

Amazing Labyrinths, Further Developments IV

Samuel Verbieese
Terholstdreef 46
B-3090 Overijse, Belgium
E-mail: verbieese@alum.mit.edu

Abstract

An unlikely combination of events brought me early this year to an Art & Math exhibition at Brussels University and from there to an inspiring graph by artist Ode Bertrand. It led me to create a large-scale microChartres labyrinth mowed in a grass lawn, a design that bridges between an ancient myth and present-time artworks.

A graphic work by Ode Bertrand inspiring a microChartres labyrinth



Figure 1 shows a large mowed-grass labyrinth created in the lawn at the Spring 2014 Aywiers Gardens fair, my fourteenth such ephemeral vegetal labyrinth. It is derived via a series of transformations from a squarish winding graph design by French artist Ode Bertrand, shown in the thumbnail at left. Bertrand represents *The Flight of Icarus* (with takeoff and crash-landing sites near to each other) on a fine book-binding for *Le vol d'Icare* by French poet and mathematician Raymond Queneau [4]. It aptly features the even black and white line spacing often found in labyrinths and mazes, as Icarus is the son of Daedalus, the father of the Labyrinth. This project stems from a most unlikely sequence of events (detailed in the attachment [1]) leading me first to an *Art & Math* exhibition held early this year at the Free University of Brussels [2] and second, through some research for this exhibition, to this inspiring graph that I later transformed through another set of wanderings into this microChartres labyrinth with nice additional benefits.



Figure 1 : Aywiers Gardens labyrinth from a graph by Ode Bertrand. Photo © by Ulli Bromberg

My epistemological drive to patiently analyze the genesis of ideas and to acknowledge the sources (an enterprise I like to consider as part of my artwork but not necessarily of interest to most readers) has been developed as an attachment to this paper, online and on the conference disk [1], along with a summary of how the Chartres, miniChartres and microChartres features came about as first described and thereafter recurrently revisited in my previous Bridges papers and exhibits. This short paper only highlights the inclusion of these features in this labyrinth, introducing the artwork on display at the Conference exhibit [3] and its subsequent materialization at the Aywiers Gardens fair.

I couldn't help trying to doodle my 10-year young microChartres labyrinth (Figure 2a and a') into a similar design, but I failed miserably (Figure 2b). A sudden educated guess suggested using the overall graph shape exactly "as is", considering that its crossing windings could easily be transformed into concentric circuits like in the classical Cretan labyrinth and its succeeding evolutions to the magnificent Chartres monument, through the use of poles or barriers inducing turns instead of crossings. As usual in my microChartres labyrinths, I give the wall its ludical maze function transformed into a circuit by bridges, tunnels, or Japanese steps. The transformations involve an extra central mini-room (where I could stage the mythical Minotaur, behind a fence for the safety of the labyrinth's present-day visitors), (Figure 2c), a 90° clockwise turn of the whole labyrinth (for some dynamic looks but mainly to produce a smiling face) and finally bleaching the black wall to transform it in a walkable folded 3D ribbon circuit. See the print on display in the Exhibit [3] (Figure 2d).

The real-world exercise of Figure 1 revealed that an even better geometrical fit could be obtained without a need for any alteration of the original graph drawing, with a cleaner wall circuit and all white lines being filled with the labyrinth, albeit a little less satisfactory on the artistic/playful viewpoints (Figure 2e).

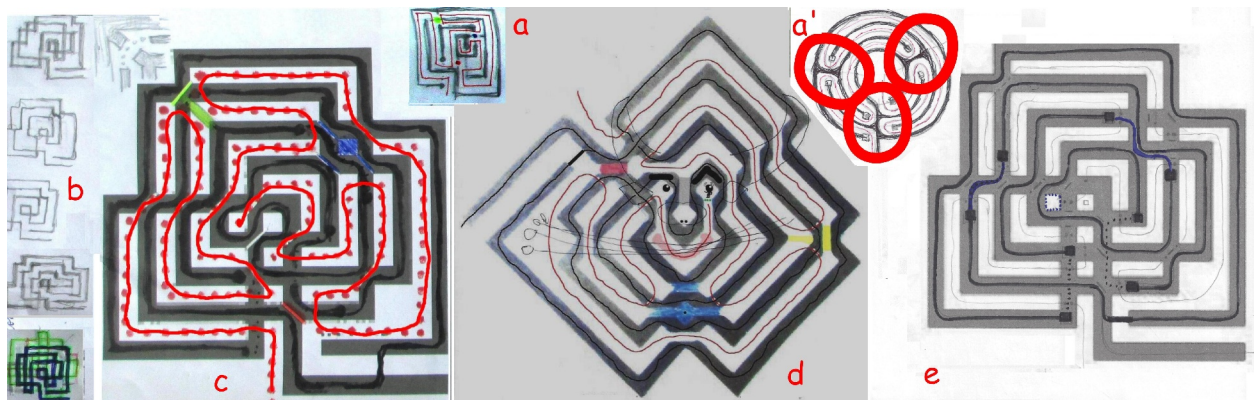


Figure 2 : a, a': microChartres features, b: doodles, c: labyrinth inserted, d: artwork, e: better fit.

Acknowledgments and Copyright

Grateful thanks are extended to all the persons cited in the meandering annex to this paper [1], to the patient reviewers. The final work and design stages are copyrighted through Sofam [6].

References

- [1] Samuel Verbiese, *Attachment to "Amazing Labyrinths, Further Developments IV"*.
- [2] Gisèle De Meur, *Art & Math - un concept / une expo*, 180° éditions, 2014, <http://gatito.be/expo>.
- [3] Samuel Verbiese, *Seoul 2014 Exhibit Catalog*, eds. Robert Fathauer and Nathan Selikoff, <http://gallery.bridgesmathart.org/exhibitions/2014-bridges-conference/samuelverbiese>.
- [4] <http://www.quefaire.be/bibliotheca-durantiana-138835.shtml>
- [5] Patricia Limaige, *Les Jardins d'Aywiers*, <http://www.aywiers.be/photos.html>
- [6] www.sofam.be