From Painting to Coding: The Art of Harold Cohen

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Harold Cohen's Exhibitions until 1968
Source: http://www.aaronshome.com/

One-Person Exhibitions
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. 1950.
Gimpel Fils Gallery, London. 1954.
Gimpel Fils Gallery, London. 1956.
Art Gallery, University of Nottingham. 1956.
Gimpel Fils Gallery, London. 1958.
Art Gallery, University of Nottingham. 1959.
Alan Stone Gallery, New York. 1961.
Robert Fraser Gallery, London. 1962.
Alan Stone Gallery, New York. 1963.
Robert Fraser Gallery, London. 1963.
Whitechapel Gallery, London. (Retrospective) 1964.
Jerrold Morris Gallery, Toronto. 1967.
Musee d'Art Contemporain, Montreal. 1967.
The Art Gallery, Vancouver. 1967.
Art Studio Gallery, Aarhus, Denmark. 1968.
Robert Fraser Gallery, London. 1968.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London:
Tapestries and textiles designed by Harold Cohen:
with tour of British Museums. 1968.
Museum of Modern Art, Oxford. 1968.
Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol. 1968.
Curwen Gallery, London. 1968.

Small Group and Two-People Exhibitions
"Four Englishmen", Milan. 1966.
"Two Decorative Works by Henri Matisse and Harold Cohen" Tate Gallery, London. 1966.
"33rd Venice Biennale" 1966.
"Four Artists from Southern California", Reese Paley Gallery, San Francisco. 1968.
"Prints by Harold Cohen and Bernard Cohen", Marlborough Gallery, London. 1972.

"TSUKUBA-EXPO 85" US Pavilion, World Fair: represented the US with "AARON," as one of four exhibits on Expert Systems. 1985.

Group Exhibitions
"Abstract Impressionism", London and tour. 1960.
"Situations", London. 1960.
"New London Situations", London. 1961.
"Deuxieme Biennale de Paris", Paris and tour. 1961.
"Carnegie International", Pittsburgh. 1961.
"British Art Today", San Francisco, Dallas and Santa Barbara. 1961.
"Tokyo Biennale", Tokyo. 1963.
"British Painting", Australia and Japan tour. 1963-64.
"British Painting in the Sixties", London. 1963.
"Milan Triennale", Milan. 1963.
"Dunne International", London and Canada tour. 1963-64.
"Premio de Lissone", Milan. 1963.
"Profile III - Englische Kunst", Bochum. 1964.
"Documenta III", Kassel. 1964.
"Britische Malerie der Gegenwart", Dusseldort. 1964.
"A Decade of Painting and Sculpture",Tate Gallery, London. 1964.
"IVth Biennale des Jeunes", Paris. 1965.
"London, the New Scene", Minneapolis, Washington,Boston, Seattle, Vancouver. 1965.
"British Painting Today", Hamburg. 1966.
"English Graphic Art", Cologne. 1966.
"Aspects of British Art", Australia and NewZealand. 1966.
"Carnegie International", Pittsburgh. 1967.
"Young British Painters", Brussels. 1967.
"The Stuyvesant Foundation Collection", Tate Gallery, London. 1967.
"Northern Ireland International", Belfast. 1968.

In a Harold Cohen painting there will be fragmentary linear movements and various areas of textured or flat colour where the tensions arise from the way they grow together – a dappled background intuitively suggesting the movement of line, line intuitively suggesting enclosed or partly-enclosed shapes and colour-areas – so that the results are both seemingly casual and organically close-knit: images, references, contradictions, and possibilities are implicit at every stage – the inside of a line, for example, defining a shape; the outside of it apparently suggesting a spatial boundary; and the way it abruptly comes to an end leaving both interpretations open.

(Thompson, 'Venice Biennale: the British five',

Studio International, 1966)

Programming gave me a tremendous degree of enthusiasm. It was almost a psychedelic experience. When I encountered my first computer in California it suddenly occurred to me that it was an ideal 'entity' to carry out a set of rules. So, I began investigating the relationship between the rules you make and prescribe and the forms that arise from them. It was a very exciting time to be around. A small community was beginning to awaken to this extraordinary device that could do things.

(Harold Cohen in an interview with Menezes and Poltronieri, 2015)
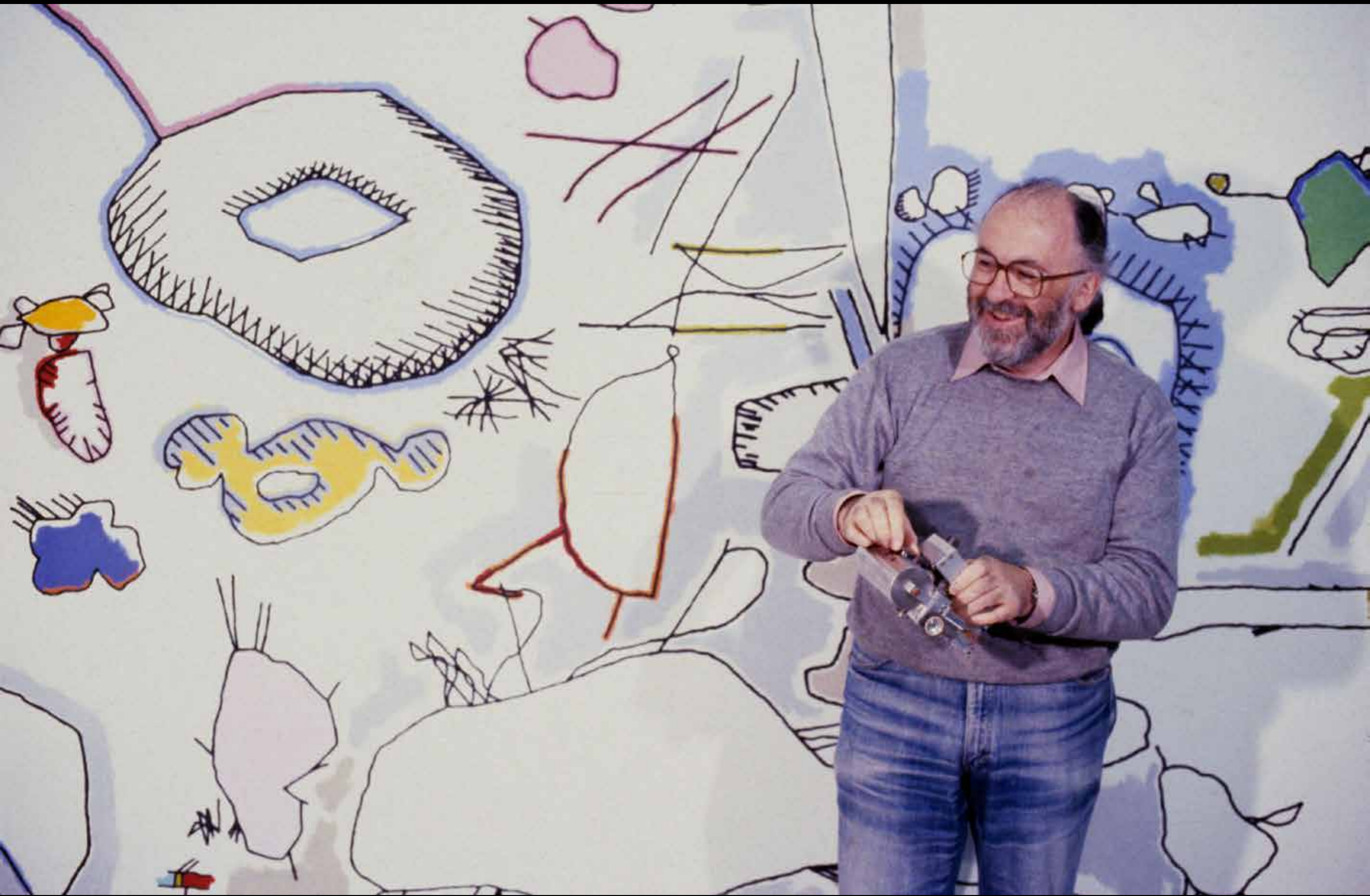
My work at that time was neither abstract in a geometric sense nor was it figurative. It sort of hovered in a kind of space of evocation in which elements were present in a way that enabled the viewer to build meanings, compiling them into a single image. The question that lingered was: what was the minimum configuration of a set of marks that functions as a single image which appeals to the human vision? Therefore, the program must have features that are very similar to the human cognitive system. So, I began teaching the program some of the issues related to this topic: the difference between a closed and open form, between the inside and the outside, among others.

(Harold Cohen in an interview with Menezes and Poltronieri, 2015)

It would be nice if AARON could tell me which of them [the images] it thinks I should print, but it can't. It would be nice if it could figure out the implications of what it does so well and so reliably, and move on to new definitions, new art. But it can't. Do those things indicate that AARON has reached an absolute limit on what computers can do? I doubt it. They are things on my can't-do-that list, and I'm aware I may never find a way of getting them off. But how can I know what insights tomorrow may bring?

(Harold Cohen in António Prates Arte Contemporânea, 2007, p.7)