Code+Art Student Visualization Contest

▲ *Clockwise from left:* Winner Anthony Smith stands in front of his Fractal Forest visualization; members of the second place team sit in front of their music visualizer display; a student interacts with a generative art piece.

Event:
Code+Art Student Visualization Contest

Location:
Raleigh, NC

Industry/Market:
Higher education

Summary:
Sponsored by Christie, the inaugural Code+Art Student Visualization Contest held at the North Carolina State University challenged students to create generative art. The winners then had their pieces displayed on the Art Wall, a 20 ft. wide display wall made up of Christie MicroTiles.

Christie sponsors Code+Art student contest

Throughout the modern, open-concept design of North Carolina State University's (NCSU) James B. Hunt Jr. Library are a total of 492 Christie® MicroTiles® integrated over five unique research labs and display walls. These labs and walls offer a rich and colorful display platform to inform and engage library patrons with an emphasis on being used as research and learning tools for the various faculty departments. "What's really amazing about this building is that they're putting all of this pixel space in the hands of the students," comments Scott Frey, a consultant with The Sextant Group who worked on the library, while adding: "They're allowing them to develop the content that is going to be displayed and they went after the highest resolution equipment on the market and they're not hiding it from the students. It's not just a showcase place for the manufacturers – it's a showplace for the students."

Part of showcasing the talents of NCSU's student population was the inaugural Code+Art Student Visualization Contest. Sponsored by Christie through a donation to the Friends of the Library, NC State University Foundation, the Code+Art contest challenged students from various departments to create large-scale data-driven generative art to be displayed on the 20 ft. wide Art Wall located in the library's main hall.

Described as "computer generated artwork that is created algorithmically and changes over time," generative art involves the writing of computer code based on algorithms to automatically generate visual representations of information or data. The large-scale Christie MicroTiles display wall proved to be the perfect platform to showcase the student's pieces. "The display walls were installed to create a dialogue with library patrons about the world around them," says Mike Nutt, Director of Visualization Services and creator of the Code+Art program. "Code+Art re-envisions the role that data has in a university setting, turning data into part of our library's aesthetics fabric."

Capturing first prize was senior computer science student Anthony Smith for his Fractal Forest visualization. Fractal Forest shows a planet that grows various types of trees in conjunction with the people entering the library. It also features a sun and moon simulation while incorporating time and weather data. As people interact with the visualization, it progresses and changes.

Earning second place was a team made-up of students from NC State's campus radio station. Their artwork was a music visualizer that generates a visual representation of the radio station's music stream. The team members include Cameren Dolecheck, Harrison Wideman, Neal Grantham, Dylan Stein and Colin Keesee.

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