# Post-Teen Beat Interview with Cory Arcangel

Founding member of BEIGE, Performer, Artist, Hacker and Programmer, Cory Arcangel sits down for an interview to discuss the 2003 "summer of html" tour, recent works, exhibitions and upcoming projects.

In the last two years, Cory has scorched an 8-bit impression upon the NYC art scene with concurrent exhibitions at the 2004 Whitney Biennial and "Seeing Double" at the Guggenheim.  However, Cory's success isn't due to a traditional art education, as an electronic music composer, computer programmer and classical guitarist, Cory has reeled his skills into deconstructing his childhood obsessions to create an unpredictable practice that embodies an 80s video game aesthetic.

Cory's creative practice encompasses collaborations with the geographically dispersed band BEIGE [programming ensemble] that mixes ATARI tracks to the hacking of old Nintendo cartridges to collaborative research projects such as the "Low Level Allstars" that digs up some old 80s video graffiti.

At the Guggenheim's "Seeing Double" you can play "I Shot Andy Warhol."  A hardware intervention that uses the original Nintendo game system and light-gun, Cory switched all the graphics of the Nintendo game Hogan's Alley so that the shooting gallery is populated by the Pope, Flava Flav, Colonel Sanders and the prime target Andy Warhol.  And at the Whitney Biennial, walking into Cory's installation you'll encounter the familiar clouds of Mario Brothers playing off the original cartridge, but without the game or any other graphics, just the happy 8-bit clouds floating across the luminescent baby blue screen.

As a digital artist, the beauty of Cory's work is that he doesn't seek to try and keep pace with the latest software, instead he busts open old systems that are hard coded to give them new life...

**R:** Cory, last summer you went on the 2003 "summer of html" tour, were there any surprising fan encounters?
**C:** Yeah,...I think the best part on my end was in Boston when I was heckled. At the end of my lecture about whatever [I think that night myself and beige member Joeseph Beuckman did a lecture about the song "Higher State of Consciousness" by Josh Wink] I asked "Does anybody have any questions," and some guy in the back of the bar replied "Yeah,....why do you suck so bad?". I guess when you think about it, it really wan't even that surprising, cause we probably did suck, ...
:)
**R:** What was the low point of the tour?
**C:** There were no low points on tour, except being dirty all the time, and sleeping in strange places with questionable facilities [one place in PA had a toilet that kept on overflowing and leaking on the beds below], and maybe also the fact that if no one showed up the night before you would have no money the next day....besides that it was 100% awesome.
**R:** Before hitting it big in the art scene, you were heading the summer program for middle school kids at Harvestworks Media Center.  How do you think you may have influenced the next generation of geekcore art kids?
**C:** Ha ha,....ummmm...well hopefully I have taught the kids that computers are like clay.  Not in a stupid "you can make art with them" kinda way, but I was more trying to get the point across that everything on a computer is there to be messed with.
**R:** Are there any surprises that come with stardom?
**C:** I am not sure I am a "star", but if I am it is a surprise how little money comes with stardom.
**R:** What's your philosophy on life?
**C:** I don't think I have one.  I just get up, check my email, go to work, come home, check my email, and surf the net for like 4 hours.  On days when I don't work, increase the web surfing to about 10 hours.  How anything gets done in between that is a miracle.  I don't have time for philosophies with all the cyber-surfing I do.
**R:** As a trained classical guitarist and as an artist using electronic media, you've entered the art world as an outsider.  What sort of reactions do you have toward the mainstream fine arts world, particularly in New York City?
**C:** Hmmmm...well it still seems a bit strange to me.  The context for my work pretty much falls 100% outside of what seems to be the scope of the NYC art world.  I keep reminding myself that the NYC art world has just accepted "video" as an art form [about 30 years late], so I don't get my hopes up that I will understand it anytime soon.  So yeah,...If that all means anything, I guess I am as scared and confused of it, as it is of me.
**R:** What do you have in the works these days?
**C:** A new command line pizza-ordering program called PIZZA PARTY made with help from an awesome programmer named Michael Frumin [to be open sourced soon].  Also, a Nintendo iPOD emulator, and a new super secret project made with paperrad.org to be exhibited next year at a super secret location.  !!! And a summer group-show all based around MAc Paint.
**R:** Do you have any tours lined up for summer 2004?
**C:** We're working on it. ......
**R:** Is there anything that you'd like to tell kids trying to make it as artists?
**C:** Don't try. Get a job. J.K. [just kidding] Just make cool stuff that you and your friends will like, that's all you can ever hope for and really the most fun.