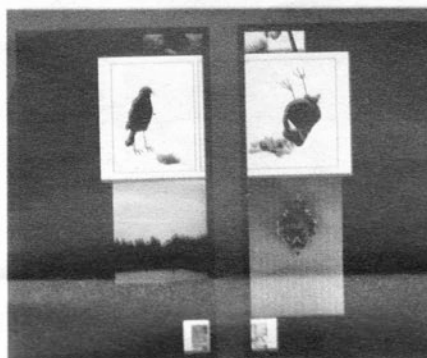
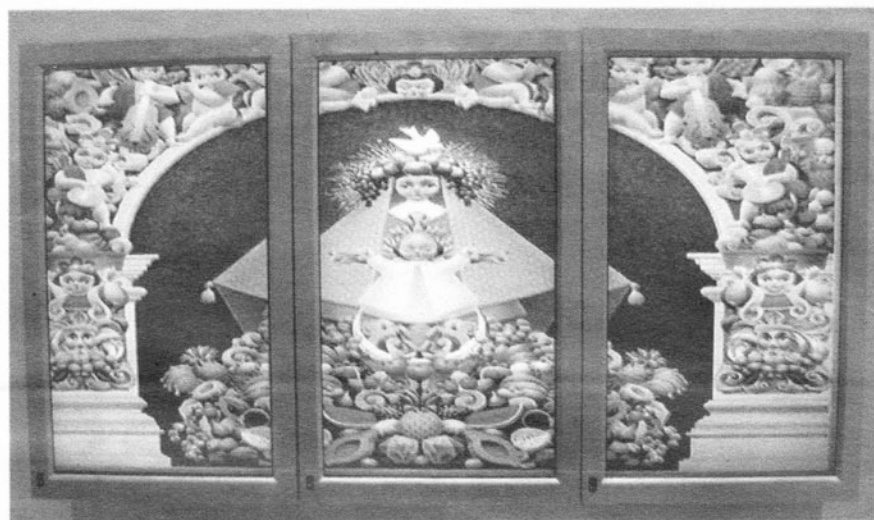


IDENTIFYING *hedges*

Siebre Versteeg @ Hallwalls

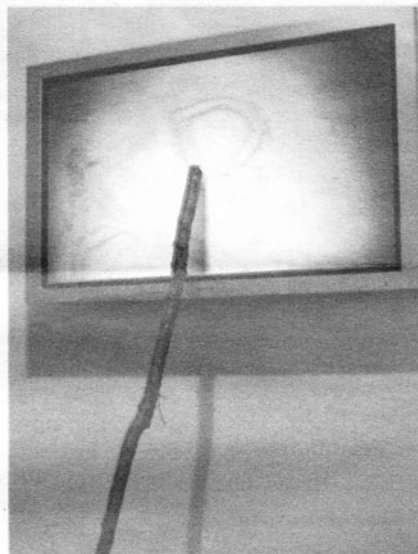


Cultural attitudes toward photography at the end of the 19th century generally regarded that invention as a child of technology rather than the epitome of realism.

One hundred years later, the child is digital and disorderly.

In Siebre Versteeg's installation of 11 computer-generated artworks at Hallwalls, viewers witness, often in real time, the hyper-reality of images in a data-intensive universe. Versteeg re-programs existing software, writing his own code to manipulate words and images parsed arbitrarily in random patterns of uncertainty. He presents works devoted to the singular event contingent on the instantaneous transmission of images from selected search engine sites while exploiting the viewer's willing suspension of disbelief to explore the limits of the material universe. In Versteeg's work the viewer confronts the "proliferating labyrinth" of the World Wide Web.

Rather than throw everything up on a Web site, Versteeg prefers the gallery environment, where his pictorial syntax works within the mediating conditions of the gallery's confines—the frame, the light, the patronage mentality of the viewer in the space. Querying the met-



rics of image retrieval, Versteeg is able to produce a comprehensive body of work. He gravitates to spectacle—from the *Nederlandish* triptych framed in gold, to a bar-graph timeline examining the explosion of data over the last hundred years, to a contemporary version of the amusing parlor trick where a long branch leaning against a monitor appears to incise letters written on the screen.

Behind these thoughtful works, of course, are hours of speculative tweaking of code that goes on unseen. Siebre Versteeg calls himself a "programist" fascinated by the "architecture of code." His artwork promises an active and potentially poetic role for digital media. As he said in an interview in 2007, "Inside the frame, anything can happen."

Versteeg's work is on display through Saturday, July 11.

—j. tim raymond