

This work, titled “A Social Species,” involves a nest of fictional organisms that survive through close contact with each other. In this imaginative environment, they feed off each other’s energy. When an individual diverges too far from their neighbors, that individual perishes. As they die, they lose their vivid red life-force and transition to a distressed blue hue.

The driving force behind this project uses mathematical formulas to simulate the flocking behavior of birds; originally developed by Craig Reynolds in 1986. Each organism in this program is born with an innate adherence to three rules: separation, alignment, and cohesion. Following these guidelines, they are able to swim towards their neighbors, grow into a flock, find safety in numbers, and reproduce. The emergent behaviors from the simple set of rules create visuals that trace the species’ existence from birth to death.

This project highlights the juxtaposition between today’s need for social-distancing and a yearning for closeness/connections. For many of us, it is easy to feel a slump in our daily lives from a lack of interaction with the outside world. The distance between us might dwindle our sense of well-being. Yet, being physically close to people can be dangerous and deadly. Overall, it is a challenge to maintain our health and happiness while we are all so far from each other. This project explores this concept of social-creatures, with their needs for closeness and cooperation.