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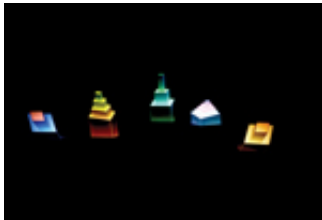
Eno, Brian

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Eno, Brian

(*b* Woodbridge, Suffolk, 15 May 1948)

English musician and artist. Eno studied fine art at the Ipswich School of Art under the tutelage of Tom Phillips (who introduced him to John Cage's *Silence*) and at the Winchester Art School from 1964 to 1969. In 2007 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Royal College of Art. Eno is best known as a rock musician, first with the band Roxy Music from 1971 to 1973, and afterwards recording as a solo artist and with other musicians. He was inspired to work with tape loops by Steve Reich (*b* 1936) after hearing that composer's *It's Gonna Rain* (1965). He is known for 'ambient' music (which he named) as well as 'generative' music, terms popularized by Eno to describe respectively music that blends with the environment and can be listened to or ignored, and music that is ever-changing and generated by a system. Ambient and generative scores have typically accompanied his visual art installations. He is also well known as a producer of albums by rock luminaries such as Talking Heads and U2. In 1975 Eno collaborated with the artist Peter Schmidt (1931–80) on *Oblique Strategies: Over One Hundred Worthwhile Dilemmas*, a set of oracle cards intended for use in artistic creation. The deck has been produced in multiple editions, including one designed by Pae White as a Peter Norton Family Christmas Project in 1996.



Brian Eno: Crystals, shown in Latest Flames installation, 1988 (San...

In 1978 Eno began working with video. Intrigued by the latitude allowed by manual camera controls and the unusual imagery that resulted from a tube damaged by pointing it directly at the sun for four days, he produced painterly, non-narrative videos such as *Mistaken Memories of Mediaeval Manhattan* (1980–81) and *Thursday Afternoon* (1984) with his own 'ambient' music as soundtrack. He also created multi-screen installations for airports, train stations, and galleries such as *Two Fifth Avenue*, first shown at The Kitchen in New York in 1979. He later began a new series of video-based light

sculptures that used abstract colour field imagery fed from videotapes onto television monitors placed on their backs; the monitors projected changing coloured light upwards through foam-core sculptures that resembled ziggurats. *The Crystals*, as they were called, were first exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA, in 1983. These video sculptures were accompanied by a soundtrack constructed of a dozen cassette tapes playing slightly out of sync, creating an effectively infinite composition, foreshadowing his later work with (digital) generative art. Following *The Crystals*, he began a series of work using suspended mobile foam-core panels onto which changing abstract light compositions were projected, sometimes in multiple layers; these pieces came to be known as *Quiet Club*, a response to the cacophony of the typical nightclub characterized by a more relaxing atmosphere of light and sound. *Quiet Club* was first proposed in 1986 and also presented as numbered *Places*, such as *Place #11* at London's Riverside Studios that year. The light works, incorporating both projections and video monitors/digital displays, subsequently continued to evolve, incorporating digitized scans of hand drawn imagery, hand-painted slides, and sound, among other things.

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Brian Eno: 77 Million Paintings, projected onto the Sydney Opera...

Eno's most widely heard piece of music is perhaps the startup sound for Microsoft Windows 95, and he has been a pioneer in the field of digital art. In 1996 he released a generative music album on a PC floppy disc format using software called Koan (*Generative Music I*, Opal Music). In 12 compositions, or 'compositional seeds' as he called them, he provided multiple sound files configured as recognizable compositions that vary nonetheless with each play. Ten years later, he brought this same generative sensibility to a sound and light installation, *77 Million Paintings*, a project that was also released as home computer software (*77 Million Paintings*, All Saints, 2006, revised and reissued 2008 on Hannibal Records). The project toured internationally in multiple versions, including a projection onto the Sydney Opera House 'sails' in 2009. In 2006 the company Lumen Ltd (London) was founded to produce the *77 Million Paintings* installations around the world.

Eno exhibited audio installations in galleries and museums as well, including shows at White Cube Gallery London in 1997, and at the Great Gallery at La Veneria Reale, outside Turin (*Twelve Seasons: Music for the Great Gallery*, 2012–17). In collaboration with Peter Chilvers, he produced generative music apps for the iPhone: *Bloom* (2008), *Trope* (2009), and *Scape* (2012).

See *also* images tab for additional illustrations.

Writings

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D. Ward and G. Cardazzo: *Brian Eno: Imaginary Landscapes* (VHS videotape, 1989; New York, 1998)




E. Tamm: *Brian Eno: his Music and the Vertical Colour of Sound* (London, 1990) 

A. Oldfield: 'Brian Eno's Generation Game', *The Independent* (29 July 1996) 


14 Video Paintings—Brian Eno (New York, 2005) [DVD reissue of *Mistaken Memories of Mediaeval Manhattan and Thursday Afternoon*] 

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N. Robertson: *[Working Backwards]: The Visual Art of Brian Eno* (London, 2011) [promotional brochure] 

C. Scoates: *Brian Eno: Visual Music* (San Francisco, 2013) 

Kevin Concannon

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