

# The best thing I ever created

 By [John Maeda](#)

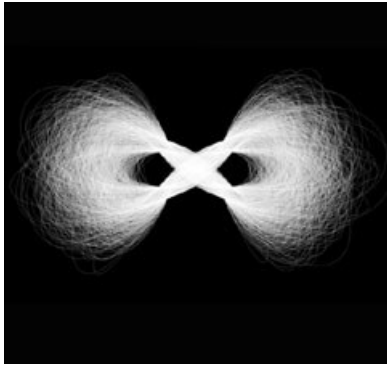
15 Jul 2013

In general, I don't care much for things I have made, but I do have an affection for the below image, which I created around 1993.

It was the first image that I coded in the PostScript programming language, after a long hiatus away from computer programming. I made it shortly after being asked by my typography teacher what I would do with my life.

My response was that I wanted to become a classical Swiss-style typographer like him - and a master of letterpress. He responded kindly but harshly to me and said, "Idiot! You are young. Do something young with yourself. The classics will still be there when you are old."

So I went off and took that as direction to start using the computer again. I recall being surprised by how the computer could do so much at the beckon of a few lines of code. It would just keep going and going, until infinity.



[click to enlarge](#)

So I made a piece for the NeXT computer that drew an infinite loop. It never stopped - unless you made it stop, of course. I stopped the image above at the 10,000th loop stroke.

I showed the image to my professor. He smiled and told me to look at the work of Karl Gerstner, and to learn from him. Imagine my delight when, 20 years later, I was standing on a commencement stage at Rhode Island School of Design, honouring him with an honorary degree!

So this image has a lot of meaning to me. Even if it's aged a lot in 20 years, it now represents my life coming "full circle." Twenty years? I can't believe it.

## ABOUT JOHN MAEDA

Artist, graphic designer, computer scientist, and educator John Maeda is president of the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and was previously Associate Director of Research at MIT Media Lab. He also serves on the Board of Directors of Sonos. Named one of the 75 most influential people of the 21st century by Esquire, Maeda received the AIGA Medal in 2010, and his art is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

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