

SPAM BLOCKER

Alex Dragulescu goes outside the inbox, turning junk mail into algorithmic art

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"A year ago, I was under a veritable psychological assault, receiving over 200 spam emails a day," says San Diego-based visual artist Alex Dragulescu. Despite its aggravating effects, this virtual onslaught turned out to be surprisingly constructive: It inspired Spam Architecture, a series of images generated by an algorithmic program that converts the content of junk mail into experimental art.

Each three-dimensional model begins with a cube. The program then adds polygonal shapes to the image by evaluating a given message, translating the characters of words and numbers – each assigned a unique value – into respective forms

("Structure 8" pictured here). The size, shape and density of the industrial-looking pieces are determined by the length and content of each email.

Dragulescu, who graduated from the University of California at San Diego in 2005, developed Spam Architecture as part of his Master's thesis, which uses similar programs to create imagery (he also "translated" Marx's *Communist Manifesto* and musical scores by Mozart). "My work is about the information society we live in and how our lives are controlled by computer processes," he says. "There is so much data around us that we need to visualize. I'm trying to make a metaphor for this, to turn text into sculpture." TJ