

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: Daniel Temkin: SYS//LOOP::[branch>halt..𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅]

Dates: September 24 – November 7, 2025

Address: 45 Main Street, #723, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Higher Pictures is pleased to present its first in-person exhibition with Daniel Temkin, a new iteration of the artist's 2020 online exhibition originally mounted at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The exhibition brings together two series: *Straightened Trees* and *Dither Studies* to explore human fallibility and the irrational architectures of systems we construct to impose order.

Temkin situates digital photography within the broader history of computer art, emphasizing the machinic processes of the medium and their strange, often illogical consequences when exposed. Where Sol LeWitt posited that the conceptual artist should follow an irrational idea absolutely, Temkin shows how our own irrationality saturates even the most rigidly logical systems. His work recalls glitch practices, the systematic sketches of Anni Albers, Liz Deschenes' cameraless studies of mediation, and Joseph Weizenbaum's writings on the compulsive programmer.

In *Straightened Trees*, a series of gelatin silver prints, Temkin photographs trees with a large-format field camera and then "corrects" their natural curvature with a custom code. The resulting images render the tree as artificially plumb while surrounding structures—buildings, power lines, manufactured objects—warp and contort in response. *Straightened Trees* highlight both the normative assumptions that underlie calibration and our compulsive desire for orderliness.

Traditionally used to allow a limited palette to approximate continuous tone, dithering usually disappears beneath the image. In *Dither Studies*, Temkin brings this overlooked system to the fore: hand rendering dithers in acrylic on panel, each pixel translated into a square of color. The dense, saturated surfaces produce a psychedelic effect, transforming a process meant to be ignored into the subject itself.

During the pandemic, Temkin expanded the project with machine learning, generating dithers with unconventional pixel shapes such as triangles and hexagons. An interactive *Dither Generator*, developed by the artist to produce these patterns, is currently on view at the Museum of the Moving Image's Schlosser Media Wall through November 9.

Coinciding with the exhibition, MIT Press will release Temkin's *Forty-Four Esolangs: The Art of Esoteric Code*, the first artist's monograph dedicated to esoteric programming languages. These languages mirror the exhibition's themes, foregrounding the expressive potential of constraint and contradiction, and revealing the excess of human speech within rigid systems of logic.

Daniel Temkin (b. 1973, Boston) received his MFA from the International Center of Photography / Bard College. His work has been featured in group shows including Electric Op at Buffalo AKG Museum, Open Codes at ZKM, and Future Isms at Glassbox Gallery. His blog, *esoteric.codes*—recipient of the 2014 ArtsWriters.org grant—documents experiments in code and language. Temkin has published in *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, *Leonardo*, and *World Picture Journal*, and has presented at SXSW, SIGGRAPH, HOPE, FOSDEM, and various other art, academic, and hacker conferences. His work has been a critic's pick in *ArtNews* and *The New York Times*, and is collected by Buffalo AKG, the Thoma Foundation, the Spalter Digital Art Collection, and others.

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