



Donald R. and Joan F. Beall
Center for Art + Technology
University of California, Irvine

University of California, Irvine
Claire Trevor School of the Arts
712 Arts Plaza, Irvine, CA 92697
beallcenter.uci.edu
949-824-6206

Hours: Monday – Saturday, 12-6 p.m.

PRESS PREVIEW KIT

VERA MOLNÁR: VARIATIONS

Solo Exhibition

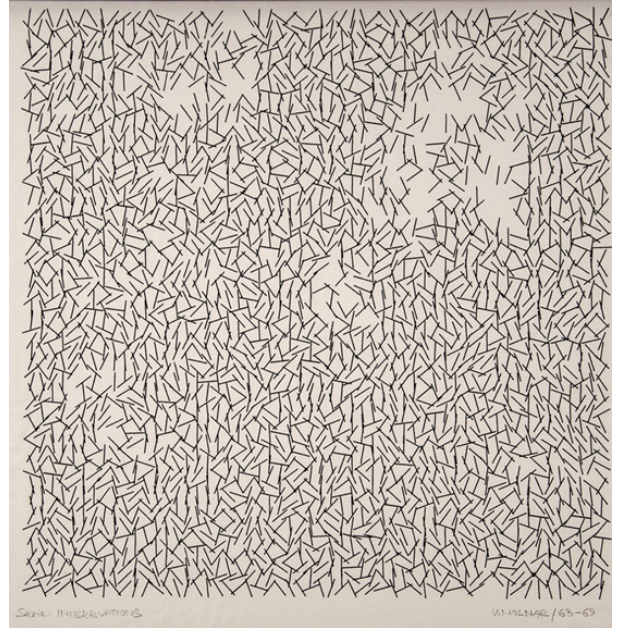
Curated by David Familian

On View: April 2 - August 27, 2022

Opening Reception: April 2, 2022, 2-5 p.m.

Media previews available by appointment

March 28-April 1, 2022



IRVINE, Calif. (March 14, 2022) – The Beall Center for Art + Technology is honored to be the first gallery in the United States to present *Variations*, a survey of Vera Molnár’s artistic practice.

The Beall Center’s mission is to research and share the history of expanded media, especially as it relates to computational art. Molnár is one of the pioneers of computational art, with her practice dating back to the mid-to-late sixties. In 1968, Molnár began to write programs to execute her computer-generated works, in which the code is the medium. Using different numbering systems to create her work, Molnár gives up control by writing a proscribed set of procedures that moves the plotter pen to create a drawing.

Molnár states: “Because of its huge capacity for combination, the computer permits systematic investigation of the field of possibilities in the visual world, helping the painter to clear his brain of mental/cultural ‘ready-mades’ and in enabling him to produce combinations of forms never seen before, either in nature or in museums, to create unimaginable images.”

As Molnár notes above, the computer allows her to create a multitude of scores and systems that yield series with ever-new permutations. These variations in her drawings and works in other media constantly produce movement—a musical, kinetic play of line and form. As one of the only computational artists who trained in art before using a computer, and among just a handful of women who innovated these new methods, Molnár continues to generate variations and surprise the audience in her artistic practice today at age 97.

Press Contacts: David Familian, Beall Center Artistic Director: dfamilia@uci.edu
Jaime DeJong, Director of Marketing and Communications: jdejong@uci.edu or (949) 824-2189



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What is unique to Molnár’s work is its ability to maintain a handmade feeling and aesthetic even though a computer program produces them. This exhibition will focus on her creation of a series of results from the same program. She varies the drawings by utilizing either a linear progression, variations on a theme, or the progression from order to chaos.

“My interest in Molnár’s work derives from my initial research into computational art and music from 1950 to 1970s, which investigated both the aesthetic aspects of the work and the computational techniques used to create this art,” said David Familian, artistic director for the Beall Center and the show’s curator. “In 2017, I created the exhibition *Drawn from a Score* at the Beall Center, which traced the use of indeterminacy in the works of John Cage, in computational drawings done in the late 1960s to early 1970s, and in the work of contemporary artists.” This exhibition will include over 80 works by Vera Molnár the largest one person show of her work in the United States.

Vera Molnár: Variations will be on view in the Beall Center for Art + Technology on the UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts campus from April 2 through August 27, 2022. There will be a public opening reception on Saturday, April 2, 2-5 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public. For visitor protocols related to COVID-19 and up-to-date information, please visit the UCI Forward website at uci.edu/coronavirus. for additional details on the exhibition, including holiday closures, please visit the Beall Center website beallcenter.uci.edu.

The Vera Molnár exhibition was made possible with generous support from the Anne and Michael Spalter Digital Art Collection, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Beall Family Foundation, and Etant donnés Contemporary Art, a program of Villa Albertine and FACE Foundation, in partnership with the French Embassy in the United States, with support from the French Ministry of Culture, Institut français, Ford Foundation, Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, CHANEL, and ADAGP.

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Image: *Serie: Interruptions*, 1968, 13.5 x 12.75 inches, 1968, Courtesy of Anne and Michael Spalter Digital Art Collection.

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Biographies

Vera Molnár (born 1924) is a Hungarian media artist living and working in France. Molnár is widely considered one of the only female pioneers of computer art and generative art. Born in Hungary, she studied aesthetics and art history at the Budapest College of Fine Arts. In the 1940s and 50s, she created non-representational paintings. By 1959 she was making combinatorial images; in 1968 she would use a computer to create her first algorithmic drawings. In the 1960s she founded two groups in France concerned with the use of technology within the arts: the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel and Art et Informatique.

This year Vera Molnár will exhibit a set of computer drawings from the 1970s at the 159th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale of Art, in the general exhibition *The Milk of Dreams* which will be running from April 23 to Nov. 27, 2022, she will be the oldest artist participating in the Biennale. In 2023 she will be in a group exhibition curated by Leslie Jones called *Coded: Art at the Dawn of the Computer Age, 1960-80* at the Museum of Los Angeles, LACMA.

David Familian is the Artistic Director and Curator at the Beall Center. He began working at the Beall Center in 2005 and was appointed Artistic Director and Curator in 2009. An artist and educator, he received his BFA from California Institute of the Arts in 1979 and his MFA from UCLA in 1986. For the past thirty years, Familian has taught studio art and critical theory in art schools and universities including Otis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Santa Clara University, San Francisco Art Institute and U.C. Irvine. Familian initiated Black Box Projects at the Beall Center, which produces collaborative exhibitions in which artists work with scientists and other experts in areas such as Cognitive Robotics, Computational Genetics, and Information Science. He has curated one-person exhibitions of artists Shih Chieh Huang, Golan Levin, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Chico MacMurtrie, Jennifer and Kevin McCoy, Nam June Paik, and others. He has also curated numerous group exhibitions that explore topics such as data visualization, new forms of gaming and narratives, real-time data, interactive installations, and sound art. He currently teaches the Beall Center's Digital Arts Exhibition course at UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts.

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Fact Sheet

Vera Molnár: Variations

Exhibition Iteration Dates:

April 2 – August 27, 2022

Beall Center for Art + Technology

<https://beallcenter.uci.edu/exhibitions/vera-molnar-variations>

Events:

Media Previews: By appointment Monday, March 28 through Friday, April 1, 2022

Open to all media affiliates, RSVP and appointment requests to jdejong@uci.edu

Launch Reception: Saturday, April 2, 2022, 2-5 p.m.

Free admission

Additional events to be announced online. To receive project-specific updates and invitations, join the project list at <http://beallcenter.uci.edu/exhibitions>

Description: In the mid-late 1960s Vera Molnár and a small group of other artists started to write their own computer programs to make their art. As one of the pioneers of computational drawing, Molnár had her own unique vision of how to employ the computer. There is a constancy in her work in that movement is always revealed both within an individual work and also from drawing to drawing. In reflecting on Molnár's approach Frank Popper astutely observes: "It can make the accidental or random subversive in order to create an aesthetic shock and to rupture the systematic and the symmetrical." The possibility of creating this "aesthetic shock" is one of the potentials of computer-generated work. Molnár's technique continues to surprise and generate variations that produce a musical, kinetic play of line and shape.

Gallery Hours:

Monday - Saturday: 12 p.m. – 6 p.m.; Closed: Sundays

Free admission and docent tours

Holiday Closures: May 30, June 20, July 4

Location:

712 Arts Plaza, Claire Trevor School of the Arts, UC Irvine, Irvine, CA 92697

Parking:

Student Center Parking Structure: 311 W. Peltason Drive, Irvine, CA 92697

Mesa Parking Structure: 4000 Mesa Road, Irvine, CA 92697

**all campus parking requires payment; \$2 per hour, \$13 full day, \$18 reserved, credit and debit cards accepted*

For maps, driving directions and parking information go to: <http://www.parking.uci.edu/maps/imap.cfm>

Note to editors:

Selected high-resolution images for publicity only may be downloaded from

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1o6T8iUl_hcRHezqV3UkyckI7mPZf4Evf?usp=sharing

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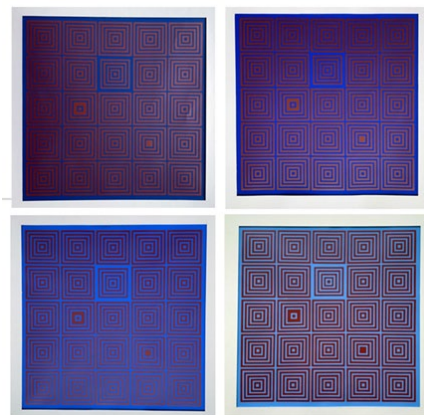
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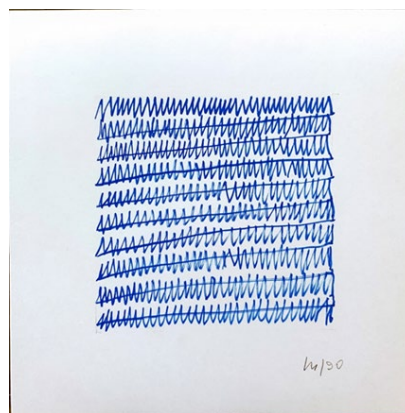
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Beall Center for Art + Technology, UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts

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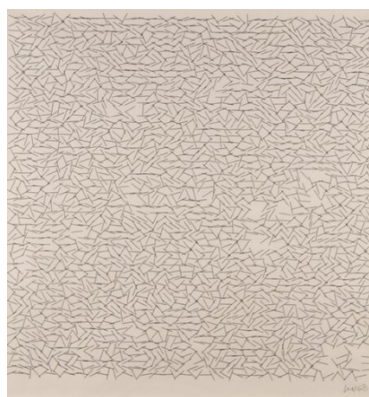
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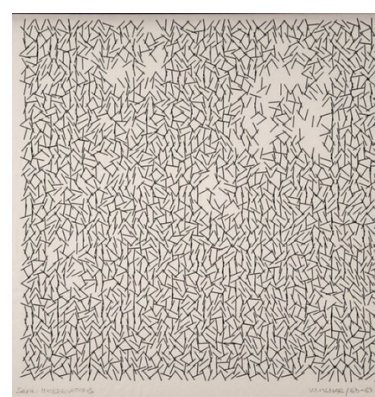
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Photo credits:

- 1) *1% de Désordre — Bleu + Rouge (1-4)*, 1979, each 15.5 x 15.5 inches. Courtesy of Anne and Michael Spalter Digital Art Collection.
- 2) *Lettre De Ma Mère*, 1990, 7.25 x 7.25 inches. Courtesy of Anne and Michael Spalter Digital Art Collection.
- 3) *Interruptions (No. 2a)*, 1968, 13.5 x 12.75 inches. Courtesy of Anne and Michael Spalter Digital Art Collection.
- 4) *Interruptions (No. 2b)*, 1968, 13.5 x 12.75 inches. Courtesy of Anne and Michael Spalter Digital Art Collection
- 5) *Serie: Interruptions*, 1968, 13.5 x 12.75 inches, 1968, Courtesy of Anne and Michael Spalter Digital Art Collection.

The images are approved only for publication in conjunction with promotion of the exhibition. Reproductions must include the full caption information, and images may not be cropped or altered in any way or superimposed with any printing.



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About the Beall Center for Art + Technology

The Beall Center is an exhibition and research center located on the campus of the University of California, Irvine. Since its opening in 2000, the Beall Center's exhibitions, research, and public programs have promoted new forms of creation and expression. For artists, the Beall Center serves as a proving ground — a place between the artist's studio and the art museum — and allows them to work with new technologies in their early stages of development. For visitors, the Beall Center serves as a window to the most imaginative and creative innovations in the visual arts occurring anywhere. The Beall Center promotes new forms of creative expression by: exhibiting art that uses different forms of science and technology to engage the senses; building innovative scholarly relationships and community collaborations between artists, scientists and technologists; encouraging research and development of art forms that can affect the future; and reintroducing artistic and creative thinking into STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) integrated learning in K-12 to Higher Education. The Beall Center's curatorial focus presents a diverse range of innovative, world-renowned artists, both national and international, who work with experimental and interactive media. Many of these artists have shown their works primarily within group exhibitions or have a limited number of solo exhibitions in the US. The Beall Center is committed to exhibiting these artists in a way that more fully expresses their individual body of work. We strive to present a direct connection between our programs and the larger trajectory of the history of video, installation art, kinetic and cybernetic sculpture. Our approach is not to exclusively emphasize the technological aspects of works, but to present experimental media projects that are equally strong aesthetically, conceptually and technically.

The Beall Center received its initial support from the Rockwell Corporation in honor of retired chairman Don Beall and his wife, Joan; the core idea being to merge their lifelong passions - business, engineering and the arts - in one place. Today, major support is generously provided by the Beall Family Foundation. For more information, please visit beallcenter.uci.edu.

About UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts

As the University of California, Irvine's creative laboratory, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts explores and presents the arts as the essence of human experience and expression, through art forms ranging from the most traditional to the radically new. The international faculty works across a wide variety of disciplines, partnering with others across the campus. National-ranked programs in art, dance, drama, and music begin with training but end in original invention. Students come to UCI to learn to be citizen-artists, to sharpen their skills and talents, and to become the molders and leaders of world culture. For more information, please visit www.arts.uci.edu.

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