The 2012 ACM SIGGRAPH Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement in Digital Art is awarded to Jean-Pierre Hébert for his pioneering achievements in creating art through computer programming. At the core of his work are algorithms that generate drawings on paper, as well as in sand and other mixed media. Hébert began working with digital conceptual algorithmic art in 1974 and has been an independent artist since 1984. Since 1989, his work has appeared in 17 SIGGRAPH Art Galleries. In 1995, he co-founded The Algorists with Roman Verostko, a group that eventually included Hans Dehlinger, Helaman Ferguson, Manfred Mohr, Ken Musgrave, and Mark Wilson. He was appointed Artist in Residence at the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), in June 2003. He has received grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (2006) and the David Bermant Foundation (2009). His aesthetic is based on a patient, evolving exploration of the line. He looks at drawing not as gestural, but more essentially as a direct expression of thought that might be inspired by or suggestive of motion, time, music, light, logic, nature. Technically, his work rests on simple coding informed by geometry, mathematics, physics, and great attention to rendering details. He also explores chaos and order, silence and sounds, music, text, poetry, and the ephemeral. Some of the ideas and concepts he incorporates into his work stem from Zen Buddhism and his spiritual approach to life.

The first public exhibition of his digital drawings was in France in 1989 at the Galerie Alphonse Chave in Venice. His work has also been included in several other landmark exhibitions: Alien Intelligence at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland, in 2000; Drawing with the Mind at the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum; Imaging by Numbers at the Block Museum of Art, Chicago, in 2008; Digital Pioneers at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, in 2010; and Drawing with Code at the deCordova Museum in 2011. Additional selected venues have included the Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics, the Brooklyn Museum, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Tweed Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the New York Drawing Center, and [DAM] (Berlin, Cologne). Hébert has resided in Santa Barbara, California, since 1985, and, in addition to international exhibitions, he shows in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles venues and galleries.

Jean-Pierre Hébert is active as a public speaker and advocate for digital art and algorithmic methods of creating art. He has participated in SIGGRAPH panels in 1995, 1998, and 2005; the UCSB Art Symposia in 1999 and 2007; and in forums and symposiums at Pratt Institute, the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Chicago, Rhode Island School of Design, Pasadena Art Center College of Design, the Southern California Institute of Architecture, and many other conferences and events. ACM SIGGRAPH is honored to recognize Jean-Pierre Hébert. He is one of the pioneers who have led the way toward new forms of creative expression using digital techniques and algorithms. His consistent record of art production, exhibiting his work, and public speaking as an advocate of digital art make him an exceptional individual in the field.