

The Apple PAINTBOX

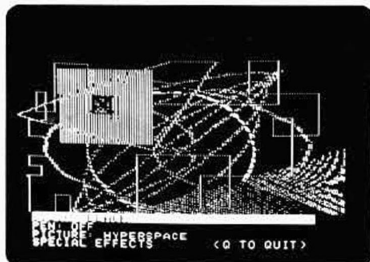
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SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Apple II Plus or Apple II with firmware Applesoft or Language Card, game paddles, 32K, 1 disk drive

Once there was a high-resolution graphics program for the APPLE II which turned the television into a combination drawing board, Etch-a-Sketch, and Spirograph. Push a button, an orange line would appear; press a key, a star would be drawn.

"Fascinating!" everybody said. Unfortunately, the program began with one meager screenful of incomprehensible instructions, and the only feedback offered during a run was an occasional low "Boop" to indicate that a command had been carried out. Nobody, including the programmer, could remember what the commands were from one run to the next.

That programmer (me, if you hadn't guessed) eventually learned that complex programs, whether used for business or fun, must have simple, interactive, error-proof control routines. Their instructions should provide enough data to make operation possible without outside documentation.



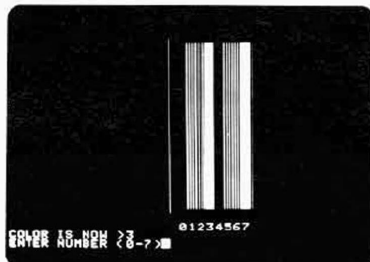
PAINTBOX is a result of this learning experience. We'll discuss the techniques used a little further on. First, the program.

HOW TO USE PAINTBOX

When you run PAINTBOX, you'll see a title page with the query "INSTRUCTIONS?". Answer "Y" to get a short instruction manual. Press <RETURN> after reading each page to get the next. At the end, press "A" to read the instructions again or <RETURN> to proceed.

After the instructions (or if you answered the initial query with "N") you will see a blank Hi-Res screen with a four-line menu at the bottom. The arrow keys step forward and backward through the menu. The <RETURN> key selects the item presently "lit up".

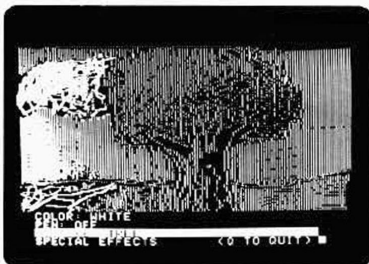
First, select a color (no point in drawing in black on black). Press the arrow keys until the **COLOR:** line on the menu lights up, press <RETURN>, and enter the first letter of one of the colors shown. Note that the menu now shows the color you have selected.



The <ESC> key switches back and forth from the menu to the full graphics page. Press it to make the menu disappear, and note the flashing dot somewhere on the screen. The paddle controls move this dot. Place it in an artistically satisfying position and push the button on PDL(0). This should leave a mark on the screen. Now move the flashing "cursor" somewhere else and press the button on PDL(1). The two locations should now be connected by a line in the color you chose.

Move again and push the button on PDL(1). The new starting point is the old ending point. The button on PDL(0) resets the starting point to the present position of the flashing dot; the button on PDL(1) draws a line to the present starting point.

Now push the button on PDL(0) and press <ESC> to return to the menu. Select a new color if you wish. Use the arrow keys to move to the line which says **PEN:OFF** and press <RETURN> to turn the pen on. Press <ESC> and move the paddle controls. You now have a color "Etch-a-Sketch".



The next item on the menu is used to **NAME** or **ERASE** a picture and to load from or save to a disk. When saving a picture, be sure your disk has plenty of room; each picture takes up 34 sectors.

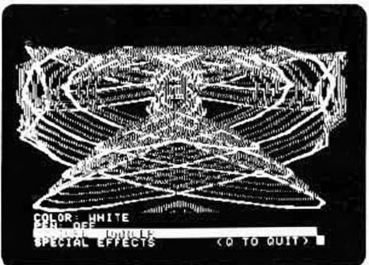
The last line of the menu is **SPECIAL EFFECTS**. Special effects presently in the program are **FILL** and **CURVES**.

FILL is intended for filling spaces with a solid color, and will do so when 4 dots are entered in the order shown in the instructions. It does other things, some of them very pretty, when different entry orders are used.

CURVES was designed as a sort of hyper-Spirograph, for those of you familiar with classical toys. Two dots entered as shown in the instructions control the location and size of the figure drawn. Four numbers are entered to determine its shape. Precisely what happens is very difficult to describe in words. Experiment!

If you quit accidentally or hit RESET, enter 3D0G <RETURN> if required to return to Applesoft, then enter GOTO 1000 <RETURN> to re-enter the program without erasing your picture.

Finally, press "Q" to quit, and we'll get back to the question of program operation.



CONTROL ROUTINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

Although much simpler in operation than the drawing functions, the control routines proved much trickier to design.

Complicating the problem in this particular case is the fact that the Hi-Res graphics display allows only 4 lines of text. The original program used 10 different commands and the present version uses 13. In addition, Apple-soft storage space when Hi-Res page 1 is used extends from location 2049 to location 8192 — a total of 6144 bytes for both program and workspace. Here's how PAINTBOX makes maximum use of the memory and display space available.

Lines 1000-1085 of the program operate the menu. The variable F is set by the right- and left-arrow keys to 1, 2, 3, or 4 (lines 1060-1065). This variable is used to print the menu line currently selected in black-on-white (lines 1015, 1025, 1035, 1045). When a carriage return is entered (line 1070), F points to the routine to be executed.

This menu has several advantages. First, it can be completely controlled by 3 keys, which makes it extremely easy to use. Second, the approach of "lighting up" the selections greatly reduces the probability of an incorrect entry. Even though the absolute number of keystrokes required may be greater (for example, if there are 10 or 12 possible selections), most people find this type of menu faster to use than the usual "pick a number" kind. The number of steps required is reduced by placing the items most often selected near the top or bottom of the menu. Finally, there is no possible way, short of pushing <RESET>, to input something the menu doesn't understand.

This particular menu allows two other entries: <ESC> (line 1075) transfers control to the main drawing loop of the program (lines 50-105). "Q" (line 1080) exits the program after restoring the computer to its initial state (line 15 has saved the original HIMEM address and set HIMEM:8192 to protect the graphics; line 1010 has set the text window to the bottom four lines only).

The menu also uses COL\$, SW\$, and PIC\$, which are changed by the related routines (lines 200-250, 300-320, and 400-480), to provide a constant display of the state of the system. The final result is a simple method of controlling a versatile program.

TEXT FILE INSTRUCTIONS

The next problem was where to put a rather long set of instructions for what had to be a rather short program. My solution was to leave the instructions out of the program entirely. Instead, I used lines 2100-2225 to read a standard Apple sequential text file from disk. (Note: these can be deleted if you use the instructions reprinted here. Otherwise use the Listing #2 to create the Text file.)

This type of file can be written by many text editors and word processors, or with the short program provided (listing 3). (I used Gary Shannon and Bill Depew's "Magic Window".)

This technique has several advantages over the usual method of including the instructions in the program itself. First, it conserves memory. This is particularly important in the present case, where the instructions are long and the workspace short. Second, it is much easier to format screens of information with a text editor than by using BASIC print statements. Changes and corrections are simpler, too. Third, the same routine can be used to read and display any set of instructions (or any other sequential text file) by simply changing the name of the file.

Line 2105 initializes the line count (LC) and the string variable (I\$) used to hold each instruction line. Line 2110 causes the program to jump to line 2200 when the end of data is reached. Lines 2115 and 2120 start the file-reading process. Note that an extra PRINT is used before each disk operation. This is required by Apple DOS to cancel out preceding GET's.

Line 2125 reads characters from the file until it finds a carriage return [CHR\$(13)] indicating the end of a line. Line 2130 prints each line and increments the line counter until the screen is full (LC = 22). Lines 2135-2145 cancel the read operation, wait for a <RETURN>, reset the line counter, and restart the process.

When an OUT OF DATA condition is reached (i.e. at the end of the file), the ONERR GOTO in line 2110 causes a jump to line 2200. Lines 2200-2225 finish up the presentation, close the file, clear the ONERR GOTO condition, and wait for the user to choose the next operation.

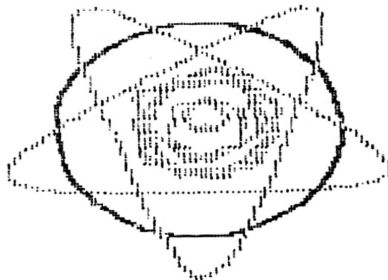
PAINTBOX INSTRUCTIONS

Listing 3 is a printout of the PAINTBOX INSTRUCTIONS file. In this listing, I have substituted periods for all blank spaces used in formatting. This was done simply to make counting easy if you are using TEXTFILE WRITER (listing 2) to make up the PAINTBOX INSTRUCTIONS file. Replace the periods with spaces or carriage returns, as required, in your actual text file.

TEXTFILE WRITER can be used to write any sequential text file. Enter each line (including any spaces), followed by a <RETURN>. You can backspace and make corrections before pressing <RETURN>. <RETURN> alone will write a blank line. After input is complete, enter the word "<FINISHED>" exactly as shown and press <RETURN> to complete the operation.

DRAWING ROUTINES

The basic draw loop (lines 50-105) shares control of the program with the menu. Control is transferred to the menu by line 55 when <ESC> is pressed. Lines 60 and 65 save the last X and Y values and read new ones from the paddles. If the "PEN:" switch (SW) is on (lines 300-320) line 70 short-circuits the loop and goes directly to the subroutine which draws a line and updates the array H(4),V(4). This array is used to store the last four endpoints entered (lines 150-190).

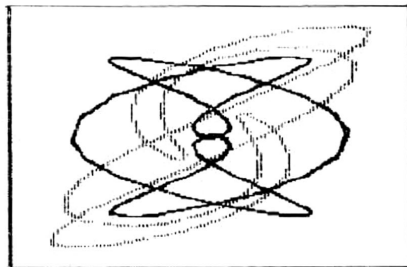


Rose in Atom

If the PEN is off, line 75 checks the button on PDL(0). If this button is not pressed [PEEK(B1)<127], lines 90 and 95 plot a white dot in the present position and erase the previous dot. If the button has been pressed, line 80 places a white point 1 dot away from the current position (so it won't be erased) and updates the array of "significant" points. Line 85 simply provides time to release the button.

Line 100 tests whether the button on PDL(1) has been pressed. If so, a line is drawn from the most recent endpoint to the present position.

The FILL routine (lines 700-810) uses the last four endpoints entered in the H and V arrays to fill in a space which is assumed to be bounded by four points entered in a certain order. However, complete range-checking (lines 740-745, 755-760, etc.) allows the points to be entered in any order. This makes it possible to obtain a variety of other interesting effects from the same routine.



It would be nearly impossible to describe the CURVES routine (lines 535-650) in words alone. Figure 1 is a diagram of approximately what this routine would "look like" if it were a mechanical device.

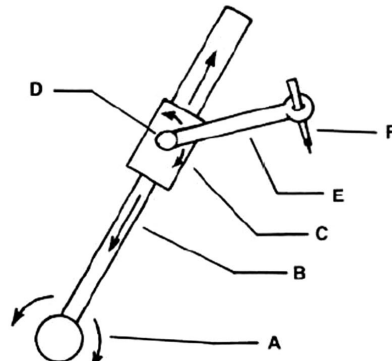


Figure 1.

In this Figure, main arm B rotates about main axis A. Carriage C slides back and forth on arm B during rotation. Meanwhile, secondary arm E (with a length determined by "%AMPLITUDE") rotates about secondary axis D at a rate determined by "FREQUENCY". "Pen" F does the actual drawing.

Lines 570-645 implement this action as a polar plotting routine. Again, complete range checking is provided. In this case, lines 605-620 cause the "pen" to be "reflected" off the top, bottom, and sides of the screen. Pushing the button on PDL(1) terminates execution of the routine.

CONCLUSION

As shown, PAINTBOX uses approximately 4700 bytes of memory, leaving about 1300 bytes free for additions and extensions. One improvement would be to extend the LOAD and SAVE error-handling routines (lines 484-496), which presently assume FILE NOT FOUND and DISK FULL errors, respectively. A fairly simple addition could be made to display a complete catalog when one of these errors is encountered. Refer to the Applesoft and DOS manuals for the techniques and error codes involved.

But enough of technicalities! Once you've typed in the program, you're an electronic artist. Turn those knobs, push those buttons, and create your first computer video masterpiece!

Listing 2 — TEXTFILE WRITER

```

10 REM TEXTFILE WRITER
15 REM BY AL EVANS, 1980
20 D$ = CHR$(4):I$ = ""
30 F$ = "PAINTBOX INSTRUCTIONS": REM NAME OF FILE TO BE WRITTEN
50 PRINT D$:"OPEN":F$: PRINT D$:"DELETE":F$: PRINT D$:"OPEN":F$
60 GET CH$: PRINT CH$:
65 IF CH$ = CHR$(21) AND I$ < > "" THEN I$ = LEFT$(I$, LEN(I$) - 1)
: POKE 36, PDS(0) - 1
70 IF CH$ < > CHR$(13) THEN I$ = I$ + CH$: GOTO 60
75 IF I$ = "<FINISHED>" THEN 100
80 PRINT D$: PRINT D$:"APPEND":F$: PRINT D$:"WRITE":F$: PRINT I$:I$ = "":
GOTO 60
100 PRINT : PRINT D$:"CLOSE":F$
105 PRINT "FINISHED": END

```

Listing 3 — PAINTBOX

INSTRUCTIONS File

(Blanks replaced with periods for easy unformatted entry)

.....
 1. PRESS <ESC> TO GET TO AND FROM MENU.
 ...SELECT A MENU ITEM WITH THE ARROW
 ...KEYS. PRESS <RETURN> TO CARRY OUT
 ...THE ACTION SELECTED.

.....
 2. SELECT THE ITEM "COLOR:" AND PRESS
 ...<RETURN>. CHOOSE A COLOR.

.....
 3. DRAWING WITH PEN:OFF

.....
 ...PRESS <ESC> TO LEAVE THE MENU. THE
 ...PADDLE CONTROLS [PDL(0) AND PDL(1)]
 ...MOVE A SPOT ON THE SCREEN. BUTTON
 ...0 MAKES A MARK; BUTTON 1 DRAWS A
 ...LINE TO THAT MARK IN THE CHOSEN
 ...COLOR. THE OLD ENDING POINT BECOMES
 ...THE NEW STARTING POINT.

.....

.....
 4. DRAWING WITH PEN:ON

.....
 ...PUSH BUTTON 0 TO MAKE A MARK ON THE
 ...SCREEN, THEN PRESS <ESC> TO GET TO
 ...THE MENU. SELECT THE ITEM "PEN:"
 ...WITH THE ARROW KEYS AND PRESS
 ...<RETURN>. THE PADDLE CONTROLS NOW
 ...WORK LIKE THE KNOBS ON AN
 ..."ETCH- A-SKETCH".

.....
 5. SPECIAL EFFECTS: F(ILL)

.....
 ...FILL IS USED TO FILL AREAS WITH A
 ...SOLID COLOR. USE BUTTON 0 TO SET 4
 ...POINTS IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER:

.....
1.....2
*.....*

.....
*.....*
3.....4

.....
 ...THEN PRESS <ESC> TO GET THE MENU,
 ...SELECT "SPECIAL EFFECTS", AND
 ...PRESS "F" FOR FILL. THE AREA INSIDE
 ...THE 4 POINTS WILL BE FILLED WITH THE
 ...SELECTED COLOR. OF COURSE, THE
 ...POINTS CAN BE ENTERED IN OTHER
 ...ORDERS, WHEREUPON OTHER THINGS WILL
 ...HAPPEN. TRY IT.

.....
 6. SPECIAL EFFECTS: C(URVES)

.....THIS SPECIAL EFFECT WORKS SOMEWHAT
 ...LIKE A SPIROGRAPH. MARK 2 POINTS
 ...WITH BUTTON 0 IN THIS FORMAT:

.....
1
*

*
2

.....
 ...THESE POINTS DETERMINE THE SIZE AND
 ...LOCATION OF THE CURVE. PRESS <ESC>
 ...TO GET THE MENU, CHOOSE "SPECIAL
 ...EFFECTS", AND PRESS "C" FOR CURVES.
 ...ENTER VALUES FOR A AND B (THESE
 ...DETERMINE THE SHAPE OF THE CURVE).
 ...NEGATIVE NUMBERS INVERT THE CURVE.
 ...THE CURVE "BOUNCES OFF" THE TOP,
 ...BOTTOM, & SIDES OF SCREEN. NEXT
 ...ANSWER "MODULATE THE CURVE?" WITH Y
 ...OR N. MODULATION ALTERS THE BASIC
 ...SHAPE. ENTER NUMBERS FOR "% AMPLI-
 ...TUDE" AND "FREQUENCY". USING 3,3 FOR
 ...A AND B (WHICH, INCIDENTALLY,
 ...PRODUCES A CIRCLE), TRY:

.....
AMPLITUDE=20,FREQUENCY=9
AMPLITUDE=30,FREQUENCY=9
AMPLITUDE=30,FREQUENCY=-9

.....

.....
 ...OTHER INTERESTING SHAPES ARE
 ...PRODUCED BY A=4, B=4;
A=10, B=23;
A=33, B=33;
AND A=12, B=6.

.....
 ...FINALLY, TRY A=-3, B=-3, AMPLITUDE=30,
 ...FREQUENCY=3. SURPRISE!!

.....
**NOTE**

.....
 ...BUTTON 1 CAN BE USED TO BREAK OUT OF
EITHER EFFECT AT ANY TIME.
 ...IN CASE OF ACCIDENTAL EXIT, RETURN TO
 ...BASIC BY ENTERING 3D06 <RETURN> IF
 ...REQUIRED, THEN TYPE GOT0 1000 <RETURN>.

.....

