

Electricity and Living Things

Kinetic art has a long history, dating at the very least to Middle Eastern automata of the 8th century, when singing birds, wind powered statues, and human-like flute players adorned both public and private spaces. Contemporary kinetic works employing computers made their debut at London's Institute of Contemporary Art exhibit "Cybernetic Serendipity", curated by Jasia Richardt in 1968. Since then, kinetic art has gradually become part of the mainstream, and as we miniaturize, virtualize, and go wireless, our kinetic art follows this trend.

This workshop will provide an introduction to the basic components of electronics used in making kinetic art: what they do, how they interact with each other, and how to use them. We will learn to build simple circuits, with a focus on switches and a variety of sensors. We'll learn to build sensors from everyday objects, and to design them into works of art and environmental installations. We'll also work with some simple micro-controllers. A special emphasis of this workshop will be the use of electronics to mimic life-like behaviors, and the use of sensors to respond to living things and to environmental changes. No prior experience with electronics is necessary.