TIL that Microsoft Solitaire was developed by a summer intern named Wes Cherry. He received no royalties for his work despite it being among the most used Windows applications of all time.

In the summer of 1988, instead of studying for his college exams, Wes Cherry programmed his own version of the game "Klondike for Macintosh" to run on his Microsoft computer[1].

Klondike is a game from a genre known as patience, where the goal is to arrange all the cards in a certain order. There are different ways of playing patience, depending on whether the 52 playing cards are face up or face down and whether the player turns over three cards or only one each turn. There are also two-player and four-player versions of patience. But when the game is played alone, and especially in the American-speaking world, it is called "solitaire".

Although he wrote the program outside of work hours, Cherry's superiors at Microsoft learned of the program and decided to make use of it. Microsoft's competitor, Apple, had made the mouse the central control element of their Macintosh in 1984, an innovation that was winning over users. The new Windows 3.0 would follow Apple's lead. And what better way, though the bosses at Microsoft, to teach people the concept of *dragging and dropping* than a game where you literally drag and drop cards to play? And so it was that every one of the 10 million Windows 3.0 floppy disks sold from 1990 onwards came with a program that simulated an 18th century card game. A program that turned out to be one of the three most-used Windows programs, coming in ahead of Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. In fact, Solitaire was so successful that in 1998 TIME magazine suggested a direct link between the game and lost productivity in companies. The prototype still allowed the user to open a fake view of the program code on command, but Microsoft executives soon had the feature removed. Despite the lack of boss keys, Solitaire became an icon of killing time. For Wes Cherry, Solitaire was a distraction, and he wrote it on his own initiative. The value creation that would benefit Microsoft more than Cherry himself took place in his free time. Ten years later, the product had come to symbolize the prevention of value creation.

Wes Cherry's contribution to cultural history remained largely hidden behind code, but in one respect it did show on the surface. Cherry had built into the game what he called a "victory screen". This was the screen that players saw when they won the game: an animation of falling cards bouncing up and down the edge of the screen until they fell off the side. The cards left a trail that varied in length

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1   see the comment of reddit-user „wesc23" from 4.01.2016
     [https://www.reddit.com/r/todayilearned/comments/3zfadv/comment/cylwpua/?utm_source=share&utm_
     medium =web2x&context=3].

depending on the size of the screen, covering the game window with streamers. The way the cards bounced off the edge of the screen did not so much break the fourth wall as reinforce it, but it did do something strange to the boundary between virtual and real space. The victory screen was Cherry's stamp on the game's look and feel. It was a symbol for the solitaire cult to rally around. And there was another one: the design of the decks.

Bitmap graphics are like mosaics and needlepoint and other pseudo-digital art forms, all of which I had practiced before going to Apple[2]

From Windows 3.0 to Windows XP (2001), the player could choose from the same twelve decks. Some of the now iconic card backs were designed by Cherry's then-girlfriend Leslie Kooy: the beach, the rainbow shell, the bat-infested castle, the robot, and the ace up the sleeve. She had this to say about the design process: » It was a funny and fun time. I was an art major who procrastinated doing my actual work by sitting in a dorm room changing the colors of pixels one at a time«[3]. The rest of the decks were likely designed by Susan Kare[4]. Kare was instrumental in designing the icons and fonts for Apple's Macintosh between 1983 and 1986. Her designs include the floppy disk ("save"), the Command icon (on the Command key), the bomb ("system error!"), as well as the fonts Geneva (used here) and Monaco and the bitmap font Cairo – all in 32x32 pixels, or 9x7 for the fonts, and black and white. Pioneering work at the time – but the visual language was not entirely new. Some of the iconography was taken from established symbols, and Kare used
mosaics and embroidery as a basis for her designs. In this way, historically grown visual vocabularies and craftsmanship that had been passed down
through generations now flowed into the newly emerging "pixel art". In 2015, MoMA exhibited Kare's designs for the Macintosh, sketched in the squares in graph paper notebooks. It goes without saying, but the digital had its origin in the analog.

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2   Susan Kare in a interview from 8.9.2000.
        see [https://web.stanford.edu/dept/SUL/sites/mac/primary/interviews/kare/trans.html].

3   see the comment of user »lesk68« from 5.01.2016, under the same post as note 1.
        [https://www.reddit.com/r/todayilearned/comments/3zfadv/comment/cym9lzk/?utm_source=share&utm_
        medium =web2x&context=3].

4   To be honest, this is assumed everywhere, but I could not find a tenable source. When asked explicitly about
        Susan Kare's part, Leslie Kooy answers: „She may have created the more traditional card backs". Even with the
        program icon, it is obvious that Kare designed it, but I am not free of doubt. What is certain is that Susan Kare is
        responsible for the card fronts.

Ceci n'est pas un pochoir.

When Lukas Matuschek of Vienna's artist-run space "SINK" asked me to write something about Paul Riedmüller's exhibition, he introduced Paul to me as a "manic painter", someone who works a lot, invests a lot of time in his painting, creates a lot. It's true, the precision and consistency of his painting is downright virtuous. On the one hand, his mastery of the tools of the trade is evident in his meticulously crafted works. But what is most remarkable is the uncompromising way in which Riedmüller interprets the model he is copying.

One would probably have to be a bit loopy to commit oneself to a subject like that, even more so for an artist to voluntarily curtail their creative license. But the limitations that Paul Riedmüller places on himself when he paints the backs of legendary playing cards or an owl graphic from a 1970s DIY manual become irrelevant or even downright liberating when the goal of painting is no longer to find an image, but looking and trying, mere painting itself – or, to put it more bluntly, when painting is freed from the (capitalist) notion of goal and efficiency The ostensible goal or problem of "how to perfectly copy a model" can thus be understood as "how to paint an identical copy". There are three aspects to emphasize here: the *how*; the *identical*, which raises the ontological question of difference and similarity between the model and the copy; and the *painting*, which could also be *sculpture, narration, dance*, and so on. This last aspect indicates an element that allows the unfolding of a self-sufficient action.

There is no contradiction in the fact that efficiency and purposefulness become relevant again at the point where technical aids shorten the working processes and the artist works to gain knowledge or expand their own abilities. For example, the production of *stencils* or the use of digital image processing programs economizes work. But at the same time it is also an independent object of the practice, not just a means to an end. One expression of this is the small black and white image with meandering contours: the white spot on a black background represents a stencil used to draw rounded lines.

Stencils make for quick and easy work, but they also represent all the shapes that *can be made* with them. Like the letters of an alphabet, they open and limit a space for creative work. They are like pixels that can take on 16 colors and 16 colors only.
But here, the stencil is just painted. Although it could be used as a stencil in one way or another even in this form, in one way or another it has become a mere reference, a mask or an empty illusion. The real thing would have had the potential to create, to be causal – for this very image, for example. The catalyst through which the template could have unfolded its potential is blocked.

Because it must remain resultless, the painted stencil can only be a consequence – an image, just as everything in the exhibition is an image. We are once again confronted with the old problem of the chicken and the egg. Which came first, the curve or the stencil? The Magritte paradigm of the relationship between names, images and representations, and the things themselves is also raised: *ceci n'est pas un pochoir.*

The boundaries between categories of being are blurred; that is, their vagueness is exposed. Also dissolved are the categories drawn between the digital and, for lack of a better term, the non-digital (image and space), when the cards and cascading cards are translated from ones and zeros to binder and pigment, wood panels and glue.

In conclusion, one could comment on the concept of "free time" and its function in capitalist society; on the meaning and/or meaningfulness of Paul's apparent rejection of the maxims of production, but on which he nevertheless depends as much as anyone else, and how this fits in with his exemplary work ethic; on the motif of sharpness and blurriness made evident through the precise copying of pixelated images; on the reasons for the popularity of some deck design and a game that Bill Gates called "too difficult" and the odds of which could not be calculated for the longest time and apparently can be since 2019, but the number remains behind a paywall, replacing one impossibility with another (in any case, the odds are likely to be between 30–50%, although an AI performed even worse than a human in 2009); on the relationship between working time and productivity and whether we could afford a four-day work week; on interpreting painting as a craft and whether it is "recapture" when painters working in the non-digital appropriate canonical motifs from the "world of the digital"; on the relationship between the front and back of a playing card and the fatality of some card games (but not Solitaire); on the newly whitewashed back wall at sink and how far the white cube still is; on the sculpture-ness of Paul's work, a subject that has been completely neglected here; and on and on; but there is neither space nor time nor strength nor money for any of that, and so GAME 0vER.

Paul Riedmüller
«Kreative Freizeit»
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