

- ① *Greenlight: Carlaw, 2022*
6-channel sound, false basement apartment, lights, custom made lock box with LED, framed drawing, carpet.
- ① *Love Letters 1, 2, 3, and 4, 2022*
Custom keyboards, Raspberry Pi, LCD screens, plywood, table legs.
- ② *Request for Comment, 2022*
Archival TCP/IP specification documents, DIN rail, industrial power supplies, LCD screens, Raspberry Pi's, ethernet router, cable, artist-written software.
- ③ *Some Great Enterprise, 2022*
Artist-written software, 'Frankenstein' (Mary Shelley, 1818), Apple ImageWriter, Raspberry Pi, custom electronics, seismic isolation mounts, plywood.
- ④ *Coming to a Convolted End, 2022*
Video, 20:49. TechCrunch Disrupt YouTube video archive.

Greenlight: Carlaw

Simon Fuh



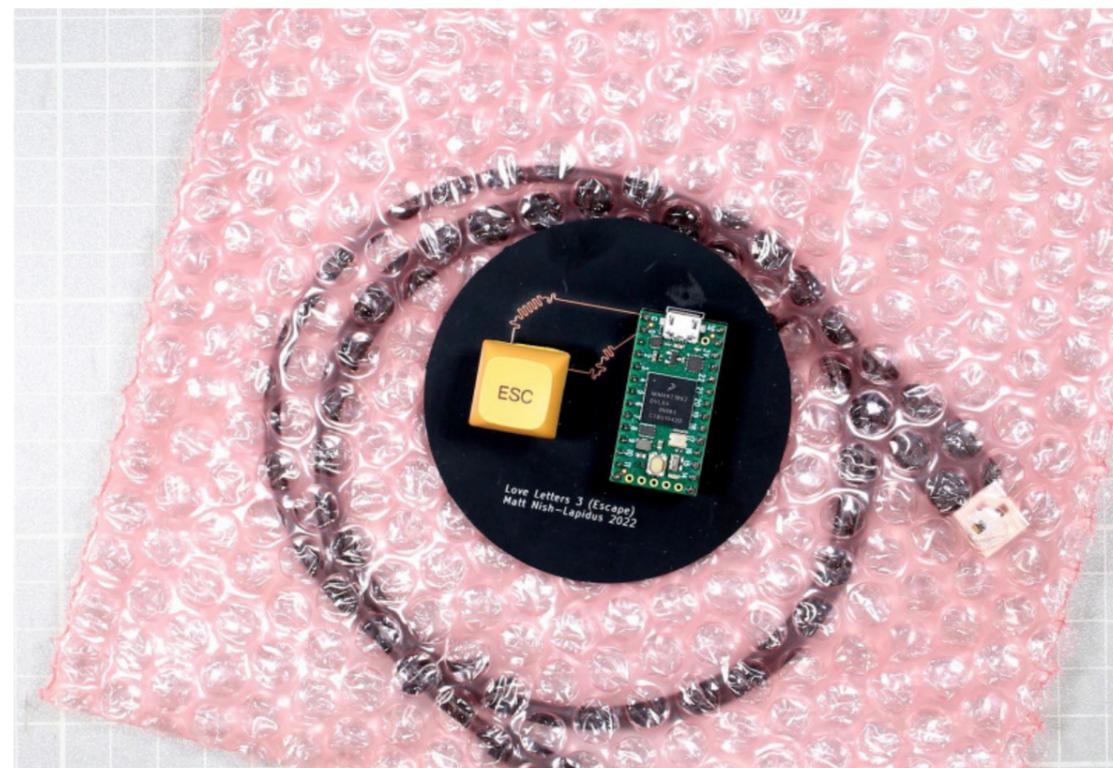
DO COMPUTERS WORRY YOU

Matt Nish-Lapidus

Collision Gallery
Toronto, ON
Nov 17 - Dec 18

I. The path up and down is one and the same.¹

Simon Fuh and Matt Nish-Lapidus are artists whose work is shaped by numerous layers of collaboration. While their respective practices diverge significantly, this exhibition encompasses partnership and participation at nearly every turn. The first convergence occurs here in the gallery, the physical space they share not only with one another but also the pedestrians frequenting this underground walkway network. Concealed below the exhibition is a collaborative studio space which Nish-Lapidus and Fuh share with three other artists; loosely demarcated nooks are strewn with reference images, pigments, and sketches. Within the gallery the din of a dot matrix printer and the scaffolding of a room anchored by an area rug gesture toward domestic and interior space, even as the sunlight from the adjacent court and the moving shadows of its patrons spill through the windows, bringing us out and letting themselves in.



Love Letters 3 (Escape), Matt Nish-Lapidus, 2022. Photo by Blair Swann / Art Metropole.

DO COMPUTERS WORRY YOU, Matt Nish-Lapidus' current body of work, in part stems from his ongoing collaboration with computers through software and programming languages.² Here, the artist intervenes in circuit boards, microprocessors, and printing machines with custom software, raw materials, and text to generate new relationships and meanings. Simon Fuh's **Greenlight: Carlaw** continues the artist's investigation of place and its contextual relationship to parties and youth culture. Here, Fuh collaborates more explicitly with a cast of characters consorting in a bright three bedroom income property in the heart of Riverdale, and more obscurely with the imagined downstairs tenant—from whose perspective the work is experienced—and the true events which the work issues from.

1 ~ Fr. 60 Hippolytus
Refutation of All Heresies
IX, 10, 4 (Heraclitus)

2 ~ The exhibition takes its name from ELIZA's DOCTOR script, an early natural language chat-bot designed to mimic a Rogerian psychotherapist. Created by Joseph Weizenbaum between 1964 and 1966.

3 ~ Aristotle, Physics IV.8,
208a8
(Anaximander)

4 ~ Deliberate convolution of Diogenes Laertius I, 24 and Aristotle, de Anima A5, 411a7 (Thales)

II. *It is possible for the destruction of one thing to be the generation of the other, the sum of things being limited.*³

Essential to Nish-Lapidus' practice and many of the works featured in **DO COMPUTERS WORRY YOU** is bricolage, or the construction of a work from a diverse range of sources and items. Take for instance "Some Great Enterprise" (2022), comprised of a dot matrix printer—its endless printing capability paired with continuous form paper, the text of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), seismic isolation mounts, and the artist's custom software intervention which activates the mountainous structure. Whether the artist has become a stand-in for Shelley herself or the novel's protagonist Victor Frankenstein is uncertain, as the structure before you is not merely a complete aggregate but instead some kind of whole beyond its parts. As it quivers and trills, a new interpretation of Shelley's text emerges and cascades, written in collaboration with Nish-Lapidus but free from his constraint. "We are unfashioned creatures, but half made up."

Greenlight: Carlaw, too, is a plurality of parts convened within the fabricated domain before you. Fuh's work references a 2021 viral video of a group of teens getting caught using a staged home in Toronto to grill burgers, drink beer, and smoke cigarettes (or, simply, to party). While inspired from this real event, the teens represented here are imagined and assembled by the artist, given names, interests and belief systems, assigned socio-economic statuses, and are burdened by crushes on one another. For AJ, Michael, Ava, Morgan, Tyler, and Alexia, this detached Carlaw home's income potential is moot. Its recently updated kitchen merely provides a surface for the solo cups and bags of chips to rest, its second floor balcony a convenient place to smoke. Snippets of their conversations leak from above, muffled and dampened by the bass of R&B pop music. Doja Cat's "Tia & Tamera" underscores conversations about the existence of God, global warming, and the Solonian constitution of 594 BCE, after which the lyric "Cheese like pizzeria, have a seat bitch, please, IKEA" generates a new meaning.

III. *And some say that a share of soul was given even to inanimate objects.*⁴

Perhaps you have been skeptical of the suggestion that computers are capable of collaboration—they are, after all, machines whose function depends on source code written by humans.⁵ Nish-Lapidus' work does not obscure nor undervalue the human component of technology—in fact his process emphasizes the potential for more meaningful relationships with computers, and also challenges the expectation that technology ought to be efficient and remunerative as "Coming to a Convolved End" pointedly and humorously captures. An amalgamation of videos from TechCrunch's annual Disrupt conference and Nish-Lapidus' custom software, "Coming to a Convolved End" is an antithesis to the other works presented in **DO COMPUTERS WORRY YOU**, an illustration of what is achieved when computers are only valued for their ability to pursue wealth and power. Through works like "Love Letters" (2022-ongoing), a functional keyboard containing only the letters required for a short love poem, and "Request for Comment" (2022), a series of Raspberry Pis communicating with one another through shapes and text, Nish-Lapidus



Screenshot, "A Toronto real estate agent walked in on a group of teens who broke into a house he was showing and threw a party", BlogTO.

5 ~ This observation differs from, and condemns, the current strain of right-wing, rationalist, computationalism prevalent in crypto, artificial intelligence, and other computer technological industries.

uses language (programming and otherwise) to animate—to make living—technologies in new and unexpected contexts, for unforeseen applications such as composing love poems or digesting nineteenth century novels. This is the very function of the soul.

IV. *What is the most just thing? To sacrifice. What is the wisest? Number. What is the finest? Music. What is the most powerful? Knowledge. What is the best? Happiness. What is the truest thing said? That men are wicked.*⁶

As the party roves and rages above, beneath an anonymous basement tenant stands on an ideological threshold. Unlike the revelers she is not trespassing on private property, yet her precarity as a tenant of a listed home tethers her fate to those above. "Man, I could see myself living here," the tenant hears someone say, "I mean, we're living here now," another responds. Here for now. To the prospective buyer she represents little more than her monthly deposit into their ever-appreciating asset. Notions of trespass and private ownership pervade **Greenlight: Carlaw** and are cyphered through the figure of the tenant, and while Fuh does not ascribe a moral value to either of the players—including the invisible buyers and their agents—it is difficult to avoid a confrontation with the city's affordable housing crisis.

V. *Only fools think that what before did not exist comes into being, or that a thing dies and is completely destroyed.*⁷

Circles are visible throughout **DO COMPUTERS WORRY YOU**—tangent, concentric, congruent. Cylinders of paper fold back onto themselves, videos loop and repeat,

the stylus returns to the beginning and sets out again. Circuit boards, which are essential to the function of most works, are so named because of their looped path of electricity, reminiscent of the "great circuit" souls make as they follow the path to enlightenment.⁸ For Nish-Lapidus, the circle contains and articulates many aspects of his practice, not least of all the awe (and terror) the sublime of computers evokes, their origin beyond the realm of comprehension and their future boundless. As Nish-Lapidus gazes toward vastness, Fuh leads the way back inside to this Carlaw home and, further within, to the intimate conversations between teenage friends. "I once heard that when you die you keep feeling the last thing you felt for eternity," one dialogue begins, and "We make God! It's like we're God!" another picks up. How long they will be there and what consequences will arise after this moment is irrelevant, only the delight and freedom of the present are meaningful—the privilege of fleeting youth.

~ Leticia Cosbert Miller

6 ~ Iamblichus Vita Pythagorae 82 (Pythagoras)

7 ~ [Aristotle] *MXG* 2, 975b1 (Empedocles)

8 ~ Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a-257b