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"Sketches in Code" Exhibit Opens at the Bankhead Theater Through May 2

When is a tree more than a tree? When you view the beauty of nature through the lens of science, math and computer programming. That is the goal of Quest Science Center's new public exhibit "Sketches in Code: Randomness & Patterns in Science and Art," running through May 2, 2021 at the Bankhead Theater Gallery, located at 2400 First Street in Livermore.

In partnership with the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Council (LVPAC) "Sketches in Code" is a free exhibit offering the Tri-Valley community an opportunity to explore how the intersection of mathematics, science, computers, and art to create digital works reflecting our natural world – trees, rock formations, vistas - and more. Also on display are traditional works of art in the form of origami and paintings by local artists.

The concept for the exhibit stemmed from Quest Founder and CFO Alan Burnham's desire to follow up on their first successful collaboration with LVPAC. "Two years ago, we worked with LVPAC on the exhibit honoring the Apollo 11 lunar landing," says Burnham. "It was the most successful art installation to date and Executive Director Chris Carter and I knew we wanted to work together again."

Sketches in Code gave them that opportunity. "Through this exhibit, we are demonstrating the connection of science to our everyday lives by introducing a new way to observe nature with more depth by considering sequences, patterns and trends," says Burnham.

According to Quest's Chief Learning Officer Caleb Cheung, the idea of using generative computer programming to create works of art is nothing new. "This has been a growing field for two decades," says Cheung, who designed and led the project in collaboration with Anne Giancola from LVPAC.

The exhibit is organized around five scientific and mathematical themes used in art and computer code: patterns, randomness, fractals, sequences, and constants & ratios.

"Through these themes, we hope to help everyone see build connections between science, art, and daily life" says Cheung. "While the arts have often been described as an opposing discipline to

science, mathematics, and computer science, in many ways they are very similar and draw from the same concepts. In the end, all are creative processes that involve a journey of discovery."

Combing through hundreds of coded "sketches" available in the public domain was a gratifying and lengthy task, but thanks to team of talented volunteers who spent hours researching, they were able to identify and modify some brilliant works for the exhibit.

Patrons will observe code running on display monitors, watch videos demonstrating the rendering of artwork, and look at printed, high resolution images on display. Though many interactive and hands-on activities are temporarily sidelined until county health department guidelines for COVID-19 improve, there is still one interactive opportunity for attendees of all ages to design their own computer-generated artwork in the style of famous artists like Pablo Picasso and Diego Rivera.

Cheung says the exhibit will appeal to anyone interested in art, math and science. "There are no boundaries to creativity – even coding and folding paper are art forms." Infographic panels and QR codes at the bottom of each piece or monitor discuss the theme and lead to documents listing additional resources.

The exhibit is open to the public Fridays from 2pm – 6 pm; Saturdays and Sundays 1 pm – 5 pm through May 2, 2021. The installation has been designed to conform with county health department guidelines for COVID-19. For the safety of staff and patrons, paced entry, mask requirements, hand sanitizing stations, and six-foot minimum physical distancing are being observed.

"At Quest Science Center, we want to demystify what science is and why it's important and relevant to our daily lives," says Cheung. "Science, math and technology are for everybody and we are excited to continue developing community-based projects and exhibits that are inclusive, accessible, and celebrate the Tri-Valley as a hub of innovation."

About Quest Science Center: The mission of Quest Science Center is to connect everyone in the Tri-Valley to the value of science by offering welcoming, inclusive experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds that inspire and nurture the feeling of belonging and excitement in the exploration of science. Founded in 2018 as the Livermore Science and Society Center, the Quest Science Center is a 501©3 nonprofit (82-4865787). Volunteer, donate and find out more about Quest at www.quest-science.org.

About Livermore Valley Performing Arts Council: The Livermore Valley Performing Arts Council (LVPAC) is an independent 501©3 nonprofit organization which operates two spaces: the Bankhead Theater and Bothwell Arts Center. Its mission is to offer a broad range of arts opportunities and experiences to engage our diverse community. Learn more at www.livermorearts.org.