ABOUT THE COVER

... of quail eggs and glue and such—of two- and then three-D

For years she worked with quail eggs, polishing and filing pieces of eggshell and then gluing them to a support; this produced works of art marked by distinctive colors and shapes. However, the young French artist Mowgli found that “painting” in this style took her up to six months of intensive labor to complete a single, finished work of art.

But something happened to Mowgli three years ago; she discovered the Lactamme laboratory and its proprietary SMC computer system—a system originally designed for computer-aided teaching applications—which had evolved into a system for processing, synthesizing, and animating color television images.

Since that time, Mowgli and Jean François Colonna, the head of the Lactamme laboratory in Paris, have been working on a joint research project designed to promote the computer as a standard tool in the

"Bird Woman" (top) and "Birds and Fishes Wedding" (bottom)
plastic arts and to introduce aesthetics into scientific displays.

Mowgli thinks of the computer as a tool, not unlike the painter’s brush or the sculptor’s chisel, which should, in itself, have no significant part in the creative process. Mowgli wished to express her ideas and, as far as possible, have a computer specialist translate them into computer commands.

Some 40 of Mowgli’s original hand drawings have been “scannerized” (a neologism built from “scanner” and “iris”) by the SMC computer, which through transformation, coloration, and animation of these drawings now has over 3000 two- and three-dimensional Mowgli images on file. Some of these images, such as the “Twin-Headed Mythological Lizard Woman,” which appears on the cover, can be found in a ten-minute videotape entitled Egg Story.

The cover image and the images shown here were produced on a low-resolution display, with 256 lines, 256 points per line, and eight colors per point. Lactamme’s SMC (Conversational Multimedia System) also has medium-resolution (512 x 512) capabilities. (The design of these two pages was created by Mowgli.)

“Unicorn Spaceship” (top), “Escher’s Portrait” (center), and a mythological animal and its “Egg Moon” in a three-dimensional synthetic landscape (bottom)