

## Roman Verostko, b. 1929

Roman Verostko has had a long, distinguished, multifaceted career. For 16 years, beginning in 1952, he lived as a Benedictine monk. Toward the end of this monastic period, he was sent to New York to develop himself as an artist, with the goal of bringing this experience and training back to the abbey. While in New York, he received an MFA from Pratt and then took graduate courses in Art History at both Columbia and New York University. Eventually struggling with his beliefs in revelation and the dogmas of the church, he left the monastic life in 1968 and took a faculty position at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where he remained throughout his academic career. Verostko spent the first 30 years of his artistic life painting. This early work dealt with the search for an internal dynamic force in a work of art. He wrote the following about his process:

***Through this process, in a kind of spiritual quest, one has to empty the self of "thinking", be entirely present to the moment, and strive to be one with one's world. To be one with the brush, the crayon, the paper, the universe - in a free-flowing gesture was indeed the goal. Being most "free" was also being most joined.***

In 1970, he received a Bush fellowship grant, which provided him the opportunity to work with Gyorgy Kepes at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT. At the time, Verostko's interest in computer technology related more to how artists could humanize the emerging medium than how it could be applied directly to the creative practice: it would be 14 years (1984) before Verostko began utilizing computer code within his own creative practice. Eventually, code would become his primary creative medium, extending (rather than supplanting) his earlier interests in spiritual practice and painting.

Verostko was influenced by artists such as Mondrian, Kandinsky, and Malevich in his pursuit to uncover the underlying unity of nature, based on an integration of opposing forces within the image. He developed a software/hardware system he called "Hodos". – Hodos generates both screen-based and physical images created with brushes mounted on a pen plotter's drawing arm. Verostko's algorithms control the range of expression of the system, allowing *for* his personal style and interest in opposing forces to emerge. In 1995, Verostko and a group of artists including Jean-Pierre Hebert and Ken Musgrave formed an informal group they named "the Agorists," for those artists who use their own algorithms for creating art objects. Verostko has received numerous awards and recognition for his work including the Golden Plotter (first prize, 1994), Gladbeck (Germany), and Prix Ars Electronica (honorary mention, 1993). Verostko maintains an excellent web site about his work and life at < <http://www.verostko.com> >.

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