

The Digital Artist of Southampton

Colin Goldberg cracks the code to personal expression

By **ANDREW KESHNER**

Taking the long view, of course, Colin Goldberg can thank the thugs who once mugged him for helping him get to where he is now (and where he's about to go).

PROFILE

It was back in 1994, before Williamsburg, Brooklyn, became trendy, that a street gang — one of whom wore brass knuckles — took Goldberg's money and broke his jaw in three separate places.

Just as they say a cowboy isn't a cowboy until he's been thrown from his horse three times, in consolation, Goldberg's neighbors told him he couldn't consider himself a local until he was mugged at least once. Unconvinced, Goldberg moved to a slot of an apartment in the East Village that had room for his computer, but not his paints and canvases. Now, 11 years later, Goldberg will pursue an M.F.A. in digital art at Bowling Green State University in the fall.

With only a worktable, printer and computer, the interior of Goldberg's Southampton studio matches his demeanor: focused and unadorned. Goldberg capably multitasks this interview. While speaking, his eyes are trained on a computer screen that will display the Web sites he's designed, his burgeoning archives and a graphic of President Bush morphing into Agent Smith from *The Matrix*.

Says Goldberg, "I was born in the same age as the computer. I'd be foolish not to make my name in that medium." He

appears to be doing just that.

Colin Goldberg grew up in Southampton where his father taught chemistry at Southampton College for 30 years. A local boy, he enjoyed

Party," depicts a man and woman sitting at a dinner table — he with a roast turkey for a head, she a fish.

But the lasting influence came from Angelo Ippolito, a Binghamton

tences of gibberish to the untrained eye. Yet there is a very fluid, exciting quality to his art. Using the Adobe Illustrator program Goldberg makes lines writhe, wriggle and undulate

Boston, the Hampton Classic and the side of the Empire State Building. During the 1995 Earth Day, Goldberg created images of the earth cracking open like an egg or being bitten like an apple. The two pictures were made into 200-foot projections on the building's side. Counting that as his greatest artistic achievement thus far, Goldberg said, "I remember myself looking up, being impressed by what I saw in front of me."

When he goes to school this fall (on a full scholarship), Goldberg hopes to add 3-D modeling and animation to his skill repertoire. "I'm always looking to build," he explained.

As for future projects, one possible endeavor will focus on ancient Hebrew text. He also hopes to start working on a much larger scale. At Bowling Green, Goldberg will work with commercial-grade software that can produce images 72 inches wide by any length. "The limit is a skyscraper," he said. But it seems Goldberg's already gotten that far.

for further information, please visit www.colingoldberg.com



Colin Goldberg at work in his Southampton studio.



Colin Goldberg with his 1999 "Metagraph" entitled "Holism."

'The medium is the message. The fact that [my work] is made on a computer is what it's about, the idea that the computer is an art tool.'

going to the old Rogers Memorial Library and the Peconic Bay.

Goldberg always enjoyed drawing and took art classes at the Parrish Art Museum; some of his first works appeared there in a 1989 student art exhibit. But computers were also in his blood. His first computer was a Commodore 64, a piece of machinery that would be considered Mesozoic by today's standards.

In 1990, Goldberg traveled upstate to study philosophy and oil painting at Binghamton University. Intrigued by gestalt — the idea that images juxtapose and combine to create a visual experience greater than the sum of its parts — he experimented with surrealism in his early work. One painting, entitled "The Dinner

art professor and member of the 1950s Abstract Expressionist movement, considered a watershed moment in the progression of Modern Art.

Explaining the movement and its personal influence, Goldberg said, "Abstract Expressionism is freed from a representation agenda. There is no intrinsic meaning. The viewer can take what he wants out of the picture."

Turning to his own work, Goldberg continued, "The medium is the message. The fact that [my work] is made on a computer is what it's about, the idea that the computer is an art tool."

Strange then to think that Goldberg's art is actually an articulation of computer code — long sen-

over a spectrum of colors brilliant and mellow.

Oftentimes he will use mixed media by painting the paper before printing his digital work on the same page. These "metagraphs," as he calls them, are created quite rapidly. From start to finish, a piece usually takes just a few hours. With his electronic paintbrush — called a stylus — darting, a sample piece takes only 20 minutes.

Besides his own art, Goldberg is finishing up work for a design and printing company in Bridgehampton. He also designs Web sites for other artists in the Hamptons, including Steve Miller, Terry Elkins, Kevin Teare and Mary Boochever.

Goldberg's works have been exhibited at the Art Institute of