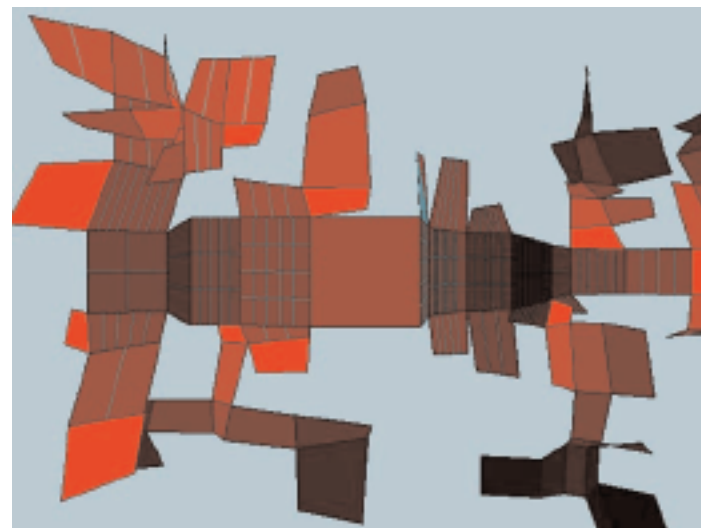


JOHN F. SIMON, JR. PRESENTING A LECTURE ON
CODING AS CREATIVE WRITING.
PHOTO BY ANDREW HETHINGTON.

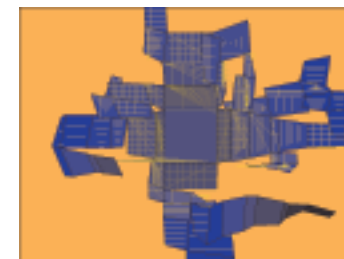
While John F. Simon, Jr.'s *Unfolding Object* looks very different from Mark Napier's *net.flag*, it also captures the traces of many viewers' interactions, thereby refuting the myth that viewing Internet art is a solitary experience. Simon describes *Unfolding Object* as "an endless book that rewrites itself and whose use dictates its content." Originally a blank square visible on a Web page, the object unfolds in response to the virtual tugs of visitors from across the globe. As new facets branch off the original shape, each is patterned with a visual graphic that reflects the state of the object at the time the facet was created.

Unfolding Object places the viewer in a space that—though virtual—is communal. The work is an object shared by the users, whose fingerprints are left on the pages they unfold. Facets that have already been unfolded darken as they become distant from the central square, but a facet that has not yet been altered rewards its discoverer with a brightly colored figure untouched by previous markings. "*Unfolding Object* presents a fresh alternative to the prevailing model of interactive artworks," according to Jon Ippolito. "No matter how 'dog-eared' Simon's pages get, his object will always leave room for fresh discoveries by individual visitors."

For his Public & Artist Interaction, Simon wanted to share his artistic concerns about the creative and expressive potential of computer languages to create pieces such as *Unfolding Object*. Known for developing his own computer-based tools, Simon presented a lecture demonstration that elaborated on his process of using computer programming as a type of creative writing. Entitled *Coding as Creative Writing: Reflections on Software as Art*, he adeptly illustrated this



UNFOLDING OBJECT, 2002. INTERACTIVE NETWORKED CODE: JAVA APPLLET WITH SERVER DATABASE AND SERVLETS, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM. 2002.16.



complex process by presenting samples of his programming code, which he views as an active extension of a written language. In Simon's case, however, the language—which he writes in a word processor and runs as computer code—translates into the beautiful patterns and movements that emerge in his work.

As the artist states, "The computer is an instrument to make discoveries with. It's a tool we can program to look at images in many different ways The writing that you do, the software that you write really does create images for you. Images that may or may not have been seen before ... that's

how I think about writing software as a tool for creative writing." Addressing a multidisciplinary audience of computer programmers, artists, art students, curators, and educators, Simon demonstrated some of the vast possibilities that programming code implies and assured the audience that there are more possibilities than anyone has time to create.

View *Unfolding Object* at www.guggenheim.org/internetart.

“The computer is an instrument to make discoveries with.”

John F. Simon, Jr.