thoma Foundation also shows works at the Orange Door in Chicago, she said.

Burack is putting together programs for students that involve more than just walking through the galleries, but involve in-depth discussion and writing, she said. She already has done a session with students at the Santa Fe University of Art and Design and is planning one for the New Mexico School for the Arts. Adult programming eventually may be developed, she added.



"Double Scramble," 2013, by Leo Villareal is fashioned from light-emitting diodes, computer, custom software, circuitry and Plexiglas. (Photo by James Ewing)