



# Digital Mantras: The Language of Abstract and Virtual Worlds

*Steven R. Holtzman*

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Computer technology is making possible new worlds of expression that are already being explored by a growing subculture of artists, musicians, virtual reality enthusiasts, and cyberpunks. In *Digital Mantras*, Steven Holtzman synthesizes ideas from a number of different disciplines to arrive at a new philosophy of creativity for the digital age. Blending ideas from music, computing, art, and philosophy, with biographical and historical anecdotes and a thread of mysticism, Holtzman gives us new ways to think about the integration of computers into the creative process. He shows how computers will change the way we create, and reveals the exciting potential for entirely new forms of expression. Running throughout the book are episodes from Holtzman's own sometimes mystical journey in search of the personal aesthetic he presents. Holtzman explores the presence and use of structure in fields as diverse as the development of ancient human languages, the philosophy of the Buddhist monk Nagarjuna and the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, the music of Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern, the paintings of Wassily Kandinsky, and the pioneering grammars of Panini and Noam Chomsky. He then turns to the use of computers for building abstract and virtual worlds in language, music, and art as well as virtual reality, and surveys the work of AI pioneer Terry Winograd, composers Gottfried Michael Koenig and Iannis Xenakis, and artist Harold Cohen. Holtzman concludes by discussing the aesthetic implications of these new worlds. He introduces the concept of digital expression, along with examples that hint at its far-reaching possibilities.

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