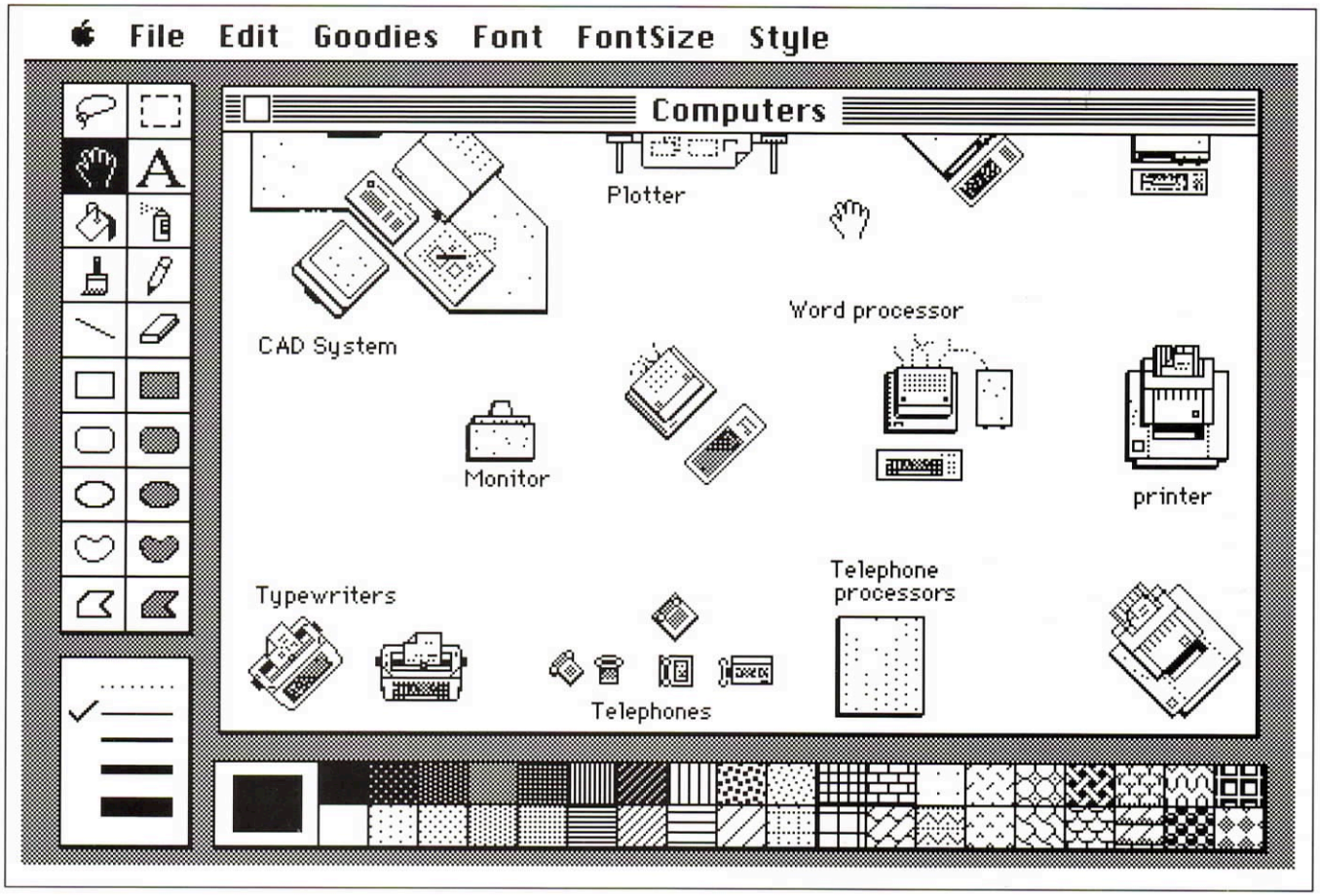
imagine

Apple Computer, Inc.
Imaging Sciences Offsite
March 28, 1988
Newport Beach, California



Commissioned work by Shelly Lake (see page 13).
Created on a Mac SE with MacPaint.
Printed on a 12'x8' canvas.

Introduction

Lisa Kleissner from Apple called a couple of weeks ago and asked about *Verbum* and our connection with Macintosh artists. She happened to be coming to La Mesa, of all places, the next day, so we got together and talked.

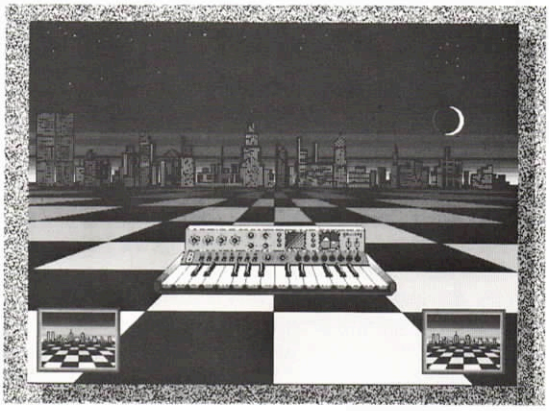
The ISO sounded like a fun – and significant event. Yes, I would be interested in producing the "Imagine Evening" art show she had planned for March 28. Never mind the fact that this month had already grown a tad dense with a new issue of *Verbum* in production, and a book deadline fast approaching. This was an opportunity for both the pc art community and for Apple. It could be a symbolic meeting of Apple's programming artists with the visual artists who have taken the Mac and its world of programs and peripherals to creative heights. How could I resist? I accepted Lisa's invitation, we finished our meeting and I started making calls.

So welcome to the show. The purpose of the Imagine exhibit is to allow Apple's engineers and others attending the ISO to see a wide range of creative works developed with Macintosh, and to interface with several talented digital artists. We hope everyone enjoys themselves and takes away some insights into the world of personal computer art – from the artist's point of view.

– Michael Gosney 3/19/88

Stuart Sharpe

Stuart Sharpe is a video artist/producer based in New York City. He is also an electronic music composer, and has a background in photography and illustration. He has produced animations for NBC Teletext and AT&T Information Systems. His original music videos have been broadcast on USA Cable Network's "Night Flight," and shown at the SIGGRAPH Film and Video Show. Stuart has been producing innovative animations with MacroMind's VideoWorks since the original program was available for the Mac 512. His VW work includes interactive software training, animations and and marketing demos for MacroMind, Ashton-Tate, Microsoft, Letraset, Apple, Aldus, BellSouth International, and Personics. He also composes original music for his videos using Opcode's MIDI Sequencer.



Frame from a VideoWorks II demo, with original music.

I do what I do because it's 1988 and there are these amazing boxes that let me do things I never thought of doing. For me, it's always been a collaboration with the technology. The limitations of the process help define and refine the content. A pencil and paper leave too much unsaid, while a camera, a drum machine, or animation software helps things along quite a bit.

The music I produce seems to conjure up moving pictures while the animations demand sound, so I try to put them together.

On Apple: A standard key layout on all keyboards would be a big help. In at least some of the marketing propaganda, use examples of *exciting* Mac art, animation, music. Put higher quality sound hardware in the next generation, and make the sound as accessible through software as the color is now (16 million MIDI sound patches in a desk accessory !?!).

Favorite Programs: *VideoWorks II,* because it has the power to put together sound and animation for business and entertainment. Lets me bring in graphics from almost any Mac application through the Scrapbook. Sampled sound is brought in with MacRecorder or MacNifty sound digitizers. I also use VW II to create still frames for slides, making use of the 24 simultaneous animation cells as still graphic objects. *Pro 3D,* incredible ease of use with awesome power. Lets me take bitmap snapshots of 3D objects in different positions for animations. *Image Studio,* for the way it takes ugly MacVision scans and makes them look like black and white gray scale photographs. *Pixel Paint,* power and versatility in a simple package. *Opcode Sequencer,* though it's not ideal (no visual editor), it's taught me a lot about music, and helps me produce it quickly. *MacPaint,* it does what it's supposed to do.

Prior Work: I was air-brushing multi-colored hearts on T-shirts and playing music. A musician friend taught me the AT&T VideoText machine and gave me my first commercial slide work.

Success: Financially, my work with this technology has paid off pretty well. Creatively, it's been amazing.

Markets: Graphic and corporate design markets are strong through word of mouth. Better, more illustrative advertising could help even more. Music is very strong.

Most Gratifying Work: The first animation on a Mac 512 with Easy 3D and VideoWorks. Because I didn't know what I was doing and it came out better than I could have imagined.

Final Note for Apple: NTSC, along with and as good as RGB, needs to be standard because there are millions and millions of TVs and VCRs!

Shelly Lake

Shelly Lake attended the Rhode Island School of Design and MIT. Since 1980, her computer art has been exhibited in over 20 shows in New York, California, Japan, France, Canada, Germany and Denmark. Based in Los Angeles, she is one of the pioneers in computer animation for films and has played a significant role in advancing the gallery treatment of computer generated art. She bought her first computer, a Mac SE, five months ago.

America has an inferiority complex. Once the technological world leader, we are quickly losing our foothold in the global marketplace. As an artist and businesswoman who works with technology, I encounter many computer naive people. I have had countless conversations with those on the defensive about their aversion to technology's latest achievement, the computer. Although everyone recognizes the immense importance of the computer, we are terribly frightened of it's power, and more terrified by our lack of understanding.

We are inclined to look upon the computer as an instrument of war, unaware of its profound and awesome potential as a creative partner. Many of us see the computer as a model of perfection, and we fear the day when computers will attain independence and personal identity. But for computer scientists and psychologists, artificial intelligence is of the utmost importance as we move into the next decade.

There is no word in the English language to describe the synthetic without being plagued by associations of the counterfeit, pretentious, ingenuine, imitation, unnatural, contrived, superficial, unreal, fake, etc. Our dictionary lacks a way to describe an artificial life without carrying the baggage of negative associations.

Technology has always concerned itself with material objects of civilization. The computer promises to cross over into an intangible, spiritual realm, redefining the meaning of technology itself. By replacing our fears with love, we may better understand the computer, hence better understand ourselves.