

FLOWERS OF LEARNING

HORTUS CONCLUSUS NAZARENUS



Seven cyberflowers as an enclosed garden by Roman Verostko

SPALDING UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC CENTER

Louisville, Kentucky

FLOWERS OF LEARNING



Project model

Seven pen and ink drawings were created in memory of the Sisters of Nazareth who were the first generation of college teachers at Spalding University. Each of these drawings exhibits colorful forms the artist calls “cyberflowers”. Below each cyberflower the artist has drawn glyph-like characters that are coded quotations from different fields of learning and culture. Alice Wagstaff, who graduated in 1941 when Spalding was known as Nazareth College, helped choose the coded texts associated with each flower. As a memorial she has also identified teachers to associate with each cyberflower. While each cyberflower has been identified with a teacher in her living memory the ensemble of forms is dedicated to all the educators, past and present, at this University.

The flowers are framed as a “*hortus conclusus*”, an enclosed garden. The tradition of enclosed gardens is found with varied and rich meanings in cultures that reach back to pre-history. The artist presents the *hortus conclusus* here as one embracing the highest aspirations symbolized in gardens of many cultures – a Paradise of peace and tranquility, the Garden of Eden, the Elysium fields, a utopia of brotherhood, sisterhood and well being - the place we seek yet a place of fullness beyond our reach that beckons us to reach ever higher. This garden honors those at Spalding University, past and present, who have dedicated their lives, as teachers, to help us acquire the tools for our journey.



“... humanity also needs dreamers.” Madame Curie ca. 1921”

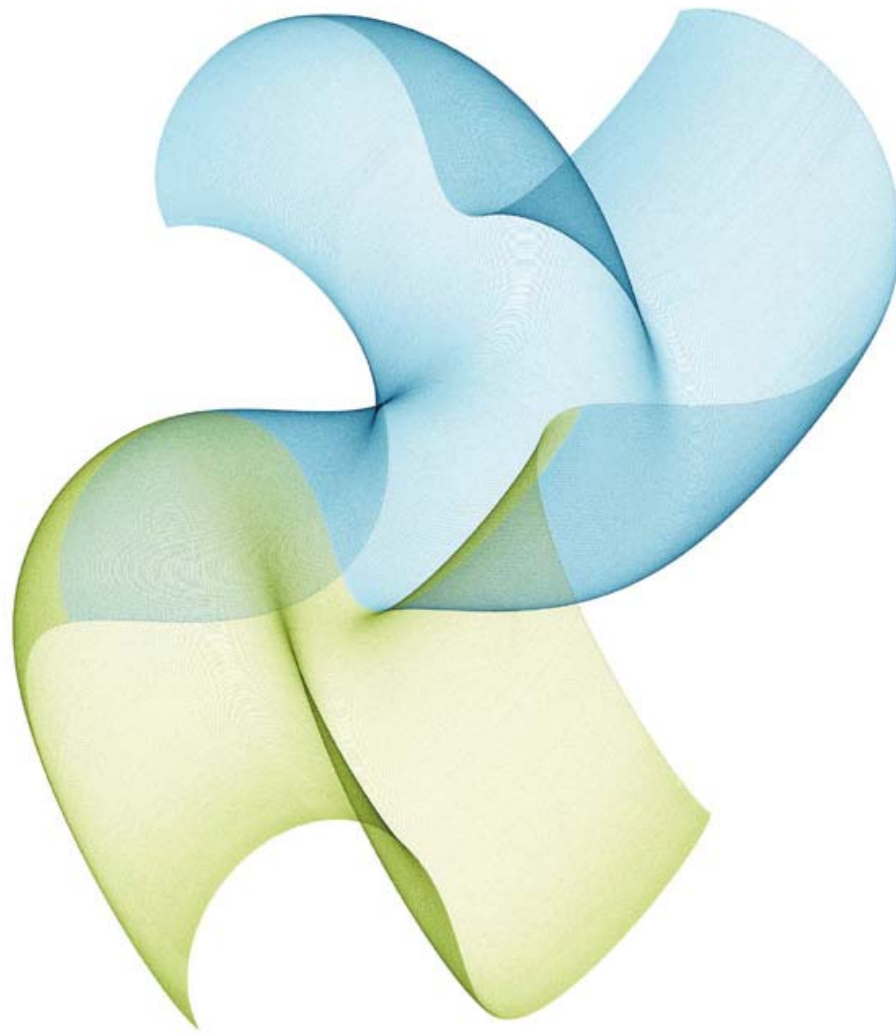


These *Flowers of Learning* embody ideas that have occupied Roman since 1969 when he first saw visual forms generated with algorithms using computing power. Since then he set out to create his own personal expert system: algorithms to implement his “form-generating” ideas. With relatively elementary programming languages, he taught himself how to write coded instructions for drawing with pen plotters, drawing machines used by engineers and architects. Through trial and error he learned to write code for drawing marvelous arrays of form nested in his mind’s eye. Years of experimentation with “form-generating” algorithms have led him to create a series of colorful forms he has referred to as “cyberflowers”.

The *Flowers of Learning* at Spalding University present the state of his art at this time. Seven visual blossoms, born in cyberspace, drawn with pen and ink on paper, framed and mounted as an enclosed garden, celebrate this institution as a venerable garden of learning.

TEXT: Each of the glyph-like characters is a letter clothed in linear forms created for this project. Algorithms for this alphabet were similar to those used for the flower forms. The characters translate selected texts arranged without spaces in 3 columns. These texts provide a glimpse into the wide world of learning and culture nurtured at Spalding University. The *Nazareth Alphabet* below was generated for this project. The glyph characters present the texts below the drawings *without using any spaces*.

 a b c d e f g h i j k l m	 A B C D E F G H I J K L M
 n o p q r s t u v w x y z	 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ? ! .	 , ; : ' / & * () ~ # - +



Homer: In memory of Sister Mary Emily Keenan

Text Source: Homer, *the Odyssey*, Trans. Samuel Butler, Book XXIV [520], *Great Books of the Western World*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, 1952, Volume 4, p.322

Ulysses and his son fell upon the front line of the foe /// Minerva raised her voice aloud, and made every one pause. 'Men of Ithaca', she cried, 'cease this dreadful war, and settle the matter at once without further bloodshed.' – Homer

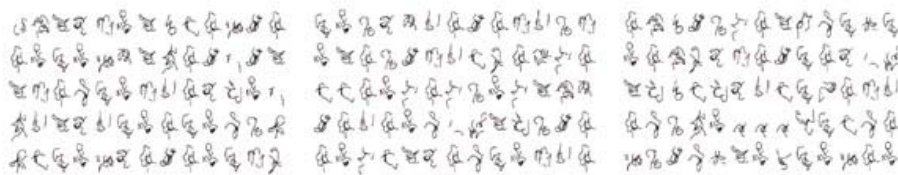
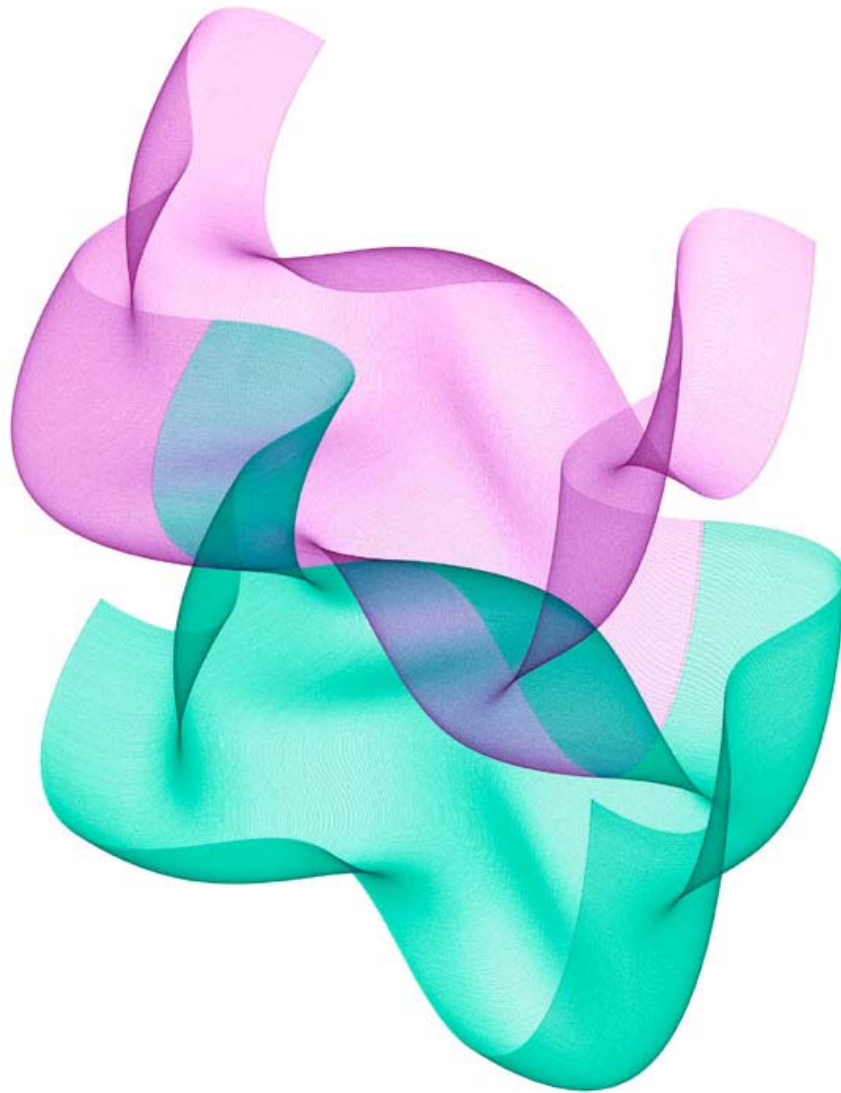


Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a transcription of the text below, arranged in three columns.

Madame Curie: In memory of Sister Mary Simeonette Savage

Text Source: *Madame Curie*. A biography by Eve Curie translated by Vincent Sheean, p.336. (Doubleday 1937). Quoted from notes she wrote after her return from America in 1921.

Humanity certainly needs practical men . . . But humanity also needs dreamers, for whom development of an enterprise is so captivating that it becomes impossible for them to devote care to their own material profit – M Curie 1867-1934



Hildegarde: In memory of Sister Mary Ramona Mattingly

Hildegard von Bingen 1098-1179. Source: Hymns. De Virginibus [Responsorium] *O nobilissima viriditas*

*O most noble greening power, rooted in the sun,
who shine in dazzling serenity in a sphere
that no earthly excellence can comprehend.
You are enclosed in the embrace of divine mysteries.
You blush like the dawn// - Hildegard von Bingen*



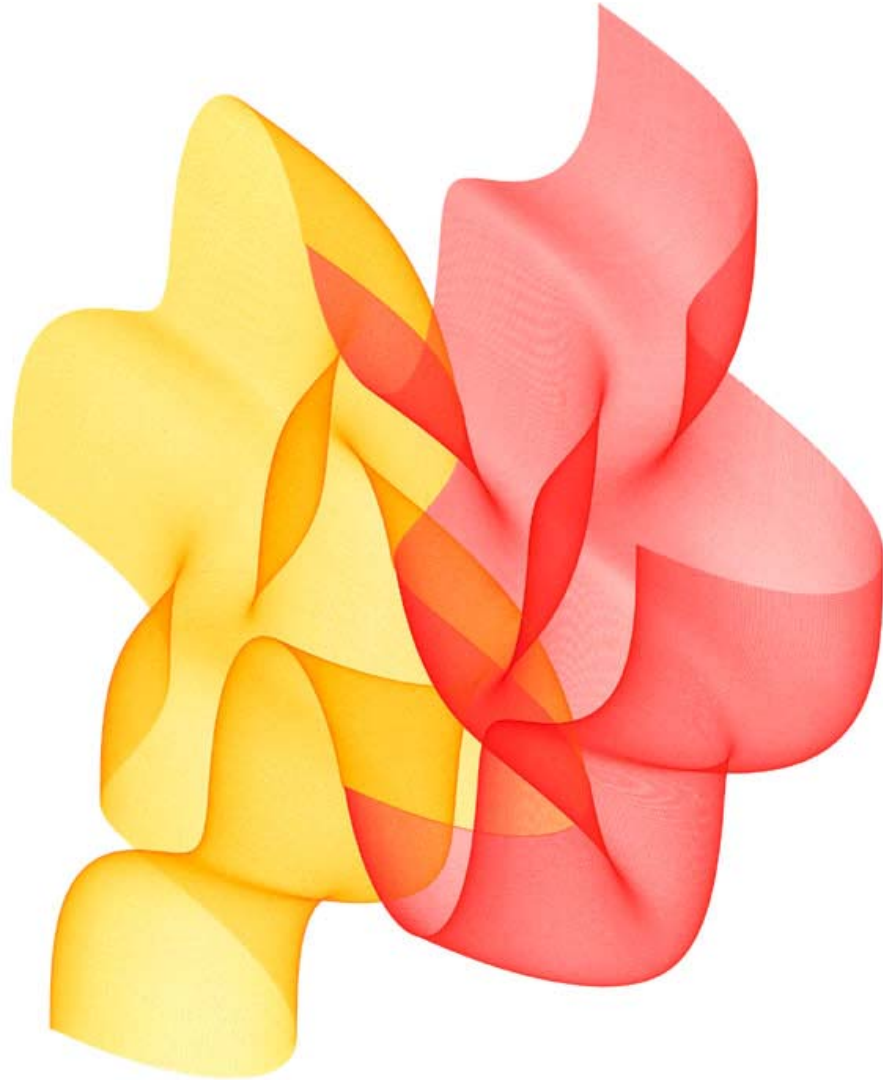
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Shakespeare: In memory of Sister Mary Eunice Rasin

Text Source:

William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1.255-60)

*I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:///*
Shakespeare in A Midsummer Night's Dream (2.1.255-258)



There is grandeur in this view of life // having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one // from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved. — Darwin

Darwin: In memory of Sister Mary Charles Morrison

Source: Origin of Species, Charles Darwin quoted from the last paragraph of the conclusion.

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