As the publication’s title suggests, the story of the New Tendencies movement is likely an unfamiliar one to many. Based out of the Yugoslavian (now Croatian) city of Zagreb, New Tendencies included international groups of artists and theorists who, much like proponents of Minimalism and Conceptual Art of the same era, rejected traditional ideas of artistic expression and “genius” in favor of precise, methodical approaches to making art. New Tendencies artists referred to their works as “artistic research” and welcomed mathematicians, engineers, and physicists into the movement’s activities. Beginning in 1968, the term “computers and visual research” was used frequently by New Tendencies participants to describe their endeavors, and the vast majority of the movement’s artists incorporated computer usage into their artistic processes from 1968 to 1973.

Opening with essays by Margit Rosen, Researcher and Curator for ZKM/Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany, and several other curators and artists, A Little-Known Story about a Movement, a Magazine, and the Computer’s Arrival in Art: New Tendencies and Bit International, 1961-1973 presents a chronological overview of the New Tendencies movement. Featured are reproductions and translations of letters, meeting minutes, essays from catalogs and the magazine bit international (intentional lowercase), and audio transcriptions. With over 650 illustrations, most of which are photographs of individual artworks, installation views, exhibition catalogs and brochures, and gatherings of the movement’s participants, there is significant visual evidence of New Tendencies activities. Major highlights are the images of individual artworks, which have been reproduced with consistently high quality. The book also includes an appendix with a timeline, biographies, a bibliography, and an index.

In “Digital Art: Intrusion or Inclusion?”, one of the publication’s opening essays, Peter Weibel asserts that a central theme of the monograph is that computers were destined to play a role in the art world because the artists required them “to solve their aesthetic problems, and to fulfill their artistic programs.” While New Tendencies artists had objectives beyond simply using computers, including adopting scientific, analytical approaches for art-making and connecting with disciplines such as industrial and graphic design, A Little-Known Story about a Movement, a Magazine, and the Computer’s Arrival in Art: New Tendencies and Bit International, 1961-1973 will be of great interest to those researching writings produced while early computer-based art was being made. This book is also recommended for those researching lesser-known twentieth-century artistic movements.

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