

OWNING ONLINE ART SELLING AND COLLECTING NETBASED ARTWORKS



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REINHARD STORZ AND MARKUS SCHWANDER INTRODUCTION

The **Owning Online Art** (OOA) research project studies conditions for the introduction of net-based art on the art market. It raises the question of how works of art published on the WWW and made available to all can be defined as property and how they can be integrated into public and private collections of contemporary art. As a practice-oriented project, **OOA** accompanies and supports the starting phase of the DA Collection/Store project. The goal of this last project is to market digital works of art and establish a pilot collection of digital new media art.

The discussion on the marketing and collectibility of net art was conducted by an interdisciplinary team from several different universities. The articles published here present the points of view of artists, scholars, economists and curators. Issues of restoration are discussed, as well as the design of digital image displays and interfaces for online exhibitions. An important aspect of the research process from the start was to establish an empirical basis, and so a survey was conducted among collection curators and Swiss and international artists with experience in net-based art. A special conference with scholars and artists promoted direct encounters between the participants.

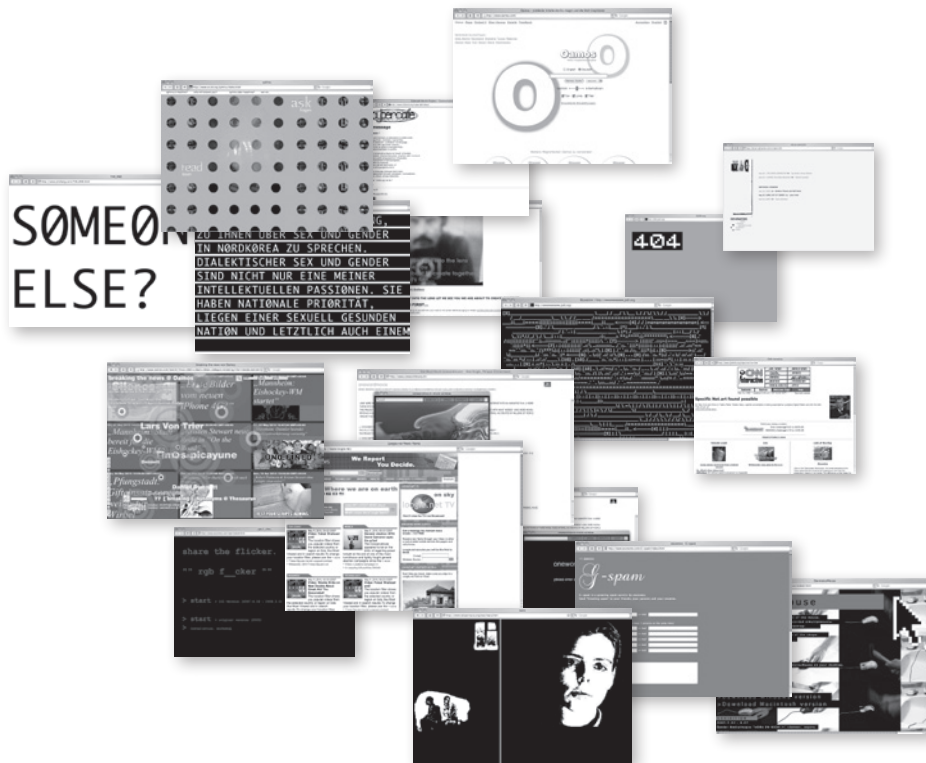
In this publication, art historians discuss the critical positioning of selected works of net art (Rachel Mader) and approach questions on the relationship between Internet art and the art market from the standpoint of the history of media (Peter Schneemann). Using the example of specific works, artists discuss aspects of the materiality of net-based art (Markus Schwander) and reflect on their experience with curators and collectors, as well as with the issues of the commercialisation and conservation of net art (Olia Lialina, Carlo Zanni).

Our research partner, the AktiveArchive project contributed its expertise in the areas of documentation, conservation and restoration of electronic art and discussed solutions for the restoration of net-based works (Tabea Lurk). A number of different economies can be applied to the issue of the relationship between net-based art and the art market: the economies of the market, of novelty and of recognition (Simon Grand), as well as aspects of the economy of free, immaterial products (Felix Stalder). Further articles are devoted to the practice of collecting net-based art, the controversy between the respective attitudes and expectations of collection curators and artists and to the idea of a «Swiss Platform for New Media Art» (Isabel Zürcher). The past and present-day development of the products of net art on the market and its collection in the USA and Europe will also be discussed (Reinhard Storz), as well as the purchase of net-based work for an existing Swiss collection from a curator's point of view (Roman Kurzmeyer). In closing, a short text will present the idea and current activities of the DA Collection/Store project (Annette Schindler and Reinhard Storz).

The text section closes with the answers of the 17 international artists to the questionnaire sent out by the OOA research project. The articles are completed by several practice-oriented studies, including a brief survey of current online payment methods; a study of the net-specific art form of the screensaver (Beo von Arx); illustrative examples of digital displays at art fairs and art exhibitions; experiments by the Basel web designer and artist Esther Hunziker with interfaces for online art exhibitions and collection archives; and the development of a special wall console with an integrated computer for interactive art works by the Zurich industrial designer Regula Büchel.

We opted for a net-supported form to publish our research, using text formats designed for the Internet, e-book readers and Smartphones, as well as books-on-demand. The decision to offer online versions of all the articles also considered the fact that many of the objects and phenomena studied here originated on the Internet themselves. Thus all the net-based works of art mentioned in this study can be consulted as «originals» online.

Translated from the German by Tolingo, Hamburg



**RACHEL MADER
OFFSIDE COMMENTARIES – NET-BASED ART AND THE
ART SYSTEM**

THE DETACHMENT OF MEDIA ART FROM THE TRADITIONAL ART BUSINESS IS STILL CLEARLY VISIBLE, EVIDENT IN THE LOCATIONS OF ITS PRESENTATION AND IN THE FORUMS WHERE IT IS DISCUSSED. RACHEL MADER'S DESCRIPTION OF NET-BASED ART PIECES RISES THE QUESTION, TO WHAT EXTENT THEY CONTINUE AN ART HISTORICAL DISCOURSE AND HOW FAR THEIR READING REQUIRES SPECIFIC QUALIFICATION. NET-BASED ART ALONG WITH ITS RECEPTION ALWAYS SEEMS TO SUPPLY A SPECIFIC COMMENTARY ON THE WAY THE CONTEMPORARY ART SYSTEM FUNCTIONS.

1. INTRODUCTION

I see this division not as a consequence of artistic engagement with new media, but rather as the result of pragmatic initiatives to create presentation possibilities and media theory reflections. This means that no fundamental function has to be attributed to the «Eigensinn of the material»¹, but merely a specifying one. The endeavor to give media art an appropriate place in the art system and in the discourse is inevitably linked with an emphasis on specificities, with which legitimization is produced and established. Yvonne Volkart's thesis, according to which everything else would be «automatically generated», if the example of «the importance of exhibitions, media labs, conferences and festivals» were consistently lived, describes the necessity of the twin-track argumentation.² In four thematically focused chapters, selected net art works are to be acknowledged here as individual works on the one hand, and on the other to be queried in terms of how, where and to what extent they stimulate art historical debates and where they serve a specialist discourse, which makes technical specialized knowledge a fundamental prerequisite for reception.³ The question will be raised in conclusion about the extent to which the «Eigensinn of the material» provokes an engagement with the work concept, which can exemplify current artistic production and its acceptance in the art business. This leads to the thesis on which this article is based, that net-based art along with its reception always supplies a specific commentary on the way the art system functions. When net-based art and its position in the art system are examined at the end of the article in relation to the work concept, then this is also in the interest of describing how it is constituted.

2. CREATIVE PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVE VIEWING – CHALLENGES FOR ART RECEPTION

On the average, museum visitors spend barely two minutes viewing a picture; it is a time period that hardly ever allows entering into a net art work in its entirety. Where some operate like film or video works with a linear progression closed in itself and usually lasting longer than two minutes, others make use of the possibilities of the Internet to design works that can only be viewed as a whole by continually clicking through them. The viewer stance that is highly conditioned in the exhibition context then faces at least a double challenge in the

¹ The term «Eigensinn of the material» (roughly: wilful obstinacy) is loosely based on Giaco Schiesser's reflections on the relationship between media and arts as a whole. Cf. Giaco Schiesser, «Arbeit am und mit Eigensinn», in: Monika Fleischmann and Ulrike Reinhard (Ed.): **Digitale Transformationen. Medienkunst als Schnittstelle von Kunst, Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft**. Heidelberg: whois, 2004; revised English translation: <http://pzwart.wdka.hro.nl/mdr/pubsfolder/Eigensinn> [03.2010]. See also: Sabeth Buchmann, «Nur soviel: Das Medium ist nicht die Botschaft». Kritik der Medientheorie», in: Marius Babias (Ed.), **Im Zentrum der Peripherie. Kunstvermittlung und Vermittlungskunst in den 90er Jahren**, Dresden, Basel: Verlag der Kunst, 1995, p. 79–102.

² Yvonne Volkart, «Durchstreifen und Neuvermessen. Schweizer Medienkunst im internationalen Kontext», in: **Mapping New Territories. Schweizer Medienkunst International**, ed. Bundesamt für Kultur, Plug.in, Neue Kunst Halle St. Gallen, 2005, p. 34–41.

³ Felix Stalder has pointed out that in the field of technology, «the knowledge gap between specialists and the broad public is considerable.» He also sees as a possible task of art with new technologies its mediation potential: «One task of the artists and art institutions can be to make it possible to experience specific segments of the present ...» Felix Stalder, in: **Mapping New Territories. Schweizer Medienkunst International**, ed. Bundesamt für Kultur, Plug.in, Neue Kunst Halle St. Gallen, 2005, p. 146.

surroundings of net-based art: not only must the passive viewer stance oriented to contemplation be abandoned, but in many cases the works are embedded not in the standardized calm of the museum, but in the complex data sea of the World Wide Web. In light of this starting point, it is a more recent phenomenon that artists decide to offer assistance for entering a work. Explanations were refused in many early works. Although they did not presume computer skills beyond normal use, they did require an insistence, for instance with Jodi, where every click triggered only a new dance of graphical elements on the screen or an error message.⁴ Jodi takes the user actions that are meanwhile taken for granted to the point of absurdity using simple aesthetic codes: selectable elements of the image first have to be discovered by randomly moving the cursor over the screen. A click leads to a new page, where in turn there is no narratively logical connection with the previous one, but which usually only shows orderly new numbers, graphical signs or simple pictures.⁵ Programming languages, source code or the generally hidden information of the Internet are brought to the surface in different treatments, a principle of various early net works, with which their authors pointed out the problematic issue of latent concurrently running protocols.⁶

2.1. BACK TO THE ROOTS: LOW TECH AND MINIMAL INTERACTION

It was not rare for the visualization of elementary data to result in an aesthetics, which, even though it could have taken on manifold forms, still remained far behind the possibilities of the Internet, and which artists therefore postulated under the term Low Tech as a kind of programmatic stance.⁷ Exonemo's **rgb-f_cker** (2003), for instance, makes countless flickering rectangles in different formats dance across the screen, whose coloration consists increasingly obviously of the basic colors of screen transfers, namely red, green and blue. «Flickering» is the technical term for rapidly changing light intensity. The title, ambiguous due to the omission of single letters (f_cker = fucker) alludes to the uncomfortable perception situation with vulgar vocabulary.⁸ With a group of works that can be subsumed under the term «data visualization», **rgb-f_cker** brings otherwise hidden data transfers to the surface, presenting them as a digital aesthetics of their own.⁹

⁴ <http://www.jodi.org>; this is the address of Jodi's official website, but not all of their works are collected there. Numerous works, especially early ones, are hosted on their own websites, whose names usually consist of unintelligible abbreviations and their name. One example is <http://404.jodi.org>: 404 is a frequently occurring code in error messages, which is shown in this work as the only writing on a colorful background. Clicking leads to a list of cryptic terms (e.g. «Bttr nvr thn lt.» or ff), at the end of which the blinking cursor invites an interactivity that does not even exist. The only selection that can be made is a square blinking in the top left corner of the picture, which brings one directly back to the start page [03.2010].

⁵ <http://www.jodi.org/betalab/index.html>, the work **betalab**, which is listed on the current [03.2010] website is a good example of this. Whereas the first page shows a compilation of 3D animated cards and set pieces of a source code, a click leads to sub-pages that are extremely differently arranged, one showing simply a list of four-digit numbers, another offering changing bird portraits, and another showing model drawings of technical processes and the prototype of a simple machine in constant rotation.

⁶ An interest in isolating individual technical components of the Internet is already found in the first net art works. Not only was the early sign code for information exchange ASCII addressed (see for instance Vuk Cosic, **Deep ASCII**, 1998, or also the exhibition **CODEDOC** organized by Christiane Paul at the Whitney Museum in 2002, which was exclusively devoted to the reworking of code), but also the design of the Desktop (cf. the work **Desktop Is**, 1997, by Alexei Shulgin) and the connecting of linked information through a common or multiple websites (cf. Olia Lialina's work **Agatha Appears**, 1997) were subjects of artistic reflection.

⁷ For the British collective **Redundant Technology Initiative**, Low Tech is the program. Cf. www.lowtech.org [03.2010]. In 2000 Justin Hoffmann organized an exhibition in the Shedhalle, Zurich on this theme and

The machine character of the computer and its generative possibilities based on chance are features used by various artists to question or ironically portray the classical concept of creativity. Beat Brogle's **onewordmovie** (2003) and Cornelia Sollfrank's **net.art generator** (from 1999 on) are two image generating works, which leave creativity up to the «machine» through a minimal interaction with the user. Both have a simply arranged start page offering users a possibility to enter a term that serves as a search command to find files marked with this term in various image search engines. **onewordmovie** then recompiles these in a high speed image sequence like a film.¹⁰ A rapidly changing sequence of images is played in a constantly renewed loop of four to eight single images at a time. Once they have been generated, the films are collected and remain on the website to be viewed. As arbitrarily as the images end up on the net, they become just as randomly part of a panorama of the digital image flood subsumed under a search term.¹¹ The machine and its vast virtual hinterland are tamed through the conceptual framework of the artist Beat Brogle and finally the individual entry in the form of a film.¹² With thematic image sequences that sometimes seem absurd, **onewordmovie** represents not only a segment from the collective digital image treasury, but also indicates its organization on the net, which is neither stringently logical nor controllable.

2.2. ATTACKING IMAGE AND MOUSE

Although Cornelia Sollfrank's **net.art generator** functions according to the same basic principle, the proximity of its resultant products to classical art works aims for a fruitful conflict with the conditions and modalities of the art business.¹³ In numerous exhibitions the artist also showed the computer-generated images along with the **net.art generator**, so that questions about the artistic quality of these images, problems of copyright or reflections on the work concept were consequently not merely by-products, but integral components of the installations.¹⁴ The fact that the **net.art generator** exists in five implementations, each designed by the artist in collaboration with different programmers, is a further indication of Sollfrank's attempts to re-develop and assess the concept of creativity under current conditions.

A radical attack on the machine itself is undertaken by the Japanese artist duo Exonemo with the **Danmatsumouse** (2007).¹⁵ While the most diverse attacks on the computer mouse are demonstrated on

illustrated how topical this interest is with works by Sadie Benning, etoy, Critical Art Ensemble and others.

⁸ <http://www.exonemo.com/rgb/indexE.html> [03.2010].

⁹ The term **Data Visualisation** is taken from the publication by Rachel Greene. Under this term she also includes works, for instance, by Lisa Jevbratt, who visualizes Internet protocols, but only optically removes their information content, because it is still possible to click on them. Greene 2004, p. 132-151.

¹⁰ An explanation of how the images are generated is found along with much further information about the work on the website of **OneWord-Movie** itself: www.onewordmovie.ch [03.2010].

¹¹ Brogle himself mentions the problematic term image flood on the website. He indicates that it is organized with his work according to a user-oriented principle. Cf. www.onewordmovie.ch. [03.2010].

¹² Philip Galanter compares the development of a conceptual framework that first assumes a concrete form through the user's input with the way Fluxus and Happening artists worked. Cf. Greene 2004, p. 152 (see note 9). Verena Kuni calls Sollfrank's works conceptual and situates them in the tradition of early institutional critique. Cf. Verena Kuni, «Totally Automatically a Genius», in: **net.art generator. Programmed Seduction**, ed. Institut für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, Nürnberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2004, p. 180.

¹³ <http://net.art-generator.com/src/gen.html> [03.2010].

¹⁴ The **nag** was shown publicly six times between 1999 and 2004; framed prints of the digitally generated image collages were exhibited in the Bremen City Gallery (1999) and in conjunction with the collection exhibition of the Volksfürsorge in Hamburg (2003).

¹⁵ <http://exonemo.com/Danmatsumouse/indexE.html> [03.2010].

the screen, it gradually becomes clear that the cursor is the organ of this abuse. And later still, it becomes obvious that when the connection is completely broken, when the cursor no longer transfers any movement, then the goal of the attack has been reached. The violent separation between the really existing mouse and its virtual effect is an ironic commentary on the autonomy of a machine, which is ultimately always the result of human construction.

3. THE NEW USER-FRIENDLINESS OF «TACTICAL MEDIA»

«The Digital Age exploded into existence,» stated the media artist Lynn Herschman Leeson in 1996, thus describing the sudden and vehement presence of new information and communication forms in the mid-1990s. Similar to the way artistic works of the 1960s and 1970s took the phenomenon of new information technologies practically as a material basis and critically commented on them, a community of cultural workers interested in the Internet reacted to the omnipresence of the World Wide Web.¹⁶ Fascination with the possibilities of global, decentralized and also low-cost communication is already to be found very early in Internet art. Even the project **The World's First Collaborative Sentence** (1994), generally called the first net art work, by the American artist Douglas Davis, operates with the possibility of virtual exchange not controlled by any instance above it.¹⁷ As a contribution to the exhibition **InterActions** (1967–1981), Davis prepared the web server only just set up at the Lehman College Art Gallery in New York to launch his sentence that has still not been finished today.¹⁸ What was soon also to be heard was growing criticism on the part of artists about the commercialization of communication tools by large corporations such as the British Telecom. This theme includes, for instance, **Communication Creates Conflicts** (1995) by the net art pioneer Heath Bunting. Here he adapted the only seemingly interactive tools of these companies and attempted to use them for a personal conversation with the users.¹⁹ With **G-Spam** in 2001 Exonemo took the meanwhile actively used mail culture as a starting point and made a framework of objectionable spam mails in connection with popular electronic greeting cards, in order to address the ambivalence and risks of these forms of communication.²⁰ Their project offers an opportunity to send these virtual greetings in the form of spam to friends, who – if they

¹⁶ On the use of information technologies in the art of the 1960s and 1970s, cf. Sabeth Buchmann, **Denken gegen das Denken: Produktion, Technologie und Subjektivität bei Sol LeWitt, Yvonne Rainer und Hélio Oiticicica**, Berlin: b_books, 2007.

¹⁷ In 1969 Jan van der Marck organized the exhibition **Art by Telephone** for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, whereby the numerous artists associated with conceptual art used the telephone not only as an art object, but also in its function as a communication carrier. This group of works also includes the work **The World in 24 Hours** (1982, presented at the Ars Electronica) by the Canadian artist Robert Adrian X. Using the most different telecommunication apparatuses, he established on-going communication for a period of 24 hours among participants distributed all over the world. There is also Nam June Paik's video work **Global Groove** (1973), which attempted to summarize the idea of the global TV landscape in a single film using numerous technical tricks.

¹⁸ <http://artport.whitney.org/collection/davis/Sentence/sentence1.html> [03.2010]. Only a year after the project was initiated, it was bought by the Whitney Museum and has been running since then on its server. Input possibilities have been adapted to technical possibilities over the course of time. Audio and video material can meanwhile be inserted as well. Cf. Douglas Davis in an interview with Tilman Baumgärtel, **net.art 2.0. Neue Materialien zur Netzkunst**, Nuremberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2001, p. 60.

¹⁹ <http://www.irational.org/cybercafe/tokyo> [03.2010].

²⁰ <http://www.exonemo.com/G-spam/index.html> [03.2010].

have activated an efficient firewall - will never even receive this courtesy.

3.1. LESS UTOPIA, MORE PRAGMATISM

Works like those by Birgit Kempker or Marc Lee include interactive elements, thus also offering indications of the shift from utopias projected onto the net in the direction of pragmatic perspectives. Kempker's **Sphinx** (2004) and Lee's works as a whole presuppose a participating viewer, who takes part in the arrangement or the course of the work not simply by clicking through, but by actively making small contributions. Like Brogle and Sollfrank, Lee also offers users the possibility of controlling the work with a term they have selected. In addition to this input, which substantially influences the character of the work, although not its fundamental constitution, all three authors present options that can result in a refined development of the appearance. Whereas in Lee's **Breaking the News** these relate to the inflection of news announcements, technical details can be influenced in Sollfrank and Brogle's works, such as the number of single images to generate a new image in **net.art generator**, or the amount of images grouped together in a loop with **onewordmovie**. Whereas Sollfrank's work results in images that are sampled, but conventional, Brogle's results in films that are only finished when the search engine finds no more new images.²¹ Both use small supplements to adapt the logic of popular search engines. Especially the additional options offered on the website hosting the work, such as «hit list», «favorites» or «send a movie to a friend», liberate the artistic intention from the political radicalness linked with the term «tactical media».²² The subcultural vocabulary has given way to a user-friendliness that is not only more strongly and clearly oriented to consumers, but also addresses a less specialized audience. For this reason, I do not find it meaningful to speak of a «depoliticization»; the loss of utopian projections goes hand in hand with a factual democratization of the appearance. The fact that this can certainly be in the artists' own interest is evident in Sollfrank's idea of distributing the images created in the **net.art generator** through the major furniture retailer IKEA, for example.²³

3.2. THE SIMULTANEITY OF POPULARITY AND SUBVERSION

The connection between popularity and subversive use is the basis of Marc Lee's works. In keeping with his interest in Internet news, he adapts and manipulates the aesthetics and user modalities of popular news sites. On the fictive news site **Loogie.net NEWS** (first version 2004), freely selectable search terms are used to generate new news an-

²¹ Cf. the information from Brogle and Zimmermann at www.onewordmovie.ch under the link «Concept» [03.2010], the link to **Breaking the News** is <http://www.oamos.com> [03.2010].

²² The term «tactical media» goes back to the historian and philosopher Michel de Certeau; he proposed it in **The Practice of Everyday Life** (in French: **Arts de Faire**, Paris 1980) in conjunction with his analysis of consumer behavior, thus identifying the possibility of a creatively subversive use of hegemonic specifications and positions. In the course of the 1990s, «tactical media» was associated with a political activism aimed at positions of power and frequently adapting their strategies. In 1997 Geert Lovink and David Garcia wrote the manifesto **The ABC of Tactical Media** (http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors2/garcia-lovinktext.html), which was published with the launch of the **Tactical Media Network** website (<http://www.waag.org/project/tmn>) [03.2010].

²³ The artist expressed this idea during the presentation of her works at the opening conference of the research project **Owning Online Art**. <http://www.oaart.ch/konferenz230607/index.html> [03.2010].

nouncements that, when they are fed back into the net, develop an effective impact in virtual reality.²⁴ This subversive act is based on the strategic way of dealing with mass media that grew in significance in the late 1990s, which was covered by the aforementioned term «tactical media».

In the work created three years later, **Breaking the News - Be a News-Jockey** (2007), this legacy can still be sensed, but now the heretical manipulation of Internet news is presented as a caricature and no longer has any feedback effect on items on existing news websites. The News Jockey generates a new news broadcast based on the input of single words or sentence fragments by searching the Internet for the relevant key word and composing an image, text and sound collage from the findings, which can be modified according to individual needs. Yet it is not only the content of the information that can be determined, but also the inflection can be selected in keeping with the user's interests from the options «critical», «informative» or «entertaining». Together with the cartoon-like graphical elements and changing the size and duplication of single image fragments, the interpretive gesture of the News Jockey becomes transparent. Marc Lee mocks the lure of the live broadcast, today a conventional argument for TV formats, by breaking down the material and wildly reconstructing it with aesthetic arguments. Unlike Vuk Cosic's **Net.art per se (CNN Interactive)** (1996), one of the first artistic adaptations of a mainstream website, Lee's works do not intend to represent a targeted attack on effectively operating market leaders, but instead present their aesthetics and mode of argumentation in a playful form.²⁵

4. ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN GESTURES AND ANIMATED POETRY - STORYTELLING IN HYPERTEXT

The interest of net artists in the possibilities of storytelling in virtual space correlated with vehement debates about narrative models in art. Art historiography related methods of narration familiar from literature to aesthetic issues specific to art. Whereas in painting, for instance, the paradoxical simultaneity of a captured segment and its narrative potential was discussed, the starting point for the art of new media proved to be completely different.²⁶ Despite being assigned to the field of visual arts, the art of new media had more in common with the narrative possibilities of literature and film and their critical reflections. These are shared in turn with cultural philosophy discussions, which more recently make a case for the knotted and less linear constitution of all social systems with metaphors like rhizome, network or hyperculture. In her descriptions of narrative strategies in virtual space, the new media specialist Söke Dinkla takes recourse specifically to this terminology marked by

²⁴ <http://www.1go1.net/index.php/Loogie/NetNEWS> [03.2010].

²⁵ <http://www.ljudmila.org/naps/cnn/cnn.htm> [03.2010].

²⁶ According to the art historian Wolfgang Kemp, the artistic treatment of content material was based from the beginning on stories. The development of iconographic codes and modalities served to ensure the readability of the narrative, which could necessarily only be represented by a single moment. Wolfgang Kemp, «Über Bilderzerzählungen», in: Michael Glasmeier (Ed.), **Erzählen. Eine Anthologie**, Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1994, p. 55-69.

post-structuralist discourse and maintains that it is «the transformation from analog to digital medium [that makes] the fundamental doubt about what is real and the search for altered possibilities for representing reality comprehensible.»²⁷

Olia Lialina's early work **My Boyfriend Cam Back from the War** (1996) confirms Dinkla's diagnosis, as the narrative assumes the possibility form. The story tells of a couple meeting again after a long separation due to war.²⁸ Using frame technology that enables a division of the screen into sections that can be individually activated, Lialina develops a dialogue between the two persons, which makes the difficulty of regaining closeness obvious just through the staccato-like sentences. The speaker position always remains unclear here, only individual statements allow for conjectures about whether he or she is speaking. Viewers thus tap their way, not only using the mouse to search for active areas, through the screen increasingly divided into single squares. They also move through a story that is clearly arranged optically, but has multiple levels in the narrative. In this story, the helplessness of the couple in the face of unexpected closeness and their struggle for words corresponds conceptually to the searching, probing movement forwards. Although the viewers are able to discover the strand of the narrative by following their curiosity, the freely selectable options are limited by the technical development to avoid a linear logic of narration. This structure is nevertheless to be read as an anti-authoritarian gesture, which does not – as the frequently mentioned comparison to Sergei Eisenstein's technique of parallel montage suggests – work with the means of a dramatic acceleration. In accordance with the complexity of the situation, instead it raises the search for words to a principle of content and design.²⁹

Against this background, the works by the Korean duo Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries seem almost antagonistic. They additionally emphasize especially the principle of linearity and the dramatic development of a story through rhythmic arrangement, such as in **The End**, for instance, one of the currently forty «text-based animations» that can be viewed on their website.³⁰ Following the usual introduction, in which there is a count-down from ten to one as in a film, the story begins – seemingly – from the end: «The End» it says, the phrase that generally marks the end of a film. The subsequent sentence fragments reveal that the story first starts here and will probably escalate. Rhythmically adapted to accompanying jazz music, the separation of a couple is rendered in dialogue form. What first looks like an amicable agreement soon becomes a forceful exchange between two furious and hurt individuals, who even lash out in the end.³¹ The music enhances the drama by increasing in vo-

²⁷ Söke Dinkla, «Virtuelle Narrationen. Von der Krise des Erzählens zur neuen Narration als mentales Möglichkeitsfeld», in: Rudolf Frieeling/Dieter Daniels (Ed.), **Medien Kunst Netz. Medienkunst im Überblick**, Vienna, New York: Springer, 2004, p. 253.

²⁸ <http://www.teleportacia.org/war/war.html> [03.2010]. Without being autobiographical, it seems likely that Lialina ties the theme to the Chechen conflict then topical in Russia. The narrative itself provides no information about this.

²⁹ This comparison was made by Lev Manovich, for instance, in his essay «Behind the Screen» cf. <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9707/msg00119.html> [03.2010]; Tilman Baumgärtel addresses parallel montage in an interview with Lialina, although she does not respond to it. Cf. Tilman Baumgärtel, **net.art**, Nuremberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 1999, p. 129.

³⁰ The duo's work is described with this telling phrase in their Wikipedia entry. The URL for their website is: <http://www.yhchang.com> [03.2010].

lume, intensity and speed, consequently becoming silent after the woman's violent blow, which corresponds to the end of the short story. The design and compositional principle of this work is found as a structural basis and as a kind of trademark in almost all the animations by Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries. Although the subject matter of the stories and their sources are sometimes fundamentally different, the implementation always reflects the specific theme, despite the framework that remains the same. **Cunnilingus in North Korea** combines the political propaganda of North Korea with the idea of sexual liberation through the equality of all people as postulated by the state in an ironically broken narrative. The text imitates a popular science lecture, which Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries were apparently invited by the North Korean dictator Kim Jong II – according to the introductory words – to hold before a North Korean audience.³² The background music is upbeat and sprinkled with funk elements, the text is highlighted with red and sometimes black bars, and the changing format of the words emphasizes the ironic tone of the appearance. Absurd aphorisms such as «Dialectic Sex + Gender = Happy People» or the remark about the bourgeois-conditioned sexual inhibitions of the South Korean population are commentaries from an unusual perspective of a politically rigidified and self-satisfied nation. Young-Hae Chang's interpretation of this situation oscillates between caricaturing and seemingly cynical commentaries, the taboo-breaking form of which recounts the prohibitions in North and South Korea in the same way.

Similar to Lialina's multi-layered dialogue, Birgit Kempker's **Sphinx** is interested in a narrative structure, in which the position of the narrator is destabilized.³³ This happens on the one hand in that the **Sphinx** is increasingly succeeded by the machine, on the other through the radical departure from a meta-narrative. The authorship is constituted by questioners and respondents, who generate narrative fragments in collaborative communication, dispensing with an overarching structure of meaning.³⁴ The net-based communication among the multiple authors results in an interwoven and continually proliferating web of questions and answers, which are only loosely or barely connected in demonstrating the simultaneity of very different positions.

As these examples show, the interest in media-specific narrative possibilities has mostly abandoned the constitutive function. More recent works playfully explore the media conditions of the Internet, often entirely without an educational impetus.³⁵ Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries' casual remark about the choice of medium – «Net art is relatively cheap to make, and you don't need a studio

³¹ http://www.yhchang.com/THE_END.html [03.2010].

³² http://www.yhchang.com/CUNNILINGUS_IN_NORDKOREA.html [03.2010] is one of the few works that is also available in German. Most of the others can be viewed in English and/or Korean on the website. According to the artists, they usually produce the stories in English first, also because the member Mark Voge is from the USA. Cf. <http://www.brown.edu/Research/dichtung-digital/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm> [03.2010].

³³ <http://www.xcult.org/sphinx/index.html> [03.2010].

³⁴ Söke Dinkla calls the departure from «grand narratives» a central interest of postmodern art. Cf. Dinkla 2004 (op. cit.), p. 252 – 253.

³⁵ Net art shares this development with video and performance art. Whereas usually artists initially engaged intensively and focused with the specific conditions of the medium, this perspective frequently expanded to a pragmatic use of the different media. An illustrative example of this kind of artistic development is shown in Dan Graham's complex of works. Cf. Brian Wallis (Ed.), **Rock my Religion. Writings and Art Projects 1965–1990**, Massachusetts: MIT, 1993.

for all your unsold works»³⁶ - only underlines this observation. At the same time, it testifies to current artistic production conditions, in which media decisions are not of a purely artistic nature.

5. WORKING ON THE WORK CONCEPT

Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries are distinguished by lively international exhibition activity, which is not at all limited to specialized art forums reserved for new media. At the same time, their works rarely undergo crucial changes here: sometimes the computer screen is replaced by a flatscreen, occasionally an enlarged projection with a data projector. The works themselves remain unchanged in their course and composition. Marc Lee frequently already conceives his works for the exhibition context, so it is not unusual for them to be seen in a room-filling installation, within which the visitors find themselves surrounded by constantly renewing news collages.³⁷ Exonemo principally operate in virtual and real space at the same time, making exactly this connection the subject matter of numerous works.³⁸ Cornelia Sollfrank has found various implementations for the public presentation of the **net.art generator**: in the City Gallery Bremen (1999), the collection exhibition of the Volksfürsorge Hamburg (2003), and in the Tinguely Museum (**Kunstmaschinen - Maschinenkunst**, 2008), she also showed digitally generated image collages next to a computer station. Beat Brogle, who also produces videos and installations in addition to his computer-based projects, is familiar with treatments for three-dimensional space. The work **Iconic Flow**, which he realized as a construction site art project for the Swisscom Business Park in Köniz in 2005, is loosely based on **onewordmovie** in content and form. The 28 plasma screens placed in the entrance area show short films with random images from the Internet. Following the principle of **onewordmovie**, search terms can be entered via text messages.³⁹ These adaptations of the works to the respective specific contexts is not regarded by the artists as a makeshift solution. Instead it is part of their activities, which have to take place in keeping with the existing conditions, whether on the net or in real space. Whereas the net presupposes a reflected way of dealing with it due to its technical conditions, the expansion into the exhibition space necessarily results in including its parameters. Net artists thus operate with a situative understanding of work, which centers around sensitivity to context, openness, and process-orientation. Topoi such as the immateriality of net-based art, as they have been named as a fundamental criterion, for instance by Timothy Druckerey and Peter Weibel in the exhibition **net-condition**, are consequently more of a mystification of an artistic practice than a description of current productions.⁴⁰ It is pre-

³⁶ <http://www.brown.edu/Research/dichtung-digital/2005/2/Yoo/index-engl.htm> [03.2010].

³⁷ <http://www.lgo1.net> [03.2010]. On Marc Lee's website there are video and photo documentations of various exhibitions.

³⁸ Cf. for instance, the exhibition at Plug.in, Basel, 2 June to 14 September 2008, <http://www.iplugin.org> [03.2010].

³⁹ Whereas the online version has no restrictions, sexualized or erotic terms are suppressed in the installation for the Swisscom.



Beat Brogle, *Iconic Flow*, 2005 Installation in the Swisscom Business Park, Köniz / Bern

cisely the relaxed way in which net artists deal with the work concept and the materiality of the works that fundamentally re-values the notion of artistry – the most intrinsic artistic capability. The radicalness of this stance results from the situative use of material foundations, which thereby reject an essentialization, as it is demanded and asserted by a branch of media theory. This gesture also remains a potential, because it requires the same flexibility from the reception, and the works thus refuse a reductionist interpretation following criteria such as signature or exclusively specific expertise. In this way, net-based art questions and destabilizes not only various parameters of art production (such as the concentration on a work concept that can be clearly delimited or the notion of a mainly reflective viewer attitude), but it also equally irritates art criticism and art history. The latter, dedicated to the autonomy of art and the resultant consequences, find themselves confronted with a form of art production that self-confidently takes up and demonstrates the dependency of creative practice on various technological, social and institutional conditions. The hesitant inclusion of net art in the traditional art system is consequently also a sign of its obstinate insistence on the principles, with which the independence of art is seemingly guaranteed in society.

Translated from the German by Aileen Derieg

40 The exhibition *net_condition. Art and Global Media* curated by Timothy Druckery and Peter Weibel in 2001 was called a first attempt to historicize net art two years later by Julian Stallabrass. Cf. Julian Stallabrass, *The Online Clash of Culture and Commerce*, London: Tate, 2003, p. 126.

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**PETER SCHNEEMANN
PROBLEMS OF COMPATIBILITY: ON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN NET-BASED ART AND MARKET IN A MEDIA HISTORY
PERSPECTIVE**

ART STUDIES AND INSTITUTIONS HAVE NOT YET LEARNED TO SUCCESSFULLY AND LASTINGLY CONVEY EPHEMERAL WORKS. THE CONCEPT OF WORK AND VALUE ORIENTED TO WHAT IS UNIQUE AND ARTISTICALLY DISTINCTIVE THUS MAKES NET ART APPEAR AS A SPECIAL AND HENCE ISOLATED AREA, THE DIFFERENCE OF WHICH APPARENTLY PREVENTS ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN THE MARKET. PETER SCHNEEMANN EXPLAINS THE PARAMETERS OF THE DISCUSSION AND OUTLINES POSSIBLE MODELS USING, AMONG OTHERS, THE HISTORICAL EXAMPLE OF VIDEO ART.

1. INTRODUCTION

The following reflections are intended to be a contribution to the discussion of the possible marketing of net-based art. The aim is not to provide a specific answer to the question of whether and how this genre can be established in the market; it is more a matter of opening up perspectives of the parameters of the discussion and the possible models. It must be noted, however, that there are radical differences in the various forms of art on the Internet in the dominance that the medium has for a specific work. Whereas for one work it may be more a matter of the distribution form, for another, the potential for interaction and processuality may be constituent.

A structural and historical perspective can first of all clarify which issues from the history of ideology apply to the art market, which are to be understood sociologically, and which take recourse to a media history discussion. The pragmatics of the project, the founding of a gallery for net-based art¹, already conjoin the mechanisms of an institution of the art market with the question of the specific features of a medium. Although this statement may seem trivial, it recalls reflexes that either presume a fundamental incompatibility in this reference or presuppose a transformation of one element (the institution) by another (the medium). In reference to new media, Rudolf Frieling has spoken of fundamental «mediation paradoxes» to connote a contradiction that he says exists between new media and their distribution in conventional media.²

It is also evident that a categorical division, indeed even a conflict is principally constructed between «purely» artistic interests and economic, strategic considerations. This division is highly reactionary and does not in any way correspond with the state of reflection in research. The following remarks are based on the opposite assumption: Internet artists have a natural interest in anchoring their activity and production in the economy.³ Which historically evolved structures are to be considered here and could serve as a foundation for new strategies? Programmatically, this means looking for a new level of investigation, which integrates economic questions about the «product» in the analysis of a network of complex dependencies on the work concept and value concept.

2. WORK CONCEPTS

What is the ideological constant in the discussion of the relationship between net-based art and art trade based on? Every characterization of this art genre tends to state a radical difference from the conventional concept of art. The contrast used here is the positioning in the major reference system of art history, the categories of which can be quickly

¹ The founding of a commercially operating gallery for net-based art was the starting point for the research project *Owning Online Art*.

² Rudolf Frieling, *40yearsvideoart.de*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2006, p. 7–14.

³ This applies not only to individual artists, but also to the community of artists operating on the Internet. An example of this is the close cooperation between the Ars Electronica and telecommunication and computer companies like Vodafone and Microsoft.

listed: **the artist** as author with an intention and production location, whose work can be contextualized in terms of history and subject matter; **the object** with a specific materiality, which can be identified, dated and exhibited as an original; **the location** (gallery, museum, art fair), which allows for a localization within the general rules of art; **the reception** as an action enabling an experience for the audience and thus generating an impact.

These categories serve as positioning aids for the recurrently erupting fundamental discussion of quality and its criteria. In addition, every single perspective can be revalued and absolutized as a normative instance. The classical art object, as it has been collected and inventoried for centuries, is located here unequivocally. The model of space and time that is applied is structured by the notion of a production process, which every reception process follows and is usually subordinated to. Up to the present, the aforementioned categories form a hierarchical structure for the inventory of every museum collection.⁴ These kinds of axioms are found even in current legislation, from copyright to the standard model of a gallery contract.⁵

The development of art in the 20th and 21st century led to greater and greater contradictions between new artistic practices and the institutional work concept. The strategies of Modernism were already no longer to be satisfied with a work concept focusing on the production of an aesthetic object with heroic individual authorship. The problems can be grasped at several levels, whereby it should be emphasized that the existence of a static work concept has frequently formed the rhetorical precondition for its negation.

Especially relevant, also for the so-called «new media», is the split between concept and realization that was already developed as a concept by the avant-garde movements of the 20th century: «On the one hand they took recourse to prefabricated industrial products and had the manufacture carried out by third parties, or on the other hand they sold to the collectors instructions for assembly and animated them to put the work together themselves.»⁶ These strategies may be conditioned by the necessity of accessing specialized skills, as well as in a conceptual deconstruction of authorship. Revisionist tendencies frequently complain here of the increasing importance of an intentional discourse that is understood as an abstract theoretical superstructure. It is thought that this no longer corresponds to an aesthetic «value», to sensual evidence.

Another very important level of the dissolution of the object concept applies to the classical demarcation of process, for instance the process of production and of action. All the qualities of the

⁴ Cf. Thomas Ketelsen, *Künstler-
viten, Inventare, Kataloge: drei
Studien zur Geschichte der kunst-
historischen Praxis*, Ammersbek bei
Hamburg: Verlag an der
Lottbek Peter Jensen, 1990;
Hans-H. Clemens, *Inventur im Museum:
Rekonstruktion und Modernisierung
traditioneller Sammlungsverwaltung.
Ein Praxisleitfaden*, Bielefeld:
Transcript, 2001; Tiffany Sutton,
*The Classification of Visual Art: A
Philosophical Myth and its History*,
Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 2000.

⁵ See also Christine Fuchs, *Avant-
garde und Erweiterter Kunstbegriff.
Eine Aktualisierung des Kunst- und
Werkbegriffs im Verfassungs- und
Urheberrecht* (Nomos Universitätss-
chriften Recht, Bd. 358), Baden-
Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft,
2000; Maria Eichhorn, *The Artist's
Contract. Interviews with
Carl Andre, Michael Asher, Daniel
Buren, Paula Cooper, Hans Haacke,
Jenny Holzer, Adrian Piper,
Setz Siegelau, John Weber, Law-
rence Weiner, Jackie Winsor*, Ed.
Gerti Fietzek, Cologne: König, 2008.

⁶ Bernadette Walter, *Dunkle
Pferde. Schweizer Künstlerkarrieren
in der Nachkriegszeit*, Bern:
Peter Lang, 2007, p. 96.

transitory, the ephemeral and even of interaction are fundamentally opposed to the idea of an object collection, such as it is cultivated in museums, for instance, as a central institution of art history. In the case of performance art, the moment of lasting presentation can be transformed into a moment of unique or repeated performance. In this way, the performance presents itself as a possible form of realization that contains elements of interaction, frequently eluding control. The category of the conserved, datable work necessarily fails here. If one considers a museum like the MoMA, the consequences of this problematic issue are radical. This institution of the art of Modernism writes an object-based art history, which almost completely excludes performance art. Treatments of processuality, not only that of performance art, are of paradigmatic importance for an issue interested in the relationship between new media and the art market. For what can be historically traced here is how the strategy of the art market (see also its «proposed solutions») and the development of an artistic practice become mutually productive. A separate type of object thus arose from the genre of documentation, which is both traded and conserved in museums.⁷

It is possible to go through the reference system described above and find further «dissolutions». At the latest with Land Art and the subsequent various developments of action art in social space, a differentiation of the notion of the location of the art work is to be noted. Institutionalized space is only one location of the work, which refers to other locations of the same work.⁸

The art market, on the other hand, stands for a conservative concept of the work. Even though innovative economic concepts and forms of distribution, such as «service» or «on demand», were able to penetrate into the art system specifically through the conservative concept, there is little evidence of them to be found so far. The static concept of work follows a tradition of collecting, which links the preservation of an object over a longer period of time with the classical value canon. It should also not be overlooked that essential motivations for collecting art are still linked to forms of representation focusing on the object. Both object-relatedness and collection activity imply compensatory strategies, for instance in opposition to a «short-lived event culture»⁹, but possibly also in opposition to a concept of achievement oriented to increased flexibility and dynamics.

The question of the economic condition of art on the Internet is shifted almost simultaneously with the issue of conservation into the foreground of attention. This parallel clearly indicates that the work concept of net-based art certainly includes «being tied to» and «conditioned by» media. The temporal tie, as I explained it for the work concept, is now reflected in attention to hardware and

⁷ Cf. Miguel Angel Corzo, *Mortality Immortality? The Legacy of 20th-Century Art*, Los Angeles, Getty Conservation Institute, 1999; Beatrice von Bismarck, *Interarchive: archivarische Praktiken und Handlungsräume im zeitgenössischen Kunstfeld*, Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002.

⁸ Cf. Nina Möntmann, *Kunst als sozialer Raum: Andrea Fraser, Martha Rosler, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Renée Green*, Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2002; Peter Schneemann, «Mapping the Site. Der Anspruch des Ortsspezifischen als Herausforderung für die kunsthistorische Dokumentation», in: *Kritische Berichte*, Vol. 33, No 3, 2005, p. 64 – 76.

⁹ See, for instance, also the argumentation of the Schaulager as a model for a new form of «preservation» at <http://www.schaulager.org> [03.2010].

its aesthetics, such as in the green monitor writing of older works.¹⁰ Computer art so often described as «immaterial» is tied again to a media carrier through the question of its capability of being archived.¹¹ There is more and more recognition of how the discourse of immateriality contradicts the strong dependency of net art on technical equipment and a sophisticated infrastructure. Net-based art urgently needs strategies for programmatically clarifying and demonstrating the work concept. The currently noticeable «retreat» to specialized niches is not a long-term perspective.

3. VALUE CONCEPTS

The category of art is a value category. All of its formulations are either reflected engagements with value concepts or they form a foil for these, regardless of an intentional separation or negation.¹² Art trade does not market objects, but rather value attributions relating to objects, but also to processes, intentions, materials, techniques, even artist subjects. In a sense, then, the value concept forms a horizon of meaning and reception for the changing formulations of art. This can lead to certain features of an artistic strategy being over-proportionally valued in this process of projection and gaining a purportedly constitutive character: the trace of the artist's hand, the rare material, uniqueness in comparison with the copy, innovativeness, provocative force, etc.

The interpretation process is closely related to societal agreement and undertakes a categorization of the singular work in a value discourse. New forms of the work concept were able to achieve a high status under ideal constructions of the avant-gardes. For net art, value attributions could be noted at a very early stage in conjunction with utopian proposals of communication, globalization and innovation. The protagonists themselves supported this ideal positioning.¹³ It seemed obvious to see the primary engagement with the social potentials and problems of a new information and communication technology in the use of the Internet.

«Today, Ars Electronica has become an international trademark, the trademark of a city **facing the future.**»¹⁴ As the title *Facing the Future* suggests, Ars Electronica sees itself as part of an avant-garde. It is not contemporaneity that characterizes the self-understanding of its scene, but rather orientation to the future/the innovation potential for science and society. In this way, a problematic reduction of the interpretation horizon takes place with art on the Internet through the

¹⁰ Christiane Paul, «The Myth of Immateriality - Presenting & Preserving New Media», in: Oliver Grau, *MediaArHistories*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007; cf. Also the proposal from Johannes Gfeller in the research project *AktiveArchive* at <http://www.aktivearchive.ch> [03.2010].

¹¹ On the concept of «immateriality» cf. Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972*, New York, 1973, and also Tilman Baumgärtel, «Immaterialien - Aus der Vor- und Frühgeschichte der Netzkunst», at: <http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/6/6151/1.html> [03.2010].

¹² Peter Schneemann, «Physis und Thesis. Die Frage nach dem Wert der Kunst in der Gegenwart», in: *Kodikas/Code, Ars Semiotica*, Vol. 25, No. 3-4, 2002, p. 275-290.

¹³ Cf. Stefan Münker and Alexander Roesler, *Poststrukturalismus*, Stuttgart: Verlag J.B. Metzler, 2000.

¹⁴ *Facing the Future* is a review of two decades of the festival for computer art. Timothy Druckrey (Ed.), *Ars Electronica. Facing the Future*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999.

specific characteristics of the medium, which represses a differentiation into formal or aesthetic interests and conceptual reflections.

The resultant defining of net-based art almost exclusively through the technical medium has either a positive or even a subversive connotation; in both cases it is oriented to social relevance.

The first doctrine sees a completely new possibility for the relationship between artist and audience in the medium. The focus is targeted to the possibilities of distribution. Similarly to the introduction of print graphics in the 18th century of the discovery of the fax machine by artists like Nam June Paik or Joseph Beuys in the 1970s, a democratic potential is seen in the alternative to the status of the original: «By means of technical media, art is supposed to overcome the limitedness of the manually produced original, reach a new audience and mobilize society.»¹⁵ - «All users can operate interactively on an equal basis, everyone principally functions equally as sender and receiver. The Internet works in a way that is as decentral and self-organized as possible. The expansion is user-controlled. Central controlling bodies able to sustainably steer what happens on the Net are absent.»¹⁶

In 2000 Tilman Baumgärtel also propounded the thesis that the Internet allows a democratization of art, so that in principle everyone can become an artist: «Some of the most innovative and unusual net offers here come from <living room senders> from all over the world. In this way, it seems that Brecht's famous demand that all media consumers should also become media producers has come a bit closer to being realized.»¹⁷

In this sense, net-based art is the first art direction that can theoretically be accessed worldwide and can generate simultaneity independent from space. It operates internationally and is received internationally. «Net art is everywhere and nowhere, so to speak - it takes place in a distributed computer network. The fundamental conditions of <cyberspace [...] include dematerialization (the inhabitants and their living space are digital and thus, to a certain extent, bodiless) and space-time directness (the <spaceless space> of the net world is largely independent from geographical distances).»¹⁸ However, we cannot speak of a completely international art scene. Rather, the electronic communication networks mirror the existing social-economic hierarchies and continue them.¹⁹

The second doctrine sees the Internet as already economically contaminated and seeks possibilities for a new appropriation in subversive strategies.²⁰ Net-based art today can no longer, in my opinion, define its ideal value solely through technological

¹⁵ Dieter Daniels, *Duchamp und die anderen: Der Modellfall einer künstlerischen Wirkungsgeschichte in der Moderne*, Cologne: DuMont, 1992, p. 18.

¹⁶ Sabine Helmers, Ute Hoffmann und Jeanette Hofmann, «Netzkultur und Netzwerkorganisation. Das Projekt <Interaktionsraum Internet>». WZB Discussion Paper FS II 96 - 103, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, 1996, p. 18.

¹⁷ Cf. Tilman Baumgärtel, «Zielgruppe: null Zuhörer. Konferenzbericht: <net.congestion - Art, Music and Activism at the Dawn of the Fusion between the Internet and Broadcast Media>, Amsterdam, 6 - 8 October 2000», in: *Kunstforum International*, Vol. 153, 2000, p. 468.

¹⁸ Tilman Baumgärtel, *[net.art] Materialien zur Netzkunst*, Nuremberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 1999, p. 21.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁰ «It will be a decisive programmatic point of the social ecology to guide these capitalist societies of the age of mass media into a post-mass medial age; I mean that the mass media have to be reappropriated by a multiplicity of subject-groups who are able to administer them on a path of singularisation.» Félix Guattari, *Die drei Ökologien*, ed. Peter Engelmann, Vienna: Passagen, 1994, p. 64.

innovation, but instead requires a critical positioning under art-specific aspects. The connotation of innovation is no longer sufficient, since it has penetrated so far into everyday life that a utopian potential is hardly directly recognized.²¹ The question of the economic possibilities of art on the Internet radically raises the question of whether it wants to operate with the status of art or move closer to completely different value systems, such as service or entertainment media.

Despite all the work on canceling out the boundary between art and life, the value of art is still defined specifically through this difference. The value of a work is conditioned by the categorical status of its purity and innocence, which separates it from the value system of consumer products. The «symbolic alchemy» of value enhancement functions according to this model from Bourdieu in isolating the world of art. Does art thus attain its value in the negation of an exchange value, as it assumes its function in society by rejecting any function?²² It must be added that for the self-understanding of most artistic disciplines, the Internet as a distribution medium has led to a crisis in the notion of «intellectual property». If the Net is understood as being «not a consumer medium, but a producer medium»²³, then the question of the economic survival of the artist remains. Which categories play a role in clarifying whether Internet art can tie into the traditional canon of art values again?

4. LOCATIONS AND ACTIONS

The more complex a work concept is and the faster notions of value are established, the more important the rules and standards of reception become. Locations and actions are key moments in the economic system of art. The location as reference is a real and lasting place. This criterion very precisely describes the function of a museum. The museum functions not only as an institution of preservation, but also as the place that records the history of the impact of a work. Even if net art is described as immaterial and as «contemporary», it is quite interesting to observe how the anecdotes and stories about older works of net art attract more attention than the work itself. History imbues a work with a cultural-historical value here in a thoroughly classical sense. One could go even further and stress that the museum as a compensatory instance ought to take on a new significance with respect to work concepts tending towards the ephemeral. Modernism declared the tradition of the apotheosis of the past, as it was still celebrated in the 19th century especially by the institutions of the art academy and the museum, as antagonistic to the truly creative forces of art. Art's memorial potential and stylistic recourse to binding historical positions merged into the image of an enemy. In the

²¹ The slogan of the online gallery artcart.de «be avantgarde buy net.art» thus had a strangely outmoded effect for a period following the avant-gardes.

²² Bernd Kleimann, *Wo zu Kunst? die Frage nach ihrer Funktion*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001.

²³ Baumgärtel 2000 (op.cit.), p. 468.

avant-gardist emphasis on the contemporary, on the other hand, the arts should participate in the ideas of progress and cast off the ballast of memory.

Manifesto culture, as it can be grasped as the key moment of 1909 for the European avant-garde with the poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Umberto Boccioni or Gino Severini, is based on a strict rhetorics of the negation of everything that refers to the past as tradition.²⁴ The appeal for liberation through destruction is thus logically aimed explicitly at the constructions of remembrance and rule mechanisms of museum and library. Skepticism towards the museum as an instance of history is still frequently cited, but a counter-movement can be recognized in an intensive engagement with the archive.²⁵ I am convinced that the incipient canon formation here is crucial for the interest of art collectors in this art form.

The category of location belongs to the status of the art work not only for the retrospective view, but also for its constitution in a social act. A work without a community that can consider it in a social interaction can hardly function as an object of desire. The recipient of art enters into a close connection to the situation of display. Like the work itself, the recipient is part of a display. Here one might recall the revaluation of the recipient in the early history of the «salon». The reception of art is a societal process, the rituals of which for Modernism have been developing since the 18th century.²⁶ Art and the shared agreement about its value form a platform for the protagonists to position and distinguish themselves. It is to be noted that only those «locations of art» have gained special attractiveness in recent years, which offer recipients possibilities to appear as «actors». Whereas museums register less and less audience for their permanent collections, art fairs, «art occasions», collectors meetings and other «events» are continually breaking records in audience numbers.

5. MODEL FOR COMPARISON

A prognosis for the future development of the art market and its relationship to net-based art cannot be provided here. However, video art can serve in this case as a model for comparison, which was celebrated as a new medium in the 1970s and elicited very similar discourses on its potential and media-specific identity. In terms of their structure, the axioms are surprisingly similar: the art video was initially not capable of competing in the exhibition context. Presentations usually took place in a darkened special room. A hybrid in between exhibit, television and cinema, video art was a counter-proposal to the classical, iconic image media.²⁷ Its authors claimed a socially relevant, even political role for themselves; the medium,

²⁴ Friedrich Wilhelm Malsch, *Künstlermanifeste: Studien zu einem Aspekt moderner Kunst am Beispiel des italienischen Futurismus*, Weimar: VDG, 1997.

²⁵ Bismarck 2002 (op.cit., Note 7); Ingrid Schaffner, *Deep Storage: Arsenale der Erinnerung: Sammeln, Speichern, Archivieren in der Kunst*, Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1997.

²⁶ Oskar Bätschmann, *Ausstellungskünstler. Kult und Karriere im modernen Kunstsystem*, Cologne: Du Mont 1997.

²⁷ Cf. Dieter Daniels, «Video/Kunst/Markt», in: Wulf Herzogenrath und Rudolf Frieeling (Ed.), *40jahrevideokunst.de. Digitales Erbe: Videokunst in Deutschland von 1963 bis heute*, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006, p. 42.

which ran counter to the jaded consumption of mass media and the bourgeois concept of the original, was to develop its emancipatory and democratic effect beyond the context of art as well.²⁸ And finally, the sale of unlimited video tapes was established at an early stage.

The development of video art demonstrates very clearly, I think, how a new medium that found a broad social use within the framework of the entertainment industry developed strategies to establish itself in the classical art context. Although it might be a reduction, the thesis could be proposed that within these strategies ideological questions of a new «democratic» art were abandoned in favor of the old model of the certified individual work. The questions of an alternative target group and new forms of reception were not able to prevail in their radicalness either. Since the mid-1990s (Daniels takes the *documenta X* in 1997 as the key date) video art has undergone a qualitative leap in terms of recognition in the exhibition context and in the art market. As the reason for this, Daniels cites the changed work concept and the transfer from video tape to projected art video for spatially encompassing presentation.²⁹ Technical progress in image projection (illumination and image size) played an essential role in this. Consequently, physical sensory experience in the reception plays a central role for commercial success.³⁰

The art video substantially expanded its development as a hybrid from the classical image genres of painting and photography and the new, digital image worlds³¹ by being anchored in the installation. «This accommodates the type of the marketable art work to the extent that it still has an object character, even if it is an ambiguous one. The object (video tape, DVD) is not itself pictorial, but it forms an entity that can still be separated from its playing device. The significance of this is less technical than market-psychological: one does not buy a digital conglomerate of hardware and software, as in the case of an interactive art work, for instance, but instead «only» the pictorial «work» without display technology.»³²

For the potential development of net-based art on the market, following the analysis of work concept and value concept and a look at the example of the boom of the art video, this poses a seemingly very simple question. In order to facilitate a marketing of net-based art as a genre, is it necessary for this genre to simulate criteria of the classical art object, or can the art circulate in and through the Internet as an art good in distribution channels that originate outside the art business?

Translated from the German by Aileen Derieg

²⁸ Gerry Schum's project of a television gallery in 1970 and the attempt to make limited art videos marketable with his video gallery can be seen as a turning point from the utopian attitude of the 1960s to an art-immanent concept of video art in Germany. Cf. Daniels 2006 (op.cit.), p. 45.

²⁹ «The leap in market value stands instead for a completely changed work concept of video art, which was prepared in the course of the 1980s through, among others, video installation and video sculpture, which was quickly forgotten again, but it has only had a broad impact since about ten years. In fact, many already established video artists already stopped producing video tapes at the end of the 1980s, only making space-related work then instead, [...]» Cf. Daniels 2006 (op.cit.), p. 43.

³⁰ Cf. Karlheinz Lüdeking, «Jenseits des weißen Würfels. Wie die Kunst dem Betrachter ausserhalb der Galerie begegnet», in: Wolfgang Kemp (Ed.), *Zeitgenössische Kunst und ihre Betrachter*, Jahresring 43, Cologne: Oktagon 1996.

³¹ Daniels 2006 (op.cit.), p. 40.

³² Daniels 2006 (op.cit.), p. 40.

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MARKUS SCHWANDER PACKAGE DEAL – ON THE MATERIALITY OF NET-BASED ART

THE MARKETABILITY OF WORKS OF ART DEPENDS TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THEIR «MATERIALITY» AND PERMANENCE. MARKUS SCHWANDER COMPARES THE 60S' CONCEPTUAL ART IDEA OF IMPERMANENCE WITH THE EXPERIENCES OF TODAY'S ARTISTS, WHOSE NET-BASED WORKS ARE OFTEN LIMITED AS TO VISIBILITY AND FUNCTION DUE TO TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS ON THE INTERNET. SCHWANDER MAKES A CASE FOR THE COORDINATED CONSERVATION OF THESE WORKS BY THE ARTISTS AND INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR COLLECTION AND TRANSMISSION. HE GIVES CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF HOW THE THINKING ABOUT MATERIALISATION FOR THE SAKE OF SELLING ARTWORKS CAN CHANGE WORKS FOR THE BETTER.

The research project **Owning Online Art** studied the relationship between net-based art and the art market, addressing and answering some basic economic, technical and historical questions. It also examined several net-based artworks. To evaluate the conditions of sale and possession we had to check their «materiality.» What did the collector acquire when he bought this kind of work? Will the url be assigned to a new owner? Should the work's programming on the artist's server be deleted and transferred to that of the new owner? How can the programming volume be determined? What should be kept when the work is restored?

All the digital artworks examined for the project are based on a program. This program is a text that describes computing processes that involve operating systems and their applications - i.e. other programs. Such a program can be considered an active structure and they are associated with different components. Their combined interaction makes the work visible and enables the desired operations to be performed. Since these relationships involve mutual interdependence, any changes in the relevant software - be it a browser or a player - can disrupt what is seen on the screen. Repairing these disruptions often means altering what can be considered as the work's structure. Accordingly, there is a major difference between the materiality of digital and non-digital art. Tabea Lurk discusses further issues from the point of view of conservation in her article.¹

1. MATERIALITY

The idea of «materiality» is part of a discussion about the immateriality of works of art that began in the early 1960s. This idea is fundamental to the marketing of net-based art inasmuch as net-based art originally oriented itself essentially on the conceptual art tradition and the discussion involved the issue of the art market from the very beginning. In the words of Lucy Lippard writing in 1972: «The people who buy a work of art they cannot hang up or have in their garden are less interested in possession. They are patrons rather than collectors.»² She also pointed out that magazines and newspapers were ideal supports for conceptual art, because this form of «materialisation» corresponded to the spirit of the works: «Kosuth, Piper and Ian Wilson published works as <ads> in newspapers at the time.»³ In 1969, Joseph Kosuth himself expressed the hope that immaterial art would find a potentially wider audience thanks to the mass media than traditional art forms like painting and sculpture.⁴

In **How to do Things with Art** (2007), Dorothea von Hantelmann criticized the idea that works of visual art could be immaterial at all: «An art form that offers no possibility of transmission will either be made transmissible or ultimately disap-

¹ Tabea Lurk, «On the aging of net-based artworks» in the present publication, p. 51–65.

² Lucy Lippard, **Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object 1966 to 1972**, University of California Press, Berkley and Los Angeles, 1973, p. xiv.

³ Ibid. p. xviii.

⁴ Ibid. p. 73.

pear from the visual arts canon.»⁵ She adds: «There is no way for art to exist outside of the context of material objects, things or products. Materiality is the precondition for a work of art, since each one materialises something. This implies, however, that it exists structurally as a thing and product.»⁶ According to Adorno, the thingness of an artwork and the basic tendency to negate its own thingness is precisely the dialectic that founds the visual arts.⁷ While conceptual artists like Jan Dibbets consider immateriality to be the resolution of this dialectical conflict and believe that artworks are all the more market-proof as they are «artless»⁸, it seems more interesting today to look at what contents come into being through materialisation and how they reflect the issue of collectibility. The artists approached in our study generally expressed a pragmatic attitude to the marketability of their work. Martine Neddham (a.k.a. Mouchette) wrote: «Any work of art, no matter how immaterial it is, becomes a marketable commodity when it enters the art market. I wish my art would enter the art market one day so as to benefit from that kind of circulation. I'm glad it was never made as a marketable commodity and I don't think entering the art market would alter its nature.»⁹ Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries took a more assertive stance: «We tell institutional collectors that they can present our work like a painting or a sculpture. We tell potential private collectors that they can hang our work over their sofas at home and in their office.»¹⁰ The materiality of digital art productions comprises the data that permit it to be manifested. It is reasonable, and even essential, to consider this data volume as material when it changes hands by means of a sale. Logically, this also permits the recording of the events involved in the interaction to be considered as data, and so as material (as we will see in the case of the **Sphinx**).

2. PACKAGE DEAL

The thoughts mentioned at the beginning about the special materiality of net-based artworks make it necessary to define what exactly belongs to an artwork and how its individual components are to be dealt with. In our study we called these definitions «packages.» We originally wanted to use the expression «Package Deal» as the name for an art gallery that would make sure that the sale included all the components of a digital artwork.¹¹ Although the gallery idea fell by the wayside, it seems advisable to retain the idea of «package.» A package is a negotiable unit and the «package deal» includes all the measures necessary to make a work usable by its owner. Thus it seemed worthwhile to talk with the artists about the materiality of their work and evaluate their viability on the art market. The question of the materiality of a work also

⁵ Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How to do Things with Art*, Zürich/Berlin: Diaphanes, 2007, p. 14.

⁶ Ibid. p. 160.

⁷ Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetische Theorie*, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 7, Rolf Tiedemann (ed.), Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970, p. 262.

⁸ Cf. Lucy Lippard (op. cit.), p. xiv: Jan Dibbets: «To sell my work? To sell isn't part of the art. Maybe there will be people idiotic enough to buy what they could make themselves...»

⁹ Martine Neddham in «Artist's Statements» in the present publication, p. 150.

¹⁰ Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries in «Artist's Statements» in the present publication, p. 163.

¹¹ In his article «Economies of Art» in the present publication, Simon Grand discusses the conditions for creating a gallery for net-based art.

involves determining the size of its content. Since this cannot be established in terms of spatial extension, we can resort to comparisons with time-based media. We can, for example, quantify the length of time needed to view a film or the number of clicks needed to explore an interactive work. Since there are no guidelines for prices in this area, the artists and gallerists have to elaborate their own criteria, while also taking the expectations and ideas of their clients into account. Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg, who are represented by the Nicolas Krupp Gallery in Basle, state in this connection that the clients «appreciate a certain measure of stability through the establishment of clear rules,» since these gave them «standards and a basis for comparison.»¹²

In the course of our study the Ricola Collection acquired a net-based work by Esther Hunziker titled **un_focus**.¹³ This work consists of ten animated films, some of which are interactive. It was sold as an original and is considered a sizeable work, especially since the individual elements are not variations on an idea, but independent audiovisual creations. **un_focus** is the artist's first net-based artwork and was created in 2000. To make sure that her work would be viewable in the near future, Hunziker had to reprogram it in flash format. Flash has established itself as a web standard and often comes pre-installed on new computers. Similar applications have lost ground because they were not used as often. Art projects that call on data from the Internet are dependent on search engines and so demand a certain amount of technical maintenance. Thus the description of their materiality must also take this interactive factor into consideration.

Although an artist like Hamish Fulton - whose work since the 1960s consists mostly of walking tours - markets documentary photos as full-fledged representations of his activity, this kind of strategy is no longer satisfactory for interactive art.¹⁴ The impermanence of the intervention was part of Fulton's intention, but the artists who participated in our study considered the technically-conditioned disappearance of their work as a loss. The preservation of their work is a basic concern for them, not least as supporting evidence for their identity as artists. In this connection Shu Lea Cheang wrote: «Yes, I can only restate again, how important it is to preserve online work. In my case, my major commission **BRANDON**¹⁵ at the Guggenheim Museum was once lost (removed from the sponsored server) and kept offline for a few years. It was finally resurrected by the museum with a digital art preservation grant... until now, I don't see the site getting fully recovered in its full length presentation as it was in 1998-1999.»¹⁶ As we will see below, thinking about the components that make up the «package» of a work can also lead to a new way of looking at the works via a broader concept of materiality.

¹² Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg in «Artist's Statements» in the present publication, p. 159.

¹³ <http://www.ref17.net/unfocus> [03.2010]. Cf. Roman Kurzmeyer's article in the present publication, p. 115-120.

¹⁴ Patrick Werkner, *Land Art USA*, Munich: Prestel, 1992, p. 134. Dr. Peter Schneemann deals exhaustively with issues of documentation as art in his article «Problems in Compatibility» in the present publication p. 19-28.

¹⁵ <http://brandon.guggenheim.org> [03.2010].

¹⁶ Shu Lea Cheang in «Artist's Statements» in the present publication, p. 128.

3. NEGOTIATING RELATIONSHIPS: SPHINX SPECIALS

Visitors of the **Sphinx**¹⁷ website can type in questions and receive an answer after a certain interval of time. In her text on strategies for potentially saleable products, «Sphinx Specials,» Birgit Kempker treats the relationship between artist and buyer in terms of a marketable object. The very first contact with the Sphinx already raises the question of the type of personal relationship to be contracted. The home page displays a regularly pierced light-blue surface through which an unidentifiable person is looking. A ticker tape at the top of the page asks «sphinx or machine?» There are two options: «ask» or «read.» «Ask» leads to a blank input field and «read» opens a list of all the questions asked so far and their answers. By choosing, the users also decide on the role they wish to play: acting either as passive observers or active participants in a communicative transaction.

After the first choice comes another game with closeness and distance. The question can be answered either by the sphinx or by the machine. Because of its stated identity, its digitally-generated voice and the sextain structure of its sentences, the machine creates an impression of impersonality and distance. The **Sphinx**, on the other hand, seems to be animated by a living person. The interplay between the two «persons» intensifies the relationship between the user and the Sphinx/machine. Participation is free in every sense of the word. The option «Eigene Fragen» («My Questions») and the resulting answers, however, can be purchased for CHF 350 in the form of a CD that includes the record of the preceding questions and answers. These are combined by the **Sphinx** in such a way that a thread is generated in which it becomes clear in which mental context the answer to the question was elaborated. Thus what the buyer acquires is not just a document of his or her personal exchange with the **Sphinx** but also a reconstitution of the **Sphinx's** treatment of the topic in question.¹⁸

The relationship between the **Sphinx** and collector can be deepened even further. Birgit Kempker writes in «Sphinx Specials»: «The book object composed in connection with a special question by the collector or art buyer (<book objects> because they are pasted, sewn and cut-out, and so three-dimensional objects) associates images and texts with the question (pasting, cutting, copying, photographing, microphoning). These specials are added as a copy (book) to the [Sphinx] archive and so probably appear again in the next links as selected material.»¹⁹ In this way, the art buyer becomes directly involved in the art process, just as the initial questions led to all the subsequent interactions. The **Sphinx** also assigns tasks to the collector: «She has to copy one of the works she purchased and transport it, etc. This makes each special very different; allowing for different co-operations, different actions and effects on the **Sphinx** in the net.»²⁰

¹⁷ <http://www.xcult.org/sphinx/index.html> [03.2010].

¹⁸ Examples of these threads can be seen at <http://www.xcult.org/sphinx/index.html> under «collectors2 [03.2010].

¹⁹ From Kempker's description of the DA Store (unpublished manuscript). More information: <http://www.xcult.org/kempker/mat/sphinx-buch.html> [03.2010].

²⁰ Ibid.

4. UNCHOSEN ACCESSES. 1 YEAR OF ONEWORDMOVIE



Beat Brogle, onewordmovie,
Harddisk with the data of a year's
download

At the other end of the scale, Beat Brogle's **onewordmovie**²¹ asks visitors only to type in one word. The **onewordmovie** program then searches the Internet for images involving this word and makes a flash movie out of them. Unlike Birgit Kempker's **Sphinx**, no one is looking at the user. A single word typed into the search engine, as with Google, sets the film in operation. The typing-in of search words has become an everyday action, and it does not require the user to engage in any personal communication.

The interaction becomes binding only when it comes to a sale. The object sold is a DVD containing the film made for the word in question. The choice of words will be correspondingly more discriminating. Will the word chosen generate only nice pictures or will it express the client's originality? Could, for example, the «Michael Jackson DVD» someday become a valuable collector's item? Each specific word is sold only once a year. Buyers receive a DVD with the images found for the word on the Internet and a player that generates the film. Thus the random image archives of the Internet can be used to create original, and potentially valuable, collectibles by the mere copying of data on a storage medium.

In 2007 Brogle began to download all the images that were culled by **onewordmovie** each year. This downloading does not just modify the location and accessibility of the data; Brogle realized that the content of the work also changed in the process. For each yearly download Brogle used all the words that were entered into **onewordmovie**. The words - about 100'000 - crystallized an unexpected area of interest among the users: over 90% of the words involved pornographic material. One of the things that characterizes the Internet is that each user sees only what he or she is looking for: the other information does not exist. The fact that the image selection procedure was performed impersonally, independently of the user, changes his or her way of looking at the work. This project might seem at first sight to be a trivial pursuit, but the recording of the chosen words creates an archive of unsettling collective predilections.

When a selection of images from the Internet at a certain moment in time is recorded, the question of historicity immediately comes to the fore, since the data will not be preserved on the Internet forever. Each annual download permits the creation of a work that not only acts as an offline image-bank for **onewordmovie** but also contains very complex information about the Internet.

²¹ <http://www.onewordmovie.ch>
[03.2010].

5. THE FRAMING OF THE EVENT: 1 HOUR OF TV-BOT

Marc Lee works with the news that is reported on the Internet. Random queries combine the news into serendipitous new broadcasts. As soon as you choose the **TV-Bot**²² website, the program starts searching the Internet for news reports less than an hour old. The news constantly changes and appears in ever-newer combinations. This process is not recorded, and so the news of the moment disappears into the past as new items keep pouring in. The news-stream seems always to have existed and to flow on forever. What of this stream could be bought and sold? The artist's offer is an hour's worth of **TV-Bot** starting at a time of one's choice. Since there is no automatic recording of the news (this would fundamentally alter the nature of the work), the artist has to record the selected hour himself. However, the moment for beginning the recording will always lie in the future, and so how is the buyer to choose this moment? A birthday? A national holiday? At random? The invitation to choose a date in the future seems somewhat unusual in the case of news reports, since news events are usually dated only in retrospect, in the past tense. The definition of a materialised «work» for the sake of marketability in this case forcibly raises questions about the public's expectations. It upsets our usual ideas about current events that are worth being reported and goads the spectator into wishing for pleasant, humorous, violent or sensational events in the future. The fixing of the data flow here also raises new questions and expands the scope of the work.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately, like many other net-based artworks, **TV-Bot** suffered from the loss in popularity of the Real Player. Most of the TV stations that provide news pictures and text have stopped using this program, which means that a reprogramming of the work was in order.²³ Again, like other net-based artworks, **TV-Bot** has to survive in a context dominated by IT companies. Constantly changing applications means constant adaptation. It also means that net-based art has a limited transmissibility, since technical conditions – browser, programs and hardware – stop supporting the work and let it lapse into invisibility. These changes occur so fast and can be so radical that digital culture may seem to be ephemeral by its very nature. Since net-based art is so strongly influenced by conceptual art, there are some voices that say that the immateriality and impermanence of net-based art is part of its basic condition. Yet if the visibility and function of an artwork is too restricted or becomes obsolete, then the work exists only as an anecdote and its impact as a work of visual art can no longer be felt. Since a good deal of net-based art works interactively, which means that the work

²² <http://www.igoi.net/index.php/Main/TV-BOT?> [03.2010].

²³ TV-Bot 2.0 exists since January 2010: <http://www.igoi.net/56ktv> [03.2010].

²⁴ Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg in «Artist's Statements» in the present publication, p. 159.

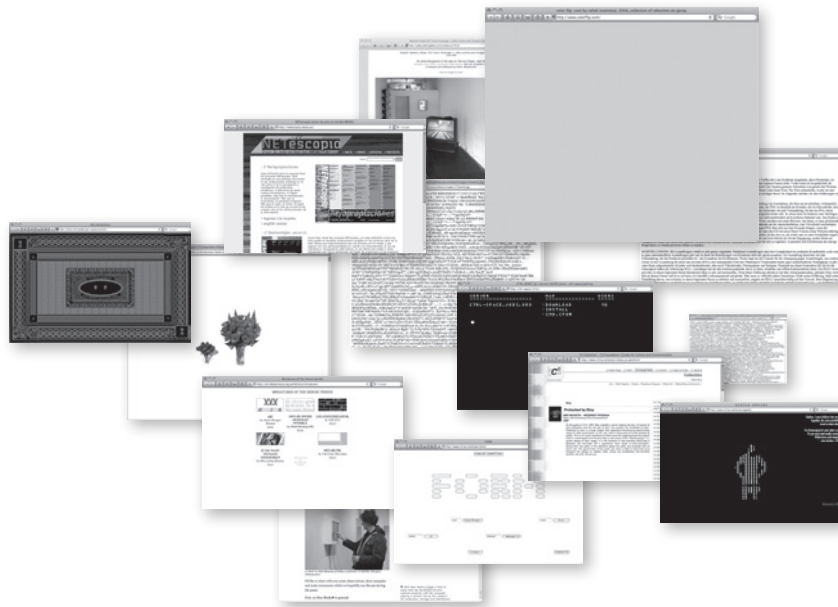
is produced to a large degree by the actions of the users, it is much more difficult to evoke the experience of the work through a documentary image or description, as with traditional media. Monica Studer and Christoph v d Berg describe the situation in these terms: «We believe that it is important that the history and chronology of net-based artworks can be consulted in the net itself. Today, in 2009, technological developments and faster data-transfer make it possible to create different works of art than ten years ago. However, this will be evident only when the fossils of net-based art can still be viewed online... In works that do not require interaction between the public and artist, the source code should always be updated to the newest technical standard. But who has time for that kind of maintenance? The updating could be done by specially trained personnel. In our case, we prefer to invest our time and money in new work than in restoring our old work, and so we accept the fact that earlier works are no longer completely functional.»²⁴

The need to preserve net-based artworks menaced with oblivion due to new modes of access and altered compatibility points to a general problem that plagues net-based art. Where will the website of important designers be preserved? Will we be able to view the visual culture of today's Internet twenty years from now? Art collections could make an important contribution in this respect, since it has always been one of their tasks to preserve works of art and make them accessible to the public. Each picture displayed in a museum involves expenditures in terms of space, maintenance and insurance. Although the net-based art described here can be preserved only by investing in technical upkeep, net-based art accessible on a server and kept online can very easily be made permanently visible. While the disappearance of the object seemed a radical artistic solution from the 1960s onward, we have to do some rethinking at a time and in a medium in which everything is vanishing very rapidly anyway. The preservation of net-based artworks can be seen as an act of resistance against the powerful IT companies, as well as an example of the conservation of new technology to protect cultural heritage.

Translated from the German by Jean-Marie Clarke

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visual artist, studied Art Education and Art in Lucerne and Basel. He has exhibited works of sculpture and drawing, including at the FRI-ART Fribourg (2006) and at the Villa Merkel in Esslingen (2007). The publication **Abdruck, on Markus Schwander's Objects and Drawings** was released in 2004 by Revolver-Verlag, Frankfurt/Main. From 1999 to 2008 he was lecturer at the UAS Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design in Basel. He is presently co-director of the research project **Owning Online Art**. <http://www.markusschwander.com> [03.2010].



OLIA LIALINA ALUMINUM SITES, GEEK CURATORS AND ONLINE CONSERVATORS

OLIA LIALINA HAS BEEN QUALIFIED IN THE FIELD OF DIGITAL MEDIA SINCE HER YEARS AS A JOURNALIST AND FILM CRITIC IN MOSCOW IN THE EARLY 1990TIES. WITH HER INTERNET BASED ART WORK **MY BOYFRIEND CAME BACK FROM THE WAR** (1996), SHE RAPIDLY ENTERED THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE OF MEDIA ART NO LONGER BOUND TO NATIONAL OR LANGUAGE BORDERS. OLIA LIALINA IS PROFESSOR AT MERZ AKADEMIE IN STUTTGART (GERMANY). HER BROAD EXPERIENCE WITH CURATORS, COLLECTORS AND ARTISTS GIVE INSIGHT INTO EARLY INITIATIVES. THE AUTHOR ILLUSTRATES THE CHANGE WITHIN DISTRIBUTION AND PRESENTATION DURING THE LAST TWENTY YEARS AND MAKES CLEAR THAT NET-BASED ART WORK IS, GENERALLY SPOKEN, DEPENDING ON WIDESPREAD KNOWLEDGE.

«Online Art» is of course a very careful term. It is as broad as computer art. Is there any computer which is not online now?

All sorts of artistic expression, a large variety of technologies and media can be seen as online art. Generative graphics made with processing, performances in Second Life, Flash games, browser bookmarklets, Google mash-ups, Youtube videos as well as conceptual net.art works, HTML experiments of the 1990s and networking acts of the 1960s. There is a variety of forms. For example at the time of writing this, Firefox Addons and Wikipedia art are hot and software art and interface art are out. And whatever or whoever becomes famous online attracts the interest of gallerists and collectors today, despite the complex technology or ephemerality of the work.

Works that were supposed to be online or shown and discussed at new media festivals and conferences¹ in the second part of the nineties, entered contemporary art galleries, art fairs and private collections after the turn of century.

Recently, «Net Art» changed from being an art form in new media to a subject in contemporary art. I see several preconditions for this transition:

1. Big audience.

If yesterday for net artists it made sense only to address people in front of their computers, today I can easily imagine to address visitors in the gallery - because in their majority they will just have gotten up from their computers. They have the necessary experience and understanding of the medium to get the ideas, jokes, enjoy the works and buy them.

2. Mature medium.

Maturity for a medium means that users are really busy and the medium became totally invisible. If I want to attract attention of users to their online environment and create works about the World Wide Web, I'll better do it offline. Net art today is finding its way out of the network.

3. Slim computers.

They look exactly like picture frames and they come with only one button. You press this button and the art piece starts. Reducing a computer to a screen, to a frame that can be fixed on the wall with one nail, marries gallery space with advanced digital works. Wall, frame, work of art. And the art world is in order again.

I formulated these principles two years ago in the «Flat against the Wall» essay for Media Art Undone panel at Transmediale07 conference.² Today I'd add a 4th one:

¹ For the variety of methods to show net art in the 1990s read my article «Die Kunst reisst aus», in: *DU. Die Zeitschrift für Kultur*, issue no.11, November, 2000, p.31-33 (online version «A Link would be enough», see <http://art.teleportacia.org/observation/du.html> [03.2010].

² http://art.teleportacia.org/observation/flat_against_the_wall [03.2010].

4. Geek Curators.

To name some with whom I had the pleasure to work – Paul Slocum, And/Or gallery (Dallas), Marcin Ramoci, Vertex List (New York), Maxim Ilyukhin, ABC (Moscow). They are not only knowledgeable about the online world and free from the media art prejudices of the 1990s, but also technically competent and innovative. They can offer truly unexpected solutions for materializing, objectifying and preserving works that were born to live in the browser.³

Among important events that reflect the process are Bryce Wolkowitz's On/Off show of 2006 that brought web projects of different years to the walls of real space. In 2008 IMAL in Brussels put together an exhibition of new media works from private collections, a big part of them was dealing with web aesthetics or were formerly web projects. In 2008 net artist Dragan Espenschied and myself were commissioned to make a web-specific work to be shown outdoors at the Madison Square Park in New York. The curator of the park's public art program considered Animated GIFs to be proper visuals for public space.

Talking about the clients, there is Thierry T., a mysterious Belgian collector, who looks for the stuff he likes online and suggests to the gallerists or artists directly in what form or storage medium he'd like to have it in his, they say, biggest new media collection. There's a rumor about him rebuilding his house to give a proper place to all the «aluminum web pages»⁴ he bought in the last years.

*

But about owning art online? There are precedents and interesting examples. Not so many though, even if technologically it would have been a very easy thing to do; also effective if you plan to get some publicity. Today it would be very fitting as well, in times when it's so fashionable to keep your digital belongings on server farms. I don't suggest to move collections to the Cloud (it could be an interesting opportunity for online galleries, not collectors), but to keep the purchased works online and to manifest your rights to the copy or original by making your name prominent. In the title bar or in the location bar, for example, if the project is to be seen in the browser.

A curious case is the one-screen-project **Colorflip** by Rafael Rozendaal.⁵ Its title in the very top of the browser says «ColorFlip.com by Rafael Rozendaal, collection of Sebastien de Ganay». As it seems collector de Ganay knows that web is the best place to exhibit web art and knows how to deal with the browser space.

Ten years ago, at the zenith of Dot.Com, Auriea Harvey and Michael Samin of e8z.com bought my page

³ For example for the Show#17 (<http://andorgallery.com/shows/17.html>) Paul Slocum transformed a webpage **Olia's and Dragan's Comparative History of Classic Animated GIFs and Glitter Graphics** (2007) into a 7-channel video on commodore monitors. See <http://www.contemporary-home-computing.org/vernacular-web-2/examples.html> and <http://www.andorgallery.com/shows/images/17stack2.jpg> [both 03.2010].

⁴ Web graphics, or generative graphics, or interface art is often sold today as digital print or silkscreen on aluminum.

⁵ Such projects can be interactive and dynamic, but the user is not leaving the document and thus not changing the URL. <http://www.colorflip.com> [03.2010].

If You Want to Clean Your Screen. The work was a part of *Miniatures of Heroic Period*⁶, a very provocative exhibition for its time, 1998. It was the first exhibition ever that explicitly offered net art (technically web pages) for sale. e8z.com were the first ones who wanted to support the idea and, I guess not in the last place to experiment with the form that an online collection could take. **If you want to clean your screen** was moved to their own server, where it stays till now. Harvey and Samyn didn't go further with their collection. So my work is the only one in their «possession» folder.⁷ But one should say that the way they designed their possession page is a piece of art by itself. Innovative and technologically sophisticated, with a lot of respect to the medium. And not without irony, they were net artists themselves, after all.

But even with only one work in their possession they have enough to do. Though **If you want to clean your screen** was technologically a very primitive work, it uses two functions in Netscape 3. These functions were considered bugs and got removed quite soon. So in browser coming after Netscape 3 these bugs are not working, but every time in a different way, so new code has to be constantly written to keep the page functioning.

Other two works from the Heroic period exhibition were sold only much later, in 2005, when MEIAC in Spain started to build their collection of online art. In the beginning of 2009 it became the Net Art Viewer⁸, part of the Immaterial Museum Project of MEIAC. At this moment it is a selection of 30 Internet projects. They are presented in a classical web exhibition way: info about artists, about projects, curatorial statement, screenshots and a link to the project itself. An interesting peculiarity is that there are actually two links: One leads to the original project on the server of the artist, the second to a purchased copy stored on the museum server. It looks like a temporary solution... or curator's confusion (I'm still waiting for the curator's statement).

C³ in Budapest is an institution with more experience in maintaining online art. It played an important role in net art in the second part of the 1990s and was providing residencies to net artists from 1996 to 2003. At the moment the C³ collection contains 20 online artworks including Shulgin's **Form Art**⁹, Jodi's **Ctrl Space**¹⁰ and Etoy's **Tanksystem**¹¹. They all were realized there and are kept online and taken care of for more than ten years. My experimental net drama **Agatha Appears**¹² is maintained there since 1997. It has to go through the «cosmetic procedures» constantly: for example graphics are appearing too small for contemporary high resolution screens, the used audio format is not supported any more, it became impossible to fiddle around with the status bar in current versions of browsers... In 2008 conservator Ela Wysocka, graduate of the Faculty of Art Conservation and

⁶ <http://art.teleportacia.org/exhibition/miniatures> [03.2010].

⁷ <http://www.entropy8zuper.org/possession> [03.2010].

⁸ <http://netescopio.meiac.es> [03.2010].

⁹ <http://www.c3.hu/collection/form> [03.2010].

¹⁰ <http://ctrl-space.c3.hu> [03.2010].

¹¹ http://www.c3.hu/collection/index_en.php?id=6 [03.2010].

¹² <http://www.c3.hu/collection/agatha> [03.2010].

¹³ http://www.incca.org/files/pdf/resources/wysocka_e._agatha_reappears_net_art_restoration_project.pdf [03.2010].

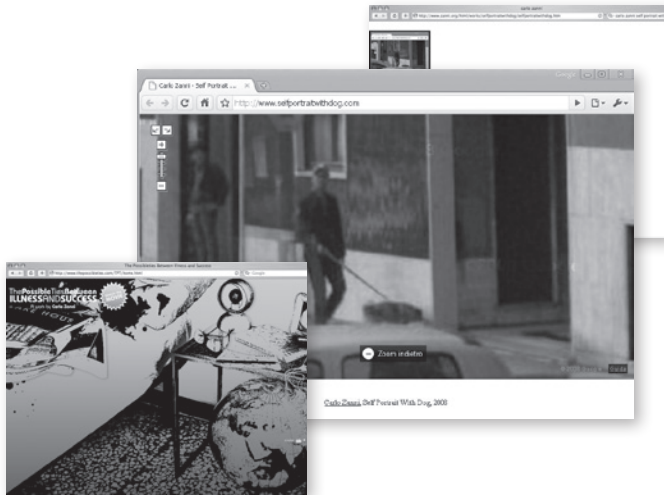
Restoration of Fine Arts Academy in Krakow, and C³ programmer András Szönyi restored Agatha Appers, by rewriting HTML code, Java scripts and substituting Real Audio with Flash. Now you can read the dialogs again and follow the story.

This was one of the first experiments to restore a net art work. And the one that actually succeeded. Wysocka writes about the experiment: «Although Agatha is complete again and works properly with current browsers, applied conservation treatments won't protect Net-art pieces from further Internet development as it is barely possible to predict these transformations. Reformatting and reprogramming strategies are not long-term solutions because they place the artwork in a never-ending process of continuous translation to correlate with valid technology. For this reason and due to the nature of the medium itself the results obtained cannot be considered the final state of the work and the end of preservation efforts.»¹³

I see it as a rather optimistic statement. There is no end to preservation effort in case of art online. The conservator sees the priority of old work functioning in new browsers over preserving the author's programming and virtualization of the artworks environment. There is a good chance that online art will stay online.

OLIA LIALINA

born 1971 in Moscow, is a pioneer Internet artist and theorist as well as an experimental film and video critic and curator. Lialina studied film criticism and journalism at Moscow State University, graduating in 1993. She founded Art Teleportacia, a web gallery of her work, which also features links to remakes of her most famous work «My boyfriend came back from the war» and was one of the organizers and later, director of Cine Fantom. Lialina is currently teaching at Merz Akademie in Stuttgart. Some of her artwork is maintained in the computerfinearts collection at Cornell University. <http://www.teleportacia.org/olia.html>, <http://www.merz-akademie.de/cms> [03.2010].



CARLO ZANNI
329,95 EURO – A TEN YEARS INVESTIGATION

FOR OVER TEN YEARS CARLO ZANNI HAS BEEN CONCERNED WITH THE QUESTION HOW NET-BASED ART COULD BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE ART-MARKET. HE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN VARIOUS PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS AND HE HAS EXPLORED THE SUBJECT EXPERIMENTALLY IN GALLERY SPACES. BY HIS OWN WORK ZANNI REFERS TO DIFFERENT STRATEGIES, DEMONSTRATING HOW THE CONSEQUENT MATERIALISATION OF NET-BASED ARTWORKS RISES CRITICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ART MARKET IN GENERAL.

I think an artist is responsible for his work from the beginning to the end in all the possible meanings. You can either make art for free or sell it to make a profit. However, if you care for it, your life won't be easy. I choose to sell my projects because I believe in the ethics of a regulated market not only within the art world. Of course some people don't need to sell to keep doing what they like to do most. Many others instead are struggling in daily jobs to finance their lives. And this is how things go whether you are a novelist, a songwriter or a visual artist.

The market of digital works is very tiny in comparison with more established ones (paintings and sculpture). Even video, which has been out for almost 40 years now, isn't well represented in important auctions. Digital art, and even worse, networked art, is almost invisible. Since I've been among the first ones attempting to wade this dangerous river, I always tried to search for easy ways to approach the art market while respecting the pretty unique nature of the projects.

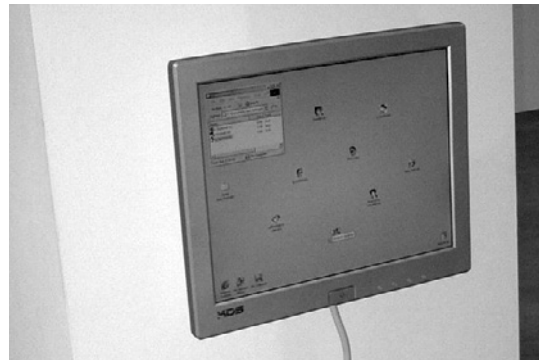
I began thinking about selling models for net-based artworks as soon as I realized that art dealers didn't have a clue on how to sell them. I thought that if I was giving them a model and some possible standards, they could use them to build a market. I was wrong, not in order to develop my theories and models but in thinking dealers needed this. They probably needed and still need education to understand the artworks and bravery to support them in an international context within the contemporary art world and market. Despite this awareness, I always kept investigating the subject both hosting a forum (**P2P-\$: Peer to Peer Selling Processes for net_things**, 2002)¹, a mailing list (**P2P-EDU: Peer to Peer Educational for art dealers**, 2003)² and testing my ideas on the field on my own projects.

Another 'big reason why' is that the main part of the current generation of influential dealers, critics, and collectors are not at ease with the language developed specifically to the media used by the artists/collaborations (artists today are making works with tools using programming languages as 'colors' 'and brushes', formal structures to incorporate the functions of mass media). More generally, I think that schooling is a key issue to

1 P2P-\$: Peer to Peer Selling Processes for net_things was a chat based dialogue that lasted three days (May 22, 23, 24 2002).

I was invited by critic and curator Valentina Tanni to give a lecture, but instead of speaking myself I chose to invite 40 speakers worldwide, and asked them to give their opinion and share their experience about selling net things. There were some interesting point of views like from John Klima, John Simon and Wolfgang Staelle. But there was no final answer for what I was looking for. The protocol started (or re-started) a discussion about this topic, then I found the perfect balance and answers to my needs with the **Altarboy**, theory + artwork. More info about «The Protocol, discussed on Rhizome that then became Altarboy», discussed below: <http://www.zanni.org/html/altarboyallinfo.htm> [03.2010]. See also: from An Interview with Carlo Zanni, by Anne Marie Boisvert, for **CIAC Magazine** #16 fall 2002, http://www.ciac.ca/magazine/archives/no_16/en/entrevue-zanni.htm [03.2010]. Press Release from 2002: <http://rhizome.org/discuss/view/1995> [03.2010].

2 P2P-EDU: Peer to Peer Educational for art dealers was done in collaboration with Michele Thursz. The P2P-edu wanted to build an educational bridge between net works and those people who have a really pragmatic position in the art field, i.e. those discovering, supporting and distributing contemporary expressions of our time: galleries and dealers. In fact, a crucial reason why the market for net based art works has not evolved, is the existence of an out of date business model used in the traditional art market. Depending on the nature of the work, the piece has to be checked and debugged constantly trying to migrate it to updated platforms that can be more easily maintained than an old PC etc., otherwise you buy a piece, you store it, and when you turn it on after 10 years of storage, it probably won't work. Conservation and maintenance are very important when dealing with this type of projects. And dealers as well as some artists and collectors are not prepared for it yet. This theme was approached by the first P2P chat conference.



Carlo Zanni, IcoPortraits (Desktop Icons), 2004, CDs, portraits original size, screen, installation view und USB stick

build a better world. Of course I'm not talking specifically about art teaching.³

FILE

In 2000-2002 I did some tiny portraits under the form of 32 x 32 pixel desktop icons. Famous people and simple friends, as Elizabeth Payton was doing in her practice. When I've been asked to show some of them in Prints and Chips - a show curated at Bitforms Gallery in New York by new media pioneering curator Michele Thursz - I decided to show them under a temporary visualization form. I made four prints out of them. Each print was hosting a single icon (the same size it has on the screen) and then mounted on aluminium to be hung onto a wall.

At the bottom of the wall I installed the proper artwork that was a USB pen hosting the files that were also displayed as real icons on a monitor just next to the prints. Doing this I was stressing the fact that the file was more a «flexible spatial concept» than a unique and immutable object like a sculpture or a painting. The buyer was acquiring the rights to «temporary visualize» the file (for instance video projecting it, printing it) while the «value» of the piece was kept in the

³ From «I simply call it art», an interview done with Kristine Ploug for *Artificial.dk*, June 29 2005, <http://www.artificial.dk/articles/cz.htm> [03.2010]. Press Release from 2003: <http://rhizome.org/discuss/view/7724> [03.2010].

file. He couldn't go and resell the print but of course he had rights to visualize the file in the way he liked it most.

This empowers the collector by allowing any possible form of temporary visualization of the file, and the ability to re-use or re-load the file in many ways to manifest a variation of objects. The fragility of the file adheres to the notion of the precious object but the malleability of the file is seductive for the ideologies of consumerism. These ideas are expressed in a conversation between critic Claire Barliant, senior editor at Artbyte magazine, and myself for A Post Media Network, 2001.⁴

A few weeks before the exhibition, this theory and specific way to approach the market were supported and explained to a public audience as a case study by Michele Thursz in **Collecting the Uncollectible**, a panel discussion held at the Guggenheim Museum. Panelists: Artists John Klima and John Simon, moderated by Jon Ippolito, Associate Curator of Media Arts, Guggenheim Museum, NYC. Artist Mark Napier initiated this conversation around new business models for digital artists together with educators Kim Kanatani and Rosanna Flouty of the Guggenheim Museum.⁵

NETWORK



Carlo Zanni, Altarboy, 2004

I wanted to find a neutral and very customizable model to sell radical Internet based art, something characterized by a «primordial asset», more a theory than an object of art. A more radical approach to the matter was the making of **Altarboy**, in 2003 presented for the first time during Artissima Art Fair in Turin at the Analix Forever booth. **Altarboy** is a portable metal suitcase that once opened, displays in the top shell a screen showing the art piece (a close up of a young woman with pupils filled by images retrieved by Google using queries she gave me describing her personality). These images once saved from the search engine were reduced to a size of 1 x 1 pixel to fill the pupil of the subject. People could click on the eyes to check its content in transformation). Inside the bottom shell there was a PC running as a web server. The PC wasn't hosting only the code powering the artwork but also a web server publishing. Once online, the public could have access to a website to interact with the piece. This means that when the buyer plugs the case into the web, the artwork is shown

⁴ <http://www.zanni.org/html/txtinterv/clairebinterv.htm> [03.2010].

⁵ From **Vitalogy**, published by ICA London, 2005, text by Carlo Giordano: <http://www.zanni.org/index.html> [03.2010].

online as a proper website while when it is offline, it is only available for him, locally. During its online life, **Altarboy** stores the traffic passing through it (images, text, IP ...) in a database, so that you can also run it in an offline mode or in an after-Internet era. This way is very useful when selling a networked piece that requires to be online to be alive.

Altarboy is a theory platform and an artwork. It means that the theory (server + domain name etc.) can be used for a myriad of other projects with their own concepts and aesthetics. And it is an artwork as well (actually two) because I used this process for two sculptures called **Altarboy**.⁶

ARCHIVE



Carlo Zanni, *The Possible Ties Between Illness And Success*, 2006/07, sculpture with iPod

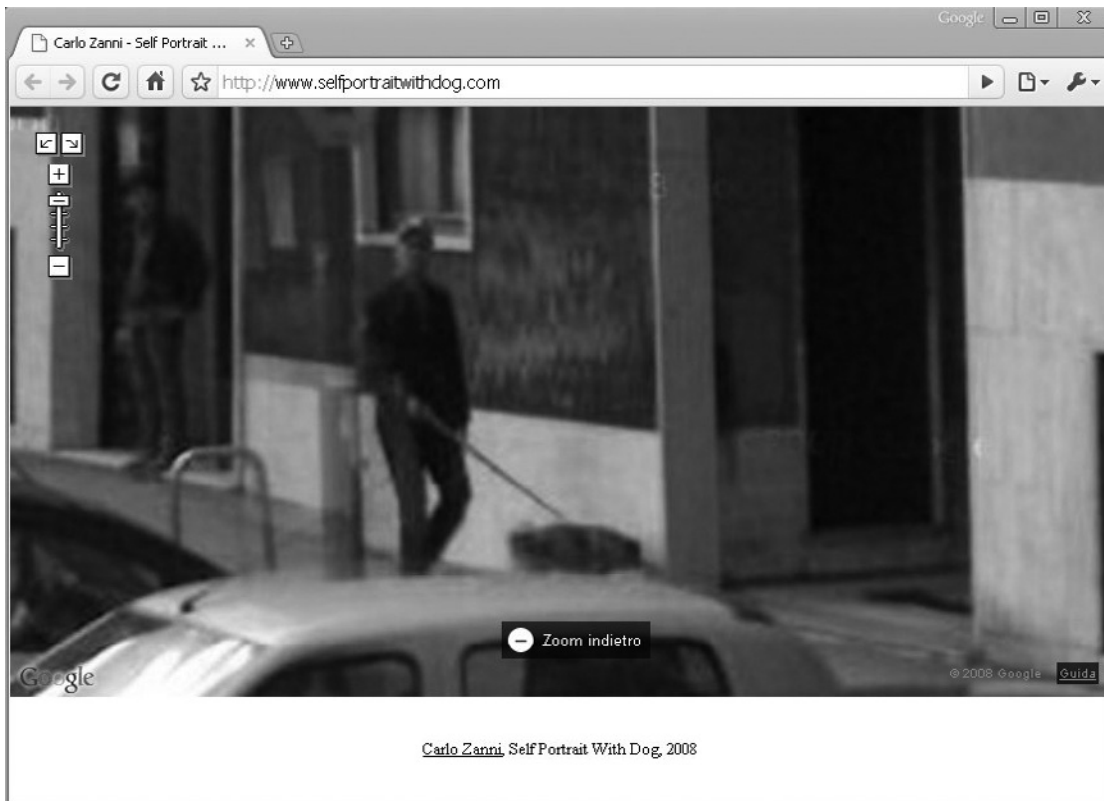
Other forms I've experimented within my practice so far is the sale of archives containing recorded versions of a time based experience. **The Possible Ties Between Illness And Success**⁷ is my first attempt of merging cinema and Internet giving birth to a hybrid I call **DATA Cinema**.

The project is based on a sequence where an actor lays on a bed sick with his skin filled by stains and dots. The amount and position of the stains on the body were determined by the number of people visiting the website on which the short movie was available and their country of origin. So statistics were transforming some elements of the narrative. The server behind the project was a dedicated server rendering movies on a daily basis (when web stats were available). The system was publishing online some of them once a week. The daily renderings were kept storing to obtain twelve archives based on the life

span of one year of online life. These archives were then uploaded into an iPod (one month per iPod). This iPod was part of a sculpture consisting of a laser cut metal case covering the iPod (except for the screen) with a nanoceramic sculpture made with a fast prototyping machine from the last scene of the movie (when the actor and his partner lay both on the bed). The collector buys the iPod based sculpture and 30 unique movies rendered in the corresponding month. This sculpture, together with the file and the server, is another very flexible model that can be customized to sell various projects.

⁶ See also: <http://www.zanni.org/html/works/altarboy-cyrille/altarboycyrille.htm> [03.2010].
<http://www.zanni.org/html/works/altarboy-oriana/altarboyoriana.htm> [03.2010].
<http://www.zanni.org/html/altarboy-allinfo.htm> [03.2010].

⁷ <http://www.thepossibleties.com> [03 2010].



Carlo Zanni, Self Portrait with Dog, 2008

DOCUMENTATION

The documentation of a project instead of the project itself is something explored in the past to sell performance-based works. There are many books giving detailed information and examples. In most cases it's about making photos, or videos and adding a certificate. I think documentation is a good strategy to be added to other forms of conservation and exhibition. For instance an iPod archive could break down or even iPods will not exist at all in a few years. So it's good to give the films on a DVD to the collectors too. To minimize dependency and because of all the instability problems, we should start thinking about the use of many different kind of media and sources for the same purpose.

WEBSITE DOMAIN NAME

The selling and buying of website domain names is probably the first or one of the first things happening years ago when the net bubble was yet to come. It is a simple and clean way but not too interesting - in art terms - if it is only used to sell some content you could easily save on a CD or on any other storage device. One project I recently came up with fits very well into this model and it is the way I currently sell it. The project is called **Self Portrait With Dog**⁸ and is a web page

⁸ <http://www.Selfportraitwithdog.com> [03.2010].

with a two-frame layout. The bottom one works like a museum label, with author's name, title of the work and year; the top frame, much bigger, has a link to Google Street View: this link shows me walking my dog in Milan. Basically what happened is that the Google car had shot us on a spring afternoon and then I found ourselves online some months later when Google held a public launch for the Italian version. This means, that when the Google street view car will pass again to keep their database updated, we will not be there anymore. So the website will look the same except that we'll be replaced by someone or something else.

CARLO ZANNI

born 1975 in La Spezia (Italy), uses live Internet data feedback to create time-based social consciousness experiences using photos, films and installations that investigate topical issues of our lives. Zanni exhibits internationally, and has had shows and screenings at the Performa 09 in New York (2009), the Galleria Lorcan O'Neill in Rome (2009) and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (2009). The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London organized his first retrospective in October 2005 and published his book **Vitalogy**. <http://www.zanni.org/index.html> [03.2010].



TABEA LURK, BERN UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS / AKTIVEARCHIVE ON THE AGING OF NET ART WORKS

ALTHOUGH THE INTERNET MAKES US BELIEVE THAT AS USERS WE ARE ALWAYS SERVED WITH UP-TO-DATE DATA, NOT A FEW NET-BASED ART WORKS ARE ALREADY NO LONGER ACCESSIBLE DUE TO THEIR HISTORICAL PROGRAMMING, OR THEIR ORIGINAL APPEARANCE IS CHANGED BECAUSE OF TECHNICAL ADAPTATIONS. THIS ESSAY ADDRESSES THE QUESTION OF WHICH INTERVENTIONS ARE LEGITIMATE IN ORDER TO SECURE A WORK AND WHICH CONSERVATIONAL MEASURES ULTIMATELY DAMAGE THE WORK IN ITS HISTORICAL CONDITIONEDNESS. LURK'S TECHNOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED REFLECTIONS EXPLAINED WITH ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES ARGUE FOR MEASURES OF PRESERVATION THAT MUST BE NEWLY DEFINED FROM ONE WORK TO THE NEXT. THIS PRESUPPOSES A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO THE TERMS OF ORIGINALITY OR AUTHENTICITY.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet, only just forty years old, has developed, especially in the last decade, from the more or less closed, highly developed research network Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) into a colorful marketplace, in which art, as we know, has also found its niche.¹ As so-called net art, it invites us to become flaneurs², to interact (Studer/van den Berg)³ and participate (Gees)⁴, or it seeks to shake us up with artistic actions (Übermorgen.com⁵) and dispel some of the shininess of all too smooth surfaces. Mark Napir, for instance, breaks down HTML-based websites into their basic components in the work **Shredder** (1998)⁶, creating an impression as though the sites have been run through a paper shredder.

Since the mid-1990s, primarily the graphical user interface of the Internet – the so-called World Wide Web (WWW) – has appeared as an artistic medium, the technical boundaries of which have been tested by artists like Vuk Cosic⁷ and others, for example with computer programs that (formerly) made the browsers or computers of their users crash.⁸ In addition, there is an exploration of legal boundaries and the complex relationship between copyright-protected contents and a neoliberal attitude of distributing books, texts and images on the Internet. This is evident in net works like **GWEI – Google Will Eat Itself**⁹ (2005) or **Amazon Noir – The Big Book of Crime**¹⁰ (2006/07), both by Übermorgen.com. The local transgression of territorial lines of demarcation in both real and virtual space has been impressively staged, for example, by Heath Bunting with **BorderXing Guide** (2001).¹¹ The artist not only documented apparently illegal border crossings in the mode of performance, but also regulated all net access through the respective location zones of the visitor-clients. A completely different reading of site specificity, on the other hand, was offered by Anja Kaufmann with her audio project **RadioSolarKompass** (2005)¹², in which a computer program listened to roughly 250 online radio broadcasts and played their sound material independently from the respective time of day (space-time balance). The artist coupled the moment when the **RadioSolarKompass** switched from one radio broadcast to another to the sunrise in the respective time zone.

As these few work examples already show, net art uses the Internet not only as a medium, but also as location and as material.¹³ Unlike the event-type actions of many telecommunications arts since the

1 Verena Kuni, **netz.kunst. Jahrbuch des Instituts für moderne Kunst '98/'99**, Nuremberg 1999. Tilman Baumgärtel, **[net.art]. Materialien zur Netzkunst**, Nuremberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 1999.

Peter Weibel et al. (Ed.), **Net_condition: art and global media**, Cambridge (Mass): MIT Press, 2001. Nina Kahnwald, **Netzkunst als Medienkritik. Neue Strategien der Inszenierung von Informationsstrukturen**, Munich: kopaed, 2006.

2 Verena Kuni, «Die Flaneurin im Datennetz. Wege und Fragen zum Cyberfeminismus», in: Sigrid Schade, Georg Christoph Tholen (Ed.), **Konfigurationen. Zwischen Kunst und Medien**, Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1999, p. 467–485, here p. 467.

3 <http://www.vuedesalpes.com> [03.2010].

4 <http://www.communimage.ch> [03.2010].

5 <http://www.ubermorgen.com/2007/sound.html> [03.2010].

6 <http://www.potatoland.org/shredder> [03.2010].

7 <http://www.ljudmila.org/~vuk> [03.2010].

8 A broader overview of the motif of viral power of destruction is presented by the touring exhibition **I Love You** (in the Museum for Applied Art in Frankfurt am Main, 2003, developed by digitalcraft, cf. <http://www.digitalcraft.org/iloveyou/index.htm> [03.2010]).

9 <http://www.gwei.org> [03.2010].

10 <http://www.amazon-noir.com> [03.2010].

11 <http://www.irational.org/borderxing> [03.2010].

12 <http://radiosolarkompass.org> [03.2010].

13 Inke Arns, «Unformatierter ASCII-Text sieht ziemlich gut aus – Die Geburt der Netzkunst aus dem Geiste des Unfalls», in: Thomas Wulffen (Ed.), **Der gerissene Faden. Nichtlineare Techniken in der Kunst**, Kunstforum International, Vol. 155, June/July 2001, p. 236–241.

1960s and 70s, however, net art is usually distinguished by being uncompleted in time and space. Most works exist in progress, i.e. without a specific point of conclusion. Many artists continually or sporadically update the appearance form of their work and continuously appropriate more recent forms, formats and strategies of communication, thus expanding their own scope. In this way, net art continues several trends of the artistic avant-garde of the 20th century at the same time. The classic work concept, for example, is dissolved not only figuratively, but also quite literally: the net art work always becomes visible in a location that is not identical with the storage place.

2. FORMS IN WHICH NET ART AGES

On the whole, artistic strategies of appropriation on the Internet are thus comparably heterogeneous as in other artistic media, but the media-immanent marginal issues are different in the aging of the works. It is interesting that various functional errors point directly to the continual progress of net technologies. Who is not familiar with the error message 404, which memorializes the hour of the birth of the Internet at CERN in referring to a non-(no longer) existent website¹⁴, or the placeholder for image material that is not (no longer) available? The perception that a website looks distorted or behaves strangely is also familiar to many people.

In short, the destructive impact of the Internet reveals itself to the user everywhere, where websites unexpectedly exhibit gaps, where the data transfer runs into obstacles, or where entire works become inaccessible. In conjunction with the preservation of art and cultural goods, we usually discuss these kinds of phenomena under the keyword damage or degradation. Whereas some net art works evince unmistakable errors, other works and websites vanish from the Internet entirely. Yet these traces and processes of aging have little in common with the classical degradation phenomena of real-world art works: in general, they are not due to wear and tear in the classical sense or to false storage, climate changes and (physical) transport damage. Nevertheless, seemingly omnipresent and timeless net art obviously does not remain immaculate either. Those who work on the subject of net art are familiar with the phantom pain of vanished works and the frustration of having neglected to make screenshots in time.

As early as 2001 Bank & Jeron formulated the (self-) critical thesis in their *Anmerkungen zur Konservierung von Netzkunst* [Remarks on the Conservation of Net Art] that conserved net art is a bit less net art than conserved painting is still painting.¹⁵ The two artists see a possible solution

¹⁴ Why the number 404 is pertinent is evident in the work *404.jodi.org.blaster* (1998) by the artist group Jodi (<http://404.jodi.org> [03.2010]) and the EU project *404 Object Not Found* (2002/03). The project was realized and discussed by *medien_kunst_netz dortmund*, an association consisting of the Museum am Ostwall, the art association *hardware medien kunst verein* (Dortmund), the Office for Culture of the City of Dortmund and the University of Dortmund (<http://404project.hmkv.de> [03.2010]).

¹⁵ (Joachim) Blank, (Karl-Heinz) Jeron, *Anmerkungen zum Konservieren von Netzkunst* (2001), cf. <http://www.joachimblank.com/texte/conservenetart.pdf> [12.2008].

in the model of patronage, in which a specific kind of maintenance agreement is concluded between artist and museum.

The following observations on the preservation of net art deal less with the supposedly deficient character of conservation than with the changing understanding of (net) art work and work environment (Internet). With net-based art works, the monolithic work concept is replaced by a modular continuum of work, which opens up new options for agency. Parts of the work and components of the work, system or net environment are differentiated here. For this reason, we introduced the term of the «work logic» to analyze these components and their coherency.¹⁶ The work logic identifies the core components of the art work and describes the interlocking of the digital modules involved. This is documented in terms of how it is anchored in the system environment and in relation to the overall artistic aesthetic concept. In relation to error zones in net art works, this means that local and external disturbance sources can be distinguished from one another. Whereas local problems occur on singular computers, i.e. on the work server or the client server, external error zones are context sensitive. This context sensitivity is substantially due to the spread of global search engines and metadata services like Google. Since about 1999/2000 more and more works include the contents of these external data providers in their own work logic. This results in dynamic areas in the art work, within which the display contents are newly assembled daily. At the same time, however, disturbances (in the art work) become more frequent, due to changes in the net environment (the Internet), which no longer occur in the work itself. Because of the lack of access, it is hardly possible to fix them in the core. However, current technologies enable the development of documentation and translation tools, which bridge the gap between obsolete, but authentically preserved work components and the current net environment.

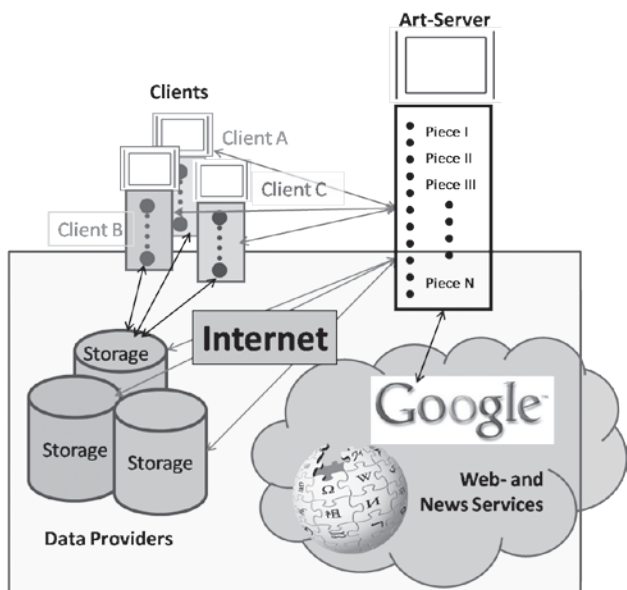
In general, the moment of closure suggested here supplies an important factor for the development of conservation strategies. This enables distinguishing between at least three types of net art:

Net art works of the first type are distinguished by a certain closure. The work is usually available in the form of static or script-based HTML websites.

In the second type, artists use more open work structures, in which external data sources can be integrated. The processes for playing out the work are executed almost entirely on the server that houses the work.

With the third type artists outsource the transfer of media data to the client. The server then only supplies the rules for downloading and playing or displaying text, image, audio and video contents, which the client then executes. However, then both server and client require free access to the Internet to provide the needed contents. The work exists more and more in a distributed communication process, resulting in a kind of trian-

¹⁶ «We» means here the team that is concerned with the framework conditions for the conservation and restoration of new media in conjunction with the national research project AktiveArchive.



gle relationship between client, work server and external data providers, i.e. the Internet. Even though the typology outlined above largely correlates with the further development (genealogy/generation sequence) of net technologies and is thus historically conditioned, it remains to be determined how suitable these differentiations are to trace the art historical genesis of net art. In any case, the categorization proposed here is inspired by media technology and does not imply a value judgment: neither historically nor aesthetically nor conceptually.

3. MEDIA FLAWS AND THRESHOLD SITUATIONS

But back to the flaws and the question of the degradation of net art. What appears simply irritating at first glance and annoys artists and art historians and critics equally, may hold an interesting added value for the media theory view. It can be demonstrated that especially the more or less spontaneously occurring flaws indicate the culturally coded threshold situations that Georg Christoph Tholen, for example, has characterized as «caesura».17 Media caesuras reveal the break in the technical continuum, thus marking the creeping progress taking place seemingly unnoticed behind the smooth user interface of the screen. Intelligent, fully automated mechanisms essentially ensure that the unpracticed user is not even aware of the technological shift. Dysfunctions in art works therefore usually only gradually become visible. For example, hardly anyone consciously remembers the day when the Internet service Google changed from the text-based descriptive language HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) to the script-oriented macro-language JavaScript.

To be able to connect these kinds of technologically induced changes with media-technical threshold situations, a more precise analysis of error causes is needed. Of course, not every bug in a net art work can be described as an indication of a «caesura» in Tholen's sense. Instead, the term caesura should be applied only to the modifications in the overall technological structure that occur when, for example, a new standard is introduced. Media thresholds mark serious changes. If a media caesura becomes acute, a dislocation results in the digital environment of the art work. Smooth functioning is prevented. Then we can speak of aging.

17 Georg Christoph Tholen, *Die Zäsuren der Medien. Kultur-philosophische Konturen*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002, p. 9.

3.1. PRESERVATION ISSUES

The shaping force of the carrier or communication medium of the Internet not only imposes framework conditions of design and arrangement on art, as is also the case with other art forms. It even has a subsequent effect on the created objects. Net art is exposed per se to a dynamic environment. The functionality and sometimes the visible presence of many Internet art works depends more directly and unpredictably on external factors than is true for computer-based offline installations, for example. In terms of preservation (and also marketing, as is discussed in the present research project **Owning Online Art**), this poses new challenges.

In the following, first the frequently occurring error sources will be explained, including the dependency on external data sources, metadata providers, communication formats, commercial applications and community portals. This will be followed by a look at the prospects of individual, more recent practices of preservation and reanimation. If technical developments are also taken into consideration, as they are currently beginning to emerge in the field of virtualization and emulation and in the context of legacy research in computer science, there is reason to feel more confident about sustainable conservation approaches for net art.

3.1.1. Dependency on External Data Sources

Since the aesthetic rearrangement of contents from the Internet is one of the most widespread net art strategies, changes to access interfaces or conditions generally affect not only single art works, but a whole series of works.

One striking example for the net-based fragility that arises through the integration of external data sources is provided by John Klima's work **The Great Game**¹⁸ (2001). Among other presentations, it was included in the net art exhibition **Shrink-to-Fit** (2004), which was curated by Reinhard Storz and realized in cooperation with the Museum for Communication in Bern.¹⁹ Conceived as a computer game, the work uses constantly updated maps that recorded military activities of the allied forces and the US during the Afghanistan War in 2001. With a sarcastic undertone Klima integrates replicas of the real battleground in the artistic online game. Since the data source has vanished, the work no longer functions either. Instead of updating the data source, as other artists frequently do, John Klima obviously decided to leave the torso of the work as a kind of memorial online. In 2003, with the emergence of another conflict zone, he shifted the work (concept) to the then current **Playground: Iraq. TGG - Iraq Expansion Pack & Campaign Maker v1.0**²⁰ (2003) can thus be understood as a kind of update, which simultaneously reflects on/satirizes the Third Iraq War.

3.1.2. Dependency on External Metadata Providers

In addition to the use of clearly defined, fixed data sources, many artists integrate the services of

¹⁸ <http://www.cityarts.com/greatgame> [03.2010].

¹⁹ <http://www.xcult.org/shrink> [03.2010]. **Shrink to Fit** takes up the intention of encouraging users to actively participate, which was widespread among net artists of the first and second generation. The interface becomes the space of action of the exhibition. The graphical exhibition portal can also be integrated in one's own website.

²⁰ Cf. <http://www.cityarts.com/iraq> [03.2010].

external information providers in their works. The reason why this is so popular is that the contents are always up to date and available in large amounts and continuously. There are also additional aspects, such as the abundance of the available media formats (text, image, moving image, sound, animation), the way the information is semantically structured, which makes it easy to find contents, and the capacity to adapt to different languages. The supplied data can also be integrated automatically, for example through RSS feeds. Another point may be the presumed postponement of legal issues, since the question of using copyright protected material seems to have been undermined to some extent.

However, since grabbing and reassembling multimedia contents from the Internet seems to generally play out in a gray area of legality, it is hard to expect service providers to guarantee access. As private service providers they define their conditions for use, i.e. access to the data (communication format and protocol, amounts of data, etc.). They can define the purposes of the (re-) use of the contents.²¹ News services usually tolerate parasitic appropriation by artistic data pirates – at least as long as they are not criticized or attacked for their services.

An illustrative example of dexterity in accessing various information service providers is found in Marc Lee's **Breaking the News. Be a News-Jockey**²² (2006). The work, conceived as an expansive room installation, accesses originally sixteen news services, whose contents are composed so that they result in a seemingly endless, interactive film.²³ The user can enter a search term in a pre-defined search field. Then about twenty different **news modules** forward the queries to the relevant data providers. The display software installed on the client receives information from the work server about where the corresponding referenced contents can be downloaded from the net.

Whereas with an art work like **Breaking the News** the loss of one data provider would merely limit the aesthetic diversity and make the work boring, the same defect can lead to a total outage for other art works. For instance, it is not difficult to imagine what it would mean for the work **onewordmovie**²⁴ (2004) by Beat Brogle and Philipp Zimmermann, if Google no longer supplied images (references). At the request of a user, the work generates an interactive film, which arranges image material referenced by Google into a virtually endless art film.

The inclusion or interpretation of meta-information from external data providers makes the art works dependent not only on the situation, but also on location and computer. Many service providers **optimize** the results by tuning the responses to search queries. For this they use not only their internal web statistics, but also certain computer settings, such as location, time zone, country and language settings, and other parameters such as client profiles, which are temporarily cached by the services. In addition, an ID number is fre-

²¹ See e.g. Google's Terms of Service: <http://www.google.ch/accounts/TOS> [03.2010].

²² Since 2008 there is also a simplified web version of OAMOS (<http://www.oamos.com> [03.2010]), which does justice to the popularity of the work.

²³ The services addressed include Amazon, ccMixer, Flickr, Google, Google Images, selected RSS-Feeds, Synonyms, Technorati, selected Webcams, Wikipedia, Yahoo, Yahoo Music, YouTube, and SonicSquirrel.

²⁴ <http://www.onewordmovie.ch> [03.2010].

quently assigned to the request. This allows the server-side documentation of user behavior. The client automatically communicates these parameters with every request. Remember, for instance, the automatic book suggestions that Amazon provides for customers, even if they are not (permanently) logged in on the site.

3.1.3. Dependency on Communication Format and Commercial Applications

It is additionally not unusual for browser-specific settings to be communicated, such as the type, the version of the browser, language and user preferences and the plug-ins used. This and further information contributes to regulating the format of communication between server and client. The relevance of the communication format is evident, for example, in Cornelia Sollfrank's **net.art Generator**²⁵ (2003). For the **net.art generator** (NAG) not only processes image material from Google-Images and is thus dependent on an external data source as described above, it also only understands a certain format: HTML. In order for the original NAG script to be executed, the parameters provided by Google have to be written in HTML protocol. Since the corresponding communication parameters that could clearly identify this information are not explicitly defined in the NAG script, however, the Google search engine assumes it is serving an up-to-date browser. There is, in fact, a Mozilla browser installed on the NAG web server, which is visible for Google as a communication partner. Missing parameters or undefined gaps, which were unproblematic during the development period because there were frequently no alternatives at all, are among the classic problem cases in old scripts. They first become a problem when the format or communication conventions change. Since Google switched from HTML to JavaScript, the `img-agent` in Cornelia Sollfrank's NAG script is no longer able to simply understand the response; the image production falters.

3.1.4. Dependency on Community Portals and External Applications

The matter becomes even more complex, when whole applications of a commercial service are directly integrated into the art work, or when the works are situated as a whole on a community platform like Facebook, YouTube or Flickr. The respective providers are responsible for the maintenance of their servers, which takes the burden off the artists. In general, however, access permissions are limited. In the case of system errors or updates, in other words when the art script and the updated server environment become (partially) incompatible, access permissions are often insufficient to lastingly conserve or restore the work. In addition, many smaller applications are limited to only a brief duration and are therefore only suitable specifically for certain actions. Some artists integrate commercial applications into their websites for certain works or events, for example for sending, processing or forwarding short messages, because it is simply

²⁵ <http://net.art-generator.com/src/gen.html> [03.2010]. The work was renamed in 2008, because the fifth net.art generator (NAG) is no longer entirely functional, and the fourth NAG turned out to be the main work. The work is now called NAG5. Since 2007 there is even a museum version/installation (see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43y2k5j7oIU> [03.2010]).

more economical to take advantage of a service for a short time than to program the correlating functionality themselves.

A prominent example of this kind of temporary setting is found in the net art action **HelloMrPresident** (2001), which Johannes Gees realized for the World Economic Forum in 2001.²⁶ The work for Internet, SMS and laser consisted of a web front-end and a local laser installation in Davos. The public, excluded from the summit meeting, was able to send short messages via mobile phone or the Internet to a certain news portal curated by the artist. The messages were transmitted from there to the laser in Davos, which projected the texts onto a hill across from the conference location. The transmitted messages were also archived online. Although the news system integrated in the website initially remained visibly accessible and the messages could be read there, the work vanished from the net completely following a hacker attack. Today the former domain redirects to the artist's website, where documentary photos and videos are stored. A similar situation applies to Gees' **HelloWorld** (2003), which further developed the principle. Users around the world could participate in a temporary installation, which transmitted text messages to building walls in Bombay, Geneva, Rio de Janeiro and New York at the same time.²⁷ In cases like this, the Internet functioned not only as transfer medium and archive, but also offered a website displaying the art action with four webcams. Today the domain is in different hands and can only be recalled through documentary records. This is also a typical problem case, for which the artist can hardly be blamed. Johannes Gees and others develop temporary work forms and often already take the documentation of the actions into consideration in the conception phase.

3.1.5. Social Networks

A final aspect for external error sources to be mentioned here are social factors, which hold a potential for danger that is not to be underestimated. They occur within artist groups as well as among the curators of the few public institutions that have entered into the so far vague business of net art. Friendships break, artist collectives drift apart or are disbanded; curators, IT staff and technical support leave an institution, after which art servers are left running more or less unattended until they are hacked or break. Updates are run, frequently automatically, but resources are rarely available for continually testing whether the works can still be played. In addition, to the extent that there is a transfer of usually personalized knowledge at all, it is certainly not always transferred or made accessible in comprehensible documentation. This makes maintenance more difficult for the following generations.

Relevant examples are widely known in the community and need not be specifically mentioned here. However, another special case should be mentioned, which fits especially well in this category of socially determined problem zones in net art and is work-specific at the same time:

²⁶ <http://www.johannesgees.com>
[03.2010].

²⁷ <http://johannesgees.com/?p=142>
[12.2008].

Birgit Kempker's **Sphinx**²⁸ (2004). Despite its programmed automatism, by definition the art work is bound to the authority and presence (!) of the artist, since the questions that users ask the Sphinx can be answered either by the artist herself or by the Sphinx machine programmed by Peter Dittmer. The work thus stages a vague tension between a media-supported interpersonal dialogue and a **purely** human-machine dialogue. The artist already points this out on her website, when she continually fades in the text at the upper edge of the **Sphinx**: Who will answer - Sphinx or machine? And the answers do not follow immediately at all. The moment of asynchronicity between question and answer raises the tension. The artist decides who answers which question. She also reserves the right to intervene in the machine dialogue, even when the questions have already been delegated to the machine **Sphinx** - for example, by intervening in the artificial sestinas.

3.2. LOCAL ERROR SOURCES

Net art works are not only susceptible to external fluctuations in the net environment, however. Changes frequently also occur in the immediate environment of the art work, i.e. the storage and display computers, for example when software or system components are updated. What is primarily intended to protect the storage or display computer endangers the existence of code-based art works again and again in a wholly elementary way. Some well-intentioned security updates hold undesirable side effects. Software producers generally offer updates to close unsecured interfaces or to prevent data corruption due to insufficiently programmed scripts. For the art works, however, this can mean that certain functions or subsections of the scripts can no longer be run without translation tools or are invalidated.

Several art scripts can be mentioned as examples, which were created in the late 1990s in association with Andrew C. Bulhak's **Dada Engine** (1996).²⁹ The Dada Engine is a randomly controlled text generator that can be modified without great expertise in programming, and which spread relatively quickly throughout the artist community. Derivatives of the artistic code as well as the **original Dada Engine** are still available for downloading. They can be installed on the server side and integrated in one's own website. However, some of the scripts can no longer be directly executed due to modified error tolerances on up-to-date web servers. There are various approaches to restoring these code fragments. In some cases it is sufficient to correct single signs - e.g. by replacing semicolons with commas or filling in previously omitted parameters.

Another problem occurs when a provider no longer supports the software used by an artist. In general, at first only the support for the relevant application or software is stopped. Sooner or later, though, the product consequently disappears from the market. Software providers cannot be blamed for this, to the extent that their licenses are

²⁸ <http://www.xcult.org/sphinx> [03.2010].

²⁹ A **bugfix release** (Version 1.01) was published on 29 April 1996, the current version of the **Dada Engine** can be found at: <http://dev.null.org/dadaengine> [03.2010]. The scripts referred to here can be found at: http://dev.null.org/dadaengine/manual-1.0/dada_toc.html [03.2010].

usually endlessly valid, but guarantees are only granted for current products, i.e. for a limited period of time. In cases like this, Open Source software is more robust than proprietary software products, because the code is open. This means it is more easily adaptable than commercial products. In terms of the dependency of certain computer art works on a certain system environment - meaning hardware components (computer type, graphic cards, printer interfaces) and software components (operating system, software and driver libraries) - current virtualization and emulation technologies and the development of collections with reference operating systems and software now offer a feasible solution strategy. They are to be supplemented as needed with further security measures. However, this applies more to current systems and parts of net art, whereas early software art works, in particular, starting from the mid-1980s, remain only very conditionally executable.³⁰

The case is similar with ties to a certain computer platform. This dependency can be noted on both the server side and the client side. Although many applications are nominally available for PCs and Macs, run errors occur again and again, when the script was created for a different computer type.

3.2.1. Partial Disruptions in the Display

The reception of browser-based art works is additionally impaired by pop-up and ad blockers and by various filters, which are intended to shield the user from annoying messages. It is not unusual for them to also block the direct reception of net art works, where the narration plays in different browser windows that open one after another. For instance, Frédéric Moser and Philippe Schwinger presented in their digital walk through a forest, **Eine Aporie**³¹ (2001), which was also part of the net art exhibition **Shrink-to-Fit**, animated images that repeatedly opened new browser windows. If the windows in these kinds of works are no longer directly opened, because permission must first be granted, the immediacy desired by the artists is undermined.

Even more difficult to deal with are applications that use complex, interactive elements for dynamic navigation (see **The Ram Show** below) or works that use specific media players or interpreters. Whereas navigation is generally still possible at the time of creation, the rendering engine and other browser-immanent display elements change so much over the course of time that navigation eventually becomes impossible.

The rapid display of dynamic contents also falls into the area of aesthetically modified playback. Essential triggers for this effect are better Internet connections (bandwidth, bitrate) and more powerful performance of the computers.³² As early

³⁰ An important aspect is access to the source code. Although it is frequently possible to make old scripts run to some extent even in a compiled form, special functions - like converting or saving the generated data in today's formats instead of in the data format specific to the software - can only be adapted if the source code is available.

³¹ http://www.xcult.org/shrink/art/schwi_mo/schwi_mo_d.html [03.2010].

³² The problem of playing speed becomes complex especially in the desktop field with playing interactive CD-Roms and DVDs, because many artists of the first generation forgot to specify the fps (frames per second) or purposely set the specifications exaggeratedly high: the contents could never be played that quickly. In the field of net art the regulation of playing speed is regarded as one of the simpler problems, because it cannot be invasively regulated by defining the data rate.

as 2005, the net artist Olia Lialina pointed out in a lecture that her work **My Boyfriend Came Back From the War**³³ (1996), originally conceived as a cyber-novel, can be clicked through so quickly today that the moment of surprise in the tension of waiting for the next action vanishes. For the former journalist, the time factor here becomes a stylistic element that is now successively changing. The extent to which Olia Lialina is aware of the inexorable changing of the Internet and with it one's own adaptations, is evident in that she makes different versions of this work available on the Internet.³⁴ In 2008 she also had her **Agatha Appears** (1997) restored.³⁵ The increase in speed becomes almost measurable with the cult porno **Deep Throat** (1972), which the ASCII-Art-Ensemble³⁶ placed on the Internet in 1996 as an ASCII film. The feature film that lasted ninety minutes when it was made, now takes barely half an hour.³⁷

3.2.2. Moving to a New Domain

Not least of all, something that is often neglected is the relocation of a net art work to a different domain. Artist groups like Etoy³⁸ and Jodi³⁹ already impressively demonstrated in the late 1990s that the (original) URL is often directly part of the work.⁴⁰ Artists are frequently not fully aware of the value of a certain domain and then later have to laboriously buy back their own domains. Whereas the problem is relatively easy to solve in the collection context and for exhibitions,⁴¹ this aspect presents a serious problem especially for artistic works that are privately owned and visited primarily via the Internet.

4. MAINTENANCE AND RE-CREATING PLAYABILITY

Despite all the problems, danger zones and aging processes, however, positive developments must not be overlooked. More recently, old net art works or artistic websites that have been offline or at least not directly accessible have been sporadically showing up again. One example is the launch of the Austrian node of **The Thing**⁴² by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute Media.Art.Research in 2007/08.⁴³ Another example could be the (re-) provision of the World Artistic Property Organization website (WAP0) by the Center for Art and Media (ZKM) Karlsruhe in Summer 2008.⁴⁴ These kinds of reanimation actions benefit especially artistic websites that are anchored in an institutionally supported work combination. Some artists, who have developed net works

³³ <http://www.teleportacia.org/war> [03.2010].

³⁴ <http://myboyfriendcameback-fromth.ewar.ru> [03.2010].

³⁵ <http://www.incca.org/preservation/390-wysocka-e-agatha-re-appears-net-art-resoration-project.html> [03.2010].

³⁶ During a festival in Amsterdam in 1998, the artists and programmers Walter van der Cruijssen, Luka Frelj and Vuk Cosic formed the **ASCII-Art-Ensemble**. The group is one of the most well known pioneers of net art. Cf. <http://www.ljudmila.org/~vuk/ascii/aae.html> [03.2010].

³⁷ <http://www1.zkm.de/~wvdc/ascii/java> [03.2010].

³⁸ The group etoy/etoy.CORPORATION has existed in various formations since 1994. The founding members included Gino Esposito, Michel Zai, Daniel Udatny, Martin Kubli, Marky Goldstein (etoy.GOLDSTEIN), Fabio Gramazio (etoy.GRAMAZIO) and Hans Bernhard (cf. <http://www.etoym.com> [03.2010])

³⁹ Joan Heemskerk, Dirk Paesmans, <http://www.jodi.org> [03.2010].

⁴⁰ eToys Inc. vs. etoy. First hearing in the case eToys Inc. vs. etoy, in: etoy.HISTORY-FILE: 08-10-99, URL: <http://history.etoym.com/stories/entries/38> [03.2010].

⁴¹ For this reason, AktiveArchive has purposely integrated a separate nameserver functionality in its conservation, archiving and display tool Netart Router.

⁴² <http://www.thing.at> [12.2008].

⁴³ <http://media.lbg.ac.at/de/content.php?iMenuID=94&iContentID=91> [03.2010].

⁴⁴ <http://salon-digital.zkm.de/~wapo/intro.htm> [03.2010]. It is to be hoped that the entire «Salon Digital» (1996/97, Walter van der Cruijssen, Christian Gosch, Jürgen Enge) will be reestablished at some point. It is considered one of the first museum online catalogues, at least in the German-speaking region, and provided access to some of the works in the ZKM media museum in an interactive labyrinth.

in conjunction with collective projects, no longer have access to the original programming themselves. Sometimes the works were realized directly on the computers of the institution. The probability that old backups can be found in large media art facilities is statistically higher than with self-administered web servers, where the routine backup is left up to the artists (groups).

In addition to the institutionally launched re-establishment of net art works, a growing awareness for issues of maintaining the digital cultural heritage can also be noted. Today there are archiving concepts for simple web contents as a matter of course, as well as guidelines for how dealing with net art works can be expanded.⁴⁵ This trend has a noticeable effect on artists, as outlined above with the example of Olia Lialina.⁴⁶

At the intersection between institution and self-initiative, Reinhard Storz' action to save the collective project **The Ram Show**⁴⁷ (1999) should also be mentioned. The curator and net activist had already completely updated the programming of the elaborate net art work on the theme of remembering and memory in 2004, after interactive navigation had become impossible due to modified browser functions. Here the formerly HTML-based programming was replicated in Flash, so that the old look and feel and the original appearance were made accessible again.

From an art historical perspective, as the example of John Klima suggests, alternative artistic preservation strategies also remain interesting, because they convey insights into the intention and the aesthetic basic principles. At least three strategies can thus be distinguished: the first group of artists attempts to keep their work alive through regular monitoring, specific updates and sometimes elaborate re-creation scenarios. Here they also use the opportunity of a system update to aesthetically update their works. These measures, which satisfy artistic demands, partly find only mitigated understanding among restorers and art historians, because they level the historical development of the genesis of the work to some extent. It is not unusual for the new work versions to be simply continued under the same, often already successful title. Another group of artists regards the technically induced degradation of their works as the natural course of things and stands by the partial decay. They leave the work torsos online, thus placing their works in a tradition of the approximate self-dissolution of art works, as this is and has been prominently practiced by Dieter Roth or Damien Hirst, for example. Yet others fear a negative image due to the superficial remains of worn out net art works and prefer to remove the websites in question from the net right away. In extreme cases, all that remains then are screenshots or sporadic relics in an Internet archive like the «Waybackmachine», which supports visual memory with automatically crawled, often fragmentary and static data.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Whereas the Swiss National Library developed strategies for archiving electronic Helvetica within the framework of **eHelvetica** (http://www.nb.admin.ch/slb/slb_professionnel/01693/index.html?lang=de [03.2010]), the Swiss Federal Archive (BAR) deals with digital archiving in the project ARELDA (<http://www.bar.admin.ch/themen/00772/index.html?lang=de> [03.2010]). Proposals for the digital long-term archiving of web-based data can be found in: **nestor Handbuch. Eine kleine Enzyklopädie der digitalen Langzeitarchivierung**, Version 2.0, Boizenburg: vwh, 2009.

⁴⁶ <http://www.c3.hu/collection/agatha> [03.2010].

⁴⁷ <http://www.xcult.org/ateliers/ramshow/index.HTML> [03.2010]. The work was realized in cooperation with Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg and other artists.

4.1. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The observations presented here are based primarily on an art-technical motivation and show aspects of classical cases of damage to net art works and their causes. These influence handling, exhibition and preservation to a certain extent. Yet the core question that remains is to consider how much originality a technically obsolete environment can take in current daily operations and how the changed understanding of originality, authenticity and work affects the sustainable conservation of net art. This question can hardly be answered by one discipline alone. On the one hand, detailed information sciences knowledge and expertise in media technology are needed to understand the phenomena of damage, correctly register them and be able to develop possible measures for stabilization or restoration. On the other hand, forms of observation from art studies support a fundamental understanding of the artistic concept, the aesthetic orientation and the historical contextualization: the art work **documents** certain artistic strategies, of which the intention and the form of articulation should be preserved as intact as possible. Finally, there is the question of the work at the material level from the perspective of current theories of conservation and restoration. The former position of physically safeguarding features⁵⁰ is taken over by the preservation of media objects as authentically as possible, including the way they are functionally networked in a system environment. Respected international research projects also suggest artist interviews as planning instruments for preventative conservation.⁵¹ In other areas of contemporary art, interviewing artists has long since progressed to a strategic methodological instrument;⁵² it mediates between documentation and the planned conservation measures.⁵³

The diversity of methods ensured in this way allows for a re-evaluation of defects at the level of digital coding. Depending on informatic findings, scaled transitions may be connected with epochal threshold situations without necessarily linking the digital code with cultural codes. The intention is a culture-historical, media-archaeological sensitization for technological fractures, in order to assess mid-term and long-term consequences for the conservation of net art and digital artifacts. Research is also being conducted on the practical implementation of **sustainability** in a field of inexorable (digital) changes. In addition to the question of the understanding of authenticity, it

⁴⁸ <http://www.archive.org/web/web.php> [03.2010].

⁴⁹ On this, cf. e.g. Pip Laurenson, «Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-Based Media Installations», in: <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tatere-search/tatepapers/06autumn/laurenson.htm> [03.2010].

Howard Besser and Mona Jimenez even propagate the term «complex media» to cover the issues across genres.

⁵⁰ Ulrich Schiessl, «Materielle Befundsicherung an Skulptur und Malerei», in: Hans Belting et al. (Ed.), *Kunstgeschichte. Eine Einführung*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1985, p. 58f.

⁵¹ Richard Rinehart (2002), *Preserving the Rhizome ArtBase*, New York: <http://rhizome.org/artbase/report.htm> [03.2010]. Relevant proposals are also found in the Tate Modern, which are even accessible online.

⁵² As far as the art studies position of the artist interview is concerned, cf. e.g. Christoph Lichtin, *Das Künstlerinterview: Analyse eines Kunstprodukts*, Bern: Lang, 2004.

⁵³ Cf. Erich Gantzert-Castrillo, *Archiv für Techniken und Arbeitsmaterialien zeitgenössischer Künstler*, Wiesbaden, 1968/79, and various EU and research projects, such as the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art INCA (<http://www.incca.nl> [03.2010]) or *Inside Installation* (<http://www.inside-installations.org> [03.2010]).

⁵⁴ Inke Arns, «Unformatierter ASCII-Text sieht ziemlich gut aus – Die Geburt der Netzkunst aus dem Geiste des Unfalls», in: Thomas Wulffen (Ed.), *Der gerissene Faden. Nichtlineare Techniken der Kunst*. Kunstforum International, Vol. 155, June/July 2001, p. 236–241.

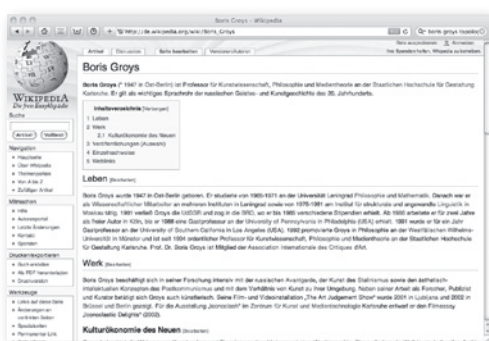
⁵⁵ Reinhard Storz, «Cargo Cult im Cyberspace, Jodi – Laborieren am Quellcode», 2002, in: <http://www.xcult.ch/texte/rest/jodi.html> [03.2010].

must also be clarified, for example, how historically informed performance practices will look in the future, or how adaptable and sometimes timeless net art works actually are. In taking recourse to current data sources, many works seem to permanently renew themselves. However, historical parameters also inscribe themselves here, which attribute the works to a certain time, a certain mental attitude and, indeed, also certain technological standards. In addition, as Inke Arns already explained earlier, various net art works also play with «what is normally suppressed as a technical dysfunction». The author goes on to explain that media disruptions in the communication between machines have always been made visible by net art works that radically deconstruct and aesthetically reshape them.⁵⁴ Looking at works like *Oss* (1999), Reinhard Storz has similarly noted that the artist group Jodi tracks down productive defective functions in the seemingly rigid command language of commercial software and achieves effects «that others sometimes misunderstand as defects».⁵⁵ Ambivalent tendencies such as the moment of up-to-dateness becoming obsolete or fragile stability thus imbue net art at the demarcation line of media breaks with a very special charm.

Translated from German by Aileen Derieg

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**SIMON GRAND
ECONOMIES OF ART – CHALLENGES & STRATEGIES FOR A
GALLERY FOR NET-BASED ART**

STARTING FROM BORIS GROYS’ THESIS THAT ART IS A COMMERCIAL SECTOR, ART COULD BE DESCRIBED AS A FIELD FOR ECONOMIC STRATEGIES. FOLLOWING KEY WORDS LIKE «RECOGNITION», «INNOVATION», «SELECTION» AND «COMPETITION», SIMON GRAND ARGUES THAT AN ECONOMICALLY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS IN THE CONTEXT OF ART HAS TO MAKE «SOVEREIGN DECISIONS». THESE ARE PLAUSIBLE ASSERTIONS THAT ATTRIBUTE THE STATUS OF BEING RELEVANT ART TO A WORK, WHEREBY THIS ASSERTION CAN BE SUPPORTED BY THE SALE OF THIS WORK, AS WELL AS BY EXPERT RECOGNITION FROM THOSE WHO FORMULATE IT. THE ESSAY, WRITTEN DURING THE FIRST PHASE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT, PROVOKES QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POSITIONING OF AN ECONOMIC BUSINESS IN THE FIELD OF NET-BASED ART. THE LINE OF ARGUMENT ALSO PROVIDES ARTISTS WITH NUMEROUS REFERENCE POINTS FOR EXAMINING THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE ART MARKET.

1. STARTING POINT: ECONOMIES OF ART

«Art is primarily a commercial sector. The task of art consists in the production, distribution and sale of artworks.»¹ This definition makes art an object of the economy and a field for entrepreneurial strategies. The central challenge for every actor in this context is to see the various economic challenges and use them for their own strategies. The aim is to integrate the diversity and heterogeneity of the economies that are essential for the valuation and revaluation of artworks.

First of all, this involves an economy of the market. It is important to understand how supply and demand for an artwork coalesce. At the same time, the question arises as to the boundaries of the respectively relevant market, because art does not form one market, but rather coalesces from a multitude of different, overlapping and mutually interacting markets: for Pop Art and Minimalism, for painting and installations, for large and small artworks, for originals and series. The strategy for competitiveness deals with this economy: it is a matter of specifically deciding whether to address a large or small market, a controversial or neglected one, a saturated or a dynamic one, and how exactly to position oneself in this market.

Secondly, it is a matter of an economy of the new, in other words the question of whether established and categorized, archived and documented artworks are involved, or of establishing, valorizing and positioning new works (which are always initially an assertion) as artworks. At the same time, this always involves the question of whether a new artwork is attempting to assert itself in an existing market, or whether a new market could be created with the artwork. The strategy for innovation deals with this economy, calling for concrete decisions about whether the aim is a focused or a radical innovation, a modular or an architectural innovation, a technological or a cultural change, and how exactly this strategy for innovation is to be realized.

Thirdly, it is a matter of an economy of recognition. An artwork must not remain merely an assertion, but must instead find recognition as an artwork in an art market by actually being shown, evaluated, auctioned or sold. Of course, it is very important to judge whose recognition is actually being sought: recognition from insiders or from the general public, from private collectors or museums, from artist colleagues or critics. The legitimation strategy deals with this economy, which translates and transforms assertions associated with every artwork into believed and shared, self-evident and unquestioned realities, keeping in mind that the establishment of recognition aimed for can also result in its opposite.

¹ Boris Groys, *Über das Neue. Versuch einer Kulturökonomie*, Vienna: Hanser, 1992, p. 9.

There are a multitude of other economies. However, the three economies outlined here and their corresponding strategies are important in any case and especially in the context of art. The question is whether an actor wants to explicitly deal with these economies and the corresponding strategies or not. What matters in any case are the specifically realized patterns of production, distribution and sales, and the results actually achieved in the art market. What is relevant in association with these patterns is the perception of one's own respective artistic position, the comparison with other artists within and outside of one's own market, questions of the innovativeness and newness of one's own works, or the specific presence and relevance in various fields of the art system.

2. DEMARCATION: WHAT BELONGS TO ART

Every object and every commodity can be an artwork, but that is not automatically the case. Accordingly, «[...] it is easy to assert that the artwork is a commodity. It is much more difficult to determine which commodities are artworks»². In other words, the assertion that a painting, an installation or a performance is art, depends on being able to convince others that this is the case. When someone spends money on an artwork, this is the most tangible confirmation that an object has a value, at least for this person, as an artwork. In addition to the purchase act, of course there are other actions and transactions that are also important in this process of affirming art as art: exhibitions, inclusion in a gallery, references in art reviews and art history.

This mode of consideration has an essential consequence for our perspective of art and its creation: «The creation consists of two operations - production and selection. [...] The act of creation is primarily an act of selection.»³ Through the selection of objects as artworks, by the purchaser, the collector, the museum, the gallery, art becomes art and also remains art. Of course, the artist's own selection is crucial here, the process of artistic creation is, in this sense, itself a process of selection and valuation, contextualization and revaluation, interpretation and translation. The economies of art and the strategies associated with them are possible ways of looking at how the selection can and will take place. The paradigm of market events is shifted here from a production view to a consumption view.

Engaging with the concrete consumption conditions and consumption habits of the involved actors in the concretely relevant art market is also decisive. How is a certain artwork consumed, how is it purchased? From this perspective, artworks and artistic strategies are to be queried in terms of how they include the consumers and collectors, the dealers and exhibitors in what happens with an artwork, in the development and

² Boris Groys, *Topologie der Kunst*, Vienna: Hanser, 2003, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

process, the creation and maintenance. In all of these activities there are selections and valuations, decisions and emphases, which affect the successful translation of objects into artworks. Ultimately, here «[...] every socially established selection procedure has a name»⁴, the name of an artist or an exhibition-maker, a collector or a critic.

The various selection procedures, the valuation strategies and the different consumption experiences compete with one another, specifically within a certain market on the one hand and between markets within the art system on the other. The central and fundamental question is which selections and strategies can prevail and establish themselves in the competition for legitimacy, attention, appreciation and financial resources in a certain situation and over the course of time. Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades are nothing other than the general description of these strategies of revaluation from an object to an artwork. Accordingly, it is not surprising that this procedure has achieved such central significance.⁵ However, this procedure is to be newly defined for every single case and in every situation.

A central feature of markets for artworks is that a relevant portion of them relate to unique works or limited series. From an economic perspective, this means that the supply actually dictates the price, but only if there is a corresponding demand. In this sense, every artwork is a positioning in the search for a market. However, the respective assertions and selections may also serve to establish a new market. Art collectors and exhibition-makers, consumers and critics form clusters of respectively comparable artworks and selection procedures from these extremely fragmented constellations. Comparability is not simply a given, but must be produced by defining corresponding categories and relationships.

3. STRATEGIES: SOVEREIGN DECISIONS

The conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing is that every artistic assertion, every production of comparability, every constellation of competition, every positing of markets, every differentiation and demarcation is contingent and is produced and established by the actors involved. This means that there could just as well be other assertions, demarcations, comparisons and positions. These are ultimately sovereign decisions in the literal sense, which are alone able to reduce the uncertainties and ambiguities associated with this contingency. Every artist and «[...] author makes sovereign decisions, but precisely because they are sovereign, they cannot be justified, explained or defended. They can only be made or not made. The fate of the author consists of having to please, in order to survive»⁶. Those who generate attention or

⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

⁵ Cf. Groys, *Über das Neue* (op. cit.).

⁶ Boris Groys, *Topologie der Kunst* (op. cit.), p. 17.

a willingness to pay, have a concrete and tangible affirmation that they are pleasing.

At the same time, each collector and gallerist, exhibition-maker and critic also has to make his or her sovereign decisions. This means that «[...] the sovereignty of the artist is directly confronted, without any mediation or institutionalization, with the sovereignty of the viewer [...]».⁷ This is why art is so distinctly self-referential. Its system stabilizes selection mechanisms, prefers single strategies of valuation, and rejects certain assertions as being irrelevant or unattractive. Stagings play a highly central role in this. They create contexts, in which competition and dynamics of comparison, assertions and valuations, selection and demarcation can take place. Fairs, exhibitions, biennales or similar occasions are suitable for this: «In order for the sovereign author to not only carry out his authorial decisions, but also manifest them, he needs a place.»⁸ His or her decisions are inherently uncertain and controversial. Various agents establish themselves accordingly, who proactively seek to reduce uncertainties, influence controversies and stabilize contingencies. Gallerists do exactly this job, thus contributing to value creation for their collectors, exhibition-makers, audience, critics and their readers, artists and colleagues. This results in a complex system of cross-references, attributions of significance and investment decisions, which condense into stable collective ideas and expectations, thus fixing individual markets and relative positions, but which can, at the same time, also always be called into question by innovations and revaluations, new ready-mades, in other words, and deconstructed over time. What ultimately prevails in competition is open; the only certainty is that something will prevail.

A fascinating paradox is established in this process: because new value judgments and positions inevitably prevail again and again in the dynamics of competition in art described above, the suspicion arises that certain actors are responsible or that certain abilities are required.⁹ Those who are successful seem to have a specific ability that makes them successful. Accordingly, a driving force is suspected behind and below the surface of the art system, consisting of influential actors who regulate these processes and make use of them for their own strategies. At the same time, who has prevailed is always clear «ex post», in retrospect we know who has been successful; success is not guaranteed «ex ante», however, not to be secured through certain strategies and interventions, manipulations and positions. The formation of expectations is correspondingly central to all dynamics of competition.

⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

⁹ For a detailed media theory analysis of this suspicion, cf. Boris Groys, *Unter Verdacht. Eine Phänomenologie der Medien*, Vienna: Hanser, 2000.

4. ENTREPRENEURIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR A GALLERY FOR NET-BASED ART¹⁰

What does this mean for setting up a gallery in the context of the Internet? Here are a few possible consequences for further proceeding to set up the gallery:

First of all, as an actor in the art system, this gallery must determine for itself certain fundamental positions and definitions that are sovereign, in other words, which cannot be conclusively founded and explained: What is the focus in reference to market and value creation? The gallery is confronted with the fact that something like a gallery for net-based art is needed, but does not exist. This is an opportunity and a challenge at the same time, but first there must be a precise definition of what the concept of a gallery like this can include. The gallery's selection strategy must first be established and make a name for itself.

Secondly, this gallery enters into an exchange with artists and collectors, with exhibition-makers and critics, who in turn determine fundamental positionings and definitions as well, which can also not be conclusively founded and explained. These other actors are also interested in the commercialization of net-based art. However, they have controversial ideas and heterogeneous expectations about this. The gallery has to make its focus attractive both with and counter to these expectations.

Thirdly, the question arises for the gallery of how it sees the economies of the market, of the new, of attention, etc. on the basis of the defined focus, and which consequences this has for the strategies of competitiveness, innovation and legitimization: What does the gallery want to achieve and how is this manifested? To what extent is the gallery oriented to existing markets and economies, or does it seek to create a market of its own with its own economy? This sovereign decision will determine the gallery's selection strategy and thus its attractiveness and relevance in the art system. Potential and currently identifiable willingness to pay is central in this context.

Fourthly, the gallery must intensively explore the consumption and selection conditions in its own context and determine the selection patterns that are to be important for its own activity. These selection patterns are not to be determined generally, but are instead manifested in concrete and specific actions and positionings: Which artists are represented by the gallery, which artworks selected, which consumers and investors addressed, which prices defined? When establishing a new type of gallery in a new market, there are no alternatives to sovereign decisions and autonomous assertions. They form the context for everything else.

¹⁰ The founding of a commercially operating gallery for net-based art was the starting point for the research project *Owning Online Art*.

Fifthly, it cannot be clearly stated *ex ante* whether the defined focus and the associated selection strategies are attractive enough to gain attention. Assertions and positionings must be proactively made and tested all the more concretely. Can they induce purchase decisions and thus establish a name? The gallery's own references and valuations are to be honed in the interplay with artists and purchasers. On the one hand, earlier positionings are essential here, because they form the context for further development, but on the other hand, initial experiences and reactions are needed to learn something *ex ante* under uncertainty about the dynamics of competition.

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**FELIX STALDER
PROPERTY, POSSESSION AND FREE GOODS
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AS THE CORE OF A NEW ECONOMY OF
IMMATERIAL CULTURE?**

FELIX STALDER DEALS WITH FUNDAMENTAL THESES OF AN ECONOMY OF FREE IMMATERIAL GOODS AS IT IS EMERGING IN THE FIELD OF «FREE AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE», BUT ALSO IN OTHER AREAS OF DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE, CULTURE AND ART PRODUCTION. THE AUTHOR EXPLORES THE QUESTION OF WHAT «PROPERTY» AND «POSSESSION» MEAN IN A CONTEXT IN WHICH THE CENTRAL CHARACTERISTIC OF THEIR DEFINITION, THE EXCLUSIVE POWER OF DISPOSITION, IS NOT GIVEN. THE OUTLINED OVERVIEW OF ALREADY EXISTING ECONOMIC MODELS BASED ON FREELY ACCESSIBLE GOODS PRESUMES THAT THE CONDITIONS FOR THE PRODUCTION AND USE OF DIGITAL GOODS CLEARLY DIFFER FROM THOSE FOR MATERIAL GOODS. PROPERTY AND ECONOMY ARE BY NO MEANS RESCINDED FOR THIS REASON. RATHER, THE CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH THESE TERMS ARE CHANGING.

1. INTRODUCTION

This essay deals with phenomena and practices outside the realm of visual arts. While the field of art is first gradually beginning to address the economy of free goods, and net art, following a brief blossoming in the late 1990s¹, exists today in a niche, other areas of digital culture and economy have developed further. This does not mean that the experiences and case studies there represent a kind of «avant-garde», whose example must be followed by other fields. On the contrary: A brief overview suffices to show that the developed models are context-dependent and clearly differ even in presumably unified areas, such as «Free and Open Source Software» (FOSS). Large-scale, industry-relevant software projects – such as the web server Apache – are structured quite differently from artist-centered projects – such as the music software PureData (PD). Thus it cannot be a matter here of drawing direct conclusions for artistic projects from projects remote from art. Instead, the point is to introduce the existent trove of experiences into the discussions intrinsic to art. How much of this is relevant can only be determined by the individual actors of the art business in terms of their own current practice. It is more a matter of generating friction than of offering finished recipes.

2. FREE GOODS AS PROPERTY

With the precondition of free access to and the free use of immaterial goods, the concept of property loses its central defining characteristic, the exclusive power of disposition, and thus becomes problematic. As it is conventionally understood, «property is any physical or intangible entity that is owned by a person or jointly by a group of persons. Depending on the nature of the property, an owner of property has the right to consume, sell, rent, mortgage, transfer, exchange or destroy their property, and/or to exclude others from doing these things.»² Property is thus based on a legal title, which defines the specific conditions of the exclusive power of disposition over a thing. In this sense, there are essentially three types of the property of immaterial things, regardless of the legal title upon which it is based.³

2.1 COPYRIGHT PROTECTED WORKS

According to Swiss copyright law, works are «intellectual creations of literature and art that have an individual character». The copyright law grants the author, the «natural person, who has created the work», the «exclusive right to determine whether, when and how the work is used.» This right is transferable, and the transferability of the rights of use forms the precondition for the

¹ A contemporaneous survey of the «heroic» phase of net art is provided by Tilman Baumgärtel, [net.art]. *Materialien zur Netzkunst*. Nuremberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst, 1999.

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property> [01.2010].

³ Strictly speaking there are others, such as legally protected indications of geographical origin and definitions of origination, but these are not relevant in this context.

commodity character of immaterial goods. Copyright guarantees the property character of the work for 75 years following the death of the author. After this period, the ownership of the work is dissolved and it enters the public domain (this does not apply, of course, to single, material copies). As long as it can be unambiguously determined, who the author of a work is and the exact limitations of the work (i.e. how it differs from other works), copyright provides a relatively coherent foundation for determining property claims to a work (having them applied in a case of conflict is naturally a different story). Today, however, copyright appears to have reached its limits in the digital context. On the one hand, its area of application is increasingly expanded, on the other the new possibilities of the treatment and distribution of a work make it more and more difficult to insist on exclusive rights. Current, widespread practices (appropriation, remixing, transformation) cannot easily be covered by copyright. Consequently, with many works it becomes increasingly difficult to precisely determine the authorship and/or the limits of a work. To be able to make better use of the new possibilities of cooperation and distribution, so-called free licenses are frequently used, which invert the exclusive control of the the use of the work into its opposite: by guaranteeing more or less free use. This at least partially de facto suspends the commodity form of the works (but not the economic value creation that can build on these kinds of works).

2.2. PATENT PROTECTED INVENTIONS

Patent law guarantees exclusive use rights for inventions, which meet the requirements of «novelty, non obviousness and susceptibility of industrial application».⁴ Since the criterion of commercial use is of central importance to the granting of a patent, patents play virtually no role in the cultural economy. The extension of patentability, especially in the direction of software patents (currently only in the USA), creates a new grey area with negative dynamics for free software,⁵ but so far, this has hardly been relevant in the field of culture.⁶

2.3. TRADEMARK PROTECTED PRODUCT NAMES / SIGNS

«Legally, a trademark is a protected sign which is used to distinguish the products or services of one business from another. [...] Registering a trademark gives you the exclusive right to use a certain sign for specific goods and services or to grant someone else the right to use it (e.g., licensing). As a trademark owner you can prevent others from using an identical or similar sign for the same or similar goods and services.»⁷ A trademark is valid for ten years, but can be renewed indefinitely. It expires when the trademark is no longer used or «de-cays» into a generic term (e.g. «Bostitch»).

In the area of Open Source Software, trademark protection plays an increasingly important role.

⁴ <http://www.patentlaw.ch/?id=2&leng=1> [01.2010].

⁵ Andreas Wiebe, «Patentschutz und Softwareentwicklung - ein unüberbrückbarer Gegensatz?», in: Bernd Lutterbeck, Rolf A. Gehring (Ed.), **Open Source Jahrbuch 2004: Zwischen Softwareentwicklung und Gesellschaftsmodell**, Berlin: Lehmanns Media, 2004.

⁶ Patentability is relevant in the cultural field to the extent that free software projects reach their limits in the audio and video field due to existing patents, and many artists work with proprietary products for this reason. Few of them are conscious of this connection.

⁷ <https://www.ige.ch/en/trademarks/trademarks-first-steps.html> [01.2010].

It allows the holders of a legal title to exercise a certain control over the freely available code, as a distinction is made between official versions released under a trademarked name and unofficial versions released under a different name. The term «Open Source» is itself trademark protected and only applies to code released under a license recognized by the Open Source Initiative.⁸ The limitation of the use of the code associated with the control of the trademarked name can lead to problems. The Mozilla Corporation, for instance, allows software distributions to distribute the official binary packet (object code) only under the trademarked name «Firefox». Those who want to compile the source code themselves and distribute it, are permitted to do so (it is free software, after all), but not under the name «Firefox». For this reason, the software distribution Debian found itself forced to rename their version of the browser «Iceweasel». In this way, the Mozilla Corporation seeks to prevent «possibly defective versions of their programs from impinging on the good name of Mozilla products».⁹

For a long time, trademark law, which essentially aims to clearly distinguish products from similar products, has only played a negative role in the cultural field, to the extent that artists working with trademark protected symbols were threatened with lawsuits by the trademark holders. An early example is the legendary Swiss punk band Liliput, for instance: the band was called «Kleenex» until the American corporation Kimberly-Clark, as proprietor of the rights to the name of the brand of paper handkerchiefs, forced a name change in 1980.¹⁰ This experience has been repeated countless times since then. Only in recent years has the cultural economy become so differentiated that trademarks are also claimed by cultural actors. Currently it is mainly applied by large museums, not only in the context of logos and names, but also to protect the depiction of the building.¹¹

Trademark protection is also interesting in the way it is applied in the area of Open Source software: a specific identity like Firefox can be valuable, even if the functional code it is based on is freely available. The Firefox Corporation has positioned itself in the market by simplifying its identity, in order to find users who trust their offers without really having to understand anything about the code behind it. These users, or rather the web traffic they produce, can be capitalized. Mozilla offers Google as the default search engine and receives a percentage of the advertising revenue thus generated from Google.¹² The value of an enterprise like the Mozilla Corporation is determined, however, not only through the exclusive control of intellectual property, but also, and perhaps even primarily, by the specific capabilities that are generated in the socio-technical configuration of the company.

⁸ <http://www.opensource.org> [03.2010].

⁹ Oliver Diedrich, «Debian vs. Mozilla oder: Namen sind Schall und Rauch», in: **Heise Open** (19.10.2006) <http://www.heise.de/open/artikel/Debian-vs-Mozilla-oder-Namen-sind-Schall-und-Rauch-221989.html> [03.2010].

¹⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LiLiPUT> [01.2010].

¹¹ The Guggenheim Foundation, for instance, states: «The names, titles, building images, trademarks, service marks, and logos that appear on the Site are registered and unregistered marks of the Foundation [...]. You may not use the Guggenheim Trademarks without the Foundation's prior, written permission.» <http://www.guggenheim.org/terms-conditions> [01.2010].

¹² In 2006 the Mozilla Foundation received \$66.8 million in revenues. About 85% of this was derived from the agreement with Google. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mozilla_Foundation#Financing [01.2010].

3. POSSESSION OF IMMATERIAL GOODS

Quite unlike property, which is based on a formal legal foundation, the situation is very different when we turn to the possession of immaterial goods. The circumstances here are substantially more flexible and nuanced. Possession is explained as «the control a person intentionally exercises toward a thing»¹³, independent of the formal legal situation. The classical example of the difference between property and possession – the thief in possession of things that are not his property – is less relevant in our context, however. What is more interesting are the forms of possessing immaterial goods, which are either constructed via the detour of material goods or are based on social conventions with or without recourse to the aforementioned legal constructions. At least four different types can be identified with embodied knowledge, possession through association, privileged access, and symbolic shareholding.

3.1. EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge can be embodied either in people or in objects. Especially with technological knowledge, however, the two levels of the technical and the social – or as Bruno Latour phrases it, of the «humans» and the «non-humans» – are hardly to be separated in practice.¹⁴ Rather, this involves heterogeneous networks of people, who produce specific effects (such as a browser, a search engine or an art work, for instance) with specialized artefacts.

Materialized knowledge, which can be far greater than the sum of the single components, is the central foundation, along with exclusive knowledge (whether in the form of intellectual property or company secrets), of the immaterial value creation of companies or other organization. It is often the specific configuration that makes it possible to generate added value, even if the single elements are standardized (Google's infrastructure, for instance, consists of tens of thousands of cheap servers), or if the knowledge circulating through the network is basically accessible to everyone (as in the case of IBM's use of Open Source software). However, constructing these kinds of networks is very complex and time-consuming. Networks (like all social organizations) are path-dependent, which means that they are not only a «status quo», but hold their entire history, from which specific further development paths may be more or less successfully taken. For this reason, it can be worthwhile to sell these kinds of networks as a whole, in order to subordinate the potentials produced in them to specific strategic goals. This is one reason why Microsoft was interested in buying Yahoo!. The acquisition applied not only to a bundle of IP titles and hardware, but to an organically evolved network with a history and specific potentialities for the future.

Yet the risk in these kinds of takeovers is great: although the network is temporarily (immediately after the takeover) in the possession of the buyer,

¹³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Possession_\(law\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Possession_(law)) [01.2010].

¹⁴ Cf. for instance, the case study by Bruno Latour, *Aramis, or, The Love of Technology* (trans: Catherine Porter), Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press, 1996.

this possession is not based on a stable property title, but rather on a social convention (which is naturally also based on contract agreements that aim to continue to reproduce the network). If parts of the network then break this convention (for instance, if employees quit or work less productively, because the new «culture» is no longer amenable to them), the network, or at least the capabilities embodied in it, dissolves, and the new owner can do little to prevent it.

3.2. POSSESSION THROUGH ASSOCIATION

It is possible to have more or less exclusive power of disposition over certain styles, elements of style or semiotic objects, without this power of disposition being based on a formal property title. Possession is then based on the named feature being associated with a certain person. One example is found in the association of certain, quasi anonymous line figures with Keith Haring. The strong association can make it impossible for others to appropriate these kinds of elements without appropriation itself becoming a topic of discussion (neither in a positive nor in a negative sense). This de facto exclusivity is the foundation for making the figures available to others for payment. On this basis, Keith Haring designed various products and product posters, such as for Absolut Vodka in 1986.¹⁵ Possession through association is based on a social consensus, which prescribes to some extent bindingly which forms of appropriation are to be understood as positive and which as negative. The art system as a relatively homogeneous and small field has suitable means at its disposal for stabilizing possession through association, because the reputation of the individual participants is based on not violating the system-wide consensus (which is often only implicitly articulated), although this, of course, does not exclude certain strategic taboo violations and confrontations. The effectiveness of these social norms also makes possession through association one of the central regulating mechanisms. Artists protect their works by becoming well known for them and thus strengthen the association quite directly. Formal legal regulations have a crucial significance primarily for the users. In other cultural subcultures as well, works are turned into property primarily through association and group norms and less through legal claims. Among professional magicians, for instance, using the tricks of other, active magicians in one's own show is considered reprehensible. Non-compliance is punished with ostracism within the professional community, which can certainly have social and economic consequences.¹⁶ The way new creations are dealt with among stand-up comedians¹⁷ and star chefs¹⁸ is similarly structured.

Outside these kinds of relatively closed systems, the normative binding function of association is often much weaker. This is very actively

¹⁵ http://absolutad.com/absolut_gallery/artists/pictures/?id=960&_s=artists [01.2010].

¹⁶ Jacob Loshin, *Secrets Revealed: How Magicians Protect Intellectual Property Without Law* (July 25, 2007), Available at SSRN URL: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1005564> [03.2010].

¹⁷ Dotan Oliar, Christopher Jon Sprigman, «There's No Free Laugh (Anymore): The Emergence of Intellectual Property Norms and the Transformation of Stand-Up Comedy», in: *Virginia Law Review* (December), Vol. 94 No. 9, 2008.

¹⁸ Emmanuelle Fauchart; Eric von Hippel, *Norms-based Intellectual Property Systems: The Case of French Chefs*. MIT Sloan Working Paper 4576-06 (January 2006) URL: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=881781> [03.2010].

demonstrated by Migros, which has again and again taken over established semiotic elements so that the reference remains, but the corresponding legal title or social consensus is not violated. This is not always the case, however. In the late 1990s, Migros offered the «Freitag [Friday] bags» that had just become famous at the time as «Thursday bags». Not only did the Freitag brothers threaten a lawsuit for plagiarism, but a social consensus quickly formed with the opinion that the design of the bags is so closely associated with the original producers that Migros' actions were not only possibly illegal, but also certainly immoral. The resultant bad publicity proved to be highly effective, and the bags were very quickly withdrawn from sale again.¹⁹ The way that the Migros appropriation developed into a PR disaster has to do not only with the Goliath vs. David aspect. It is also important that the entrepreneurs of the creative industries are located exactly at the intersection between culture and commerce, where objects, even though they are commercial products, are strongly associated with individual creativity and therefore also take recourse to a cultural value system, which specifically supports possession through association. This is not the case when a purely commercial company appropriates style elements from another purely commercial company. Here, everything is permitted that is not forbidden. The case of the «Thursday bags» shows that the possibility also exists outside the art system of stabilizing these kinds of normative forms of possession. It does seem, however, that a certain proximity to the creative professions is necessary for this.

3.3. PRIVILEGED ACCESS

There are many ways to modulate the principally free access to works. One of the axes, along which this kind of modulation can take place, is time. Being the first one to see something can be (socially and/or economically) valuable, even – or perhaps especially – if the work is accessible to everyone after that. Another axis results from physical distance. In the theater, seats in the front are more expensive than those in the back. Another axis can be the degree of mediatization. The recording of a performance, even if it can be seen in real time and even if the camera is closer to the performers than any visitor, is nevertheless a substantially different, usually less valuable experience than that of being directly on site. Another axis is that of personalization, which individualizes and strengthens the relationship between the producer and the recipient. Readers, for instance, may spend hours waiting in line to have a copy of their book signed by the author, possibly even with a personal dedication. This undoubtedly raises the value of the book, even if that is not necessarily reflected in its monetary value.

3.4. SYMBOLIC SHAREHOLDING

The classic example of an economic transaction leading to quasi possession through symbolic shareholding is the sponsoring of events or ob-

¹⁹ Christoph Doswald, «Donnerstag, Freitag und Robinson», in: *Ironisch/Ironic*, exhibition catalogue Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, 1998.

jects with a high social value of their own, which can be transferred through symbolic shareholding. The football stadium built in Munich by Herzog & De Meuron, the focus of intense attention and positive emotionality, is called «Allianz Arena». This allows the insurance company Allianz to have a symbolic share in events essentially alien to its nature and thus to absorb a portion of this social energy. There are many analogous examples in sports as well as in the cultural sector. The sponsor becomes «part of the experience», as it is propagated in the context of the EURO08.

Another form of symbolic shareholding was developed, for instance, by the project Blender²⁰, which produces the Open Source 3D animation suite of the same name and Open Source animation films. Their most recent work, the animation **Big Bug Bunny** premiered in Amsterdam in early April 2008. To pre-finance the project, there was an offer to order the DVD during the production phase. In return, the purchasers received the film before it became freely public, and in addition, their names were mentioned in the credits as members of the production team. About a thousand people pre-ordered the DVD and thus contributed a relevant portion of the production costs. For this reason, their share in the production was more than just symbolic, but also represents one of the diverse possibilities for becoming active in the community. This type of a community's share in projects forms the foundation for economic models of free goods, which are to be discussed in the following.

4. ON THE ECONOMY OF FREE GOODS, EXAMPLE OF FREE SOFTWARE

As mentioned above, the free availability of digital goods is not to be equated with the absence of an economy of such goods, not even then if we understand economy – as in the following – in the narrower sense as (monetary) economic relations. For this reason, I will concentrate on the aspects that let the users of these services pay, even though the actual software is freely available and usable. In other words, I will address primarily the demand side and not the analysis of why and how Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) is produced.²¹

4.1. WHAT IS FREE AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE (FOSS)?

In terms of ideology, there are clear differences between Free Software and Open Source Software. Whereas the former indicates the political aspects of free cooperation, the latter emphasizes its efficiency. The term Free Software stems from the mid-1980s, the term Open Source was introduced in the late 1990s to take the ideas closer to the business world.²² In practice, the differences are not so far apart, because the basic principles formulated by the founder of the Free Software movement, Richard Stallman, the so-called «four freedoms», apply equally to Open Source Software.²³

²⁰ <http://www.blender.org> [03.2010].

²¹ This question has already been dealt with very early and quite extensively, whereby a pluralism of motivation (intrinsic interest, reputation, cooperation, learning, problem-solving, merit, etc.) has been repeatedly noted at the level of individual developers. For a summary, cf. Steven Weber, **The Success of Open Source**, Cambridge: MA, Harvard UP, 2004.

²² Volker Grassmuck, **Freie Software. Zwischen Privat- und Gemeineigentum**, Berlin: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2002. URL: <http://freie-software.bpb.de/> [01.2010].

- Freedom 1: The program may be run for any purpose.
- Freedom 2: The program may be studied and changed.
- Freedom 3: The program may be distributed.
- Freedom 4: The program may be improved and distributed to provide a benefit for the community.²⁴

These freedoms can be legally enforced²⁵ with free licenses, especially the GNU General Public License (GPL).²⁶ Every user of the software is assured of these four freedoms, as long as they uphold the other conditions of the license. In the case of the GPL, these freedoms must be redistributed along with the program. Once a code has been published under the GPL, it can never be published again under a different license (unless all the rights holders agree).²⁷ Persons and companies that have no formal relationship with one another are thus able to cooperate or build on the works of others without exposing themselves to the risk of suddenly being confronted with copyright demands. This is an essential precondition for long-term cooperation in open networks.

4.2. COMMERCIAL DEMAND IN THE AREA OF FREE SOFTWARE

Whereas Free Software was initially created as a counter-reaction to the emergence of a commercial, proprietary software industry²⁸, in recent years an industry of its own has developed as more and more companies use and produce FOSS.²⁹ In this industry, which is part of the much broader, in part wholly noncommercial or even anti-commercial FOSS movement, essentially four areas have developed, which structure the economy from the demand side.³⁰

4.2.1. Services for the Community as a Whole

Free Software is usually coordinated in formally open networks³¹ with the help of e-mail lists, CVS servers (which administer the actual code), blogs and other communication means. Whereas those networks that are primarily socially structured function very well in many respects, they are not suitable for certain, essential tasks of more complex projects. This is not least of all the case, because open networks cannot be legal entities. Consequently, in recent years separate foundations have been created for almost all larger software projects, which can take over the relevant tasks. One of the most important examples of this is the Apache Foundation, founded in 1999.³² This founda-

²³ Cf. Free Software definition: <http://www.fsf.org/licensing/essays/free-sw.html> [01.2010], and the Open Source Definition: <http://opensource.org/docs/osd> [01.2010].

²⁴ A special feature of software, for which there is no direct analogy in most other cultural goods, is the distinction between source code and binary code. Source code is the code written in a programming language. In order for a machine to be able to read it, it has to be transformed into binary code consisting only of 0 and 1. This means, however, that it can then no longer be read and changed by most people. That is why it is important that not only the program that can run on the computer is freely available, but also the source code that can be changed and read. With so-called proprietary software the source code is a strictly kept company secret, and the users receive only the binary code.

²⁵ <http://gpl-violations.org> [03.2010].

²⁶ <http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/gpl.html> [12.2008].

²⁷ The GPL has recently been revised and is now available as Version 3. Several further obligatory rules have been introduced here, which react to dangers for the aforementioned four freedoms that are specific to software. For a brief explanation of the changes, see Richard Stallman, *Why Upgrade to GPLv3* (20 July 2007), <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/rms-why-gplv3.html> [01.2010].

²⁸ Williams, Sam (2002). *Free as in Freedom. Richard Stallman's Crusade for Free Software*. Sebastopol, CA, O'Reilly URL: <http://www.oreilly.com/openbook/freedom> [01.2010].

²⁹ Bruce Perens, «Open Source – ein aufstrebendes ökonomisches Modell», in: B. Lutterbeck, Matthias Bärwolff, R. A. Gehring (Ed.), *Open Source Jahrbuch 2007 – Zwischen freier Software und Gesellschaftsmodell*, Berlin: Lehmanns Media, 2007. <http://www.opensourcejahrbuch.de/portal/scripts/download?article=osjb2007-02-03-perens.pdf> [01.2010].

³⁰ This is not the only way in which business models can be categorized in the FOSS sector. A closer look at commercial software producers identifies six different clusters that only partially

tion provides organizational, legal and financial support for more than fifty free software projects. The foundation is financed (roughly US\$150'000) by donations, primarily from large companies, which have a strong interest of their own in the positive further development of one or several of these projects. The largest single sponsor of the Apache Foundation is Google.

There are many comparable examples, in which a foundation finances a community, which supports this as a whole by providing certain organizational services. Outside the field of software, the Wikimedia Foundation is certainly the most significant.³³ Its task is to promote Wikipedia and its affiliated projects, especially by taking over responsibility for the meanwhile very extensive and thus expensive infrastructure³⁴, but also by co-organizing conferences and other events. The Wikimedia Foundation is financed by individual (small) donations and donations of equipment amounting to about US\$ 6'000'000 in 2007–08.³⁵

As a broad generalization, it may be noted that the larger and more established a community is, which is structured as a formally open network, the greater the demand for specialized services, which are provided for the community as a whole. Probably because of their size, successful projects also appear to be able to overcome the problem of «free riding».³⁶ Which services these are and who within the community is willing to contribute how much for them differs widely from case to case. In the case of the artist-centered music software PureData, these services are also offered free of charge by institutions that intensively rely on this software in their work. In this case, the server infrastructure is provided by the Institute of Electronic Music and Acoustics in Graz.

4.2.2. Dual Licensing

A consequence of the GPL is that all software based on GPL code must be redistributed under the GPL. Not all users want to be restricted to these conditions. This results in the demand for the acquisition of a program under a non-free license as well. This is possible if the program is licensed twice: once free for everyone under GPL, once for a fee under a classical license, so that the license holder is not obligated to distribute their product under the GPL. One of the most prominent examples is that of QT, a so-called «cross-platform application development framework, widely used for the development of GUI programs».³⁷ This toolkit enables the programming of relatively simple graphical user interfaces (GUI), such as those used today for

overlap with the four models I have presented. Among other reasons, the difference is the result of companies focussing on the offer side. Cf. Carlo Daffara, **Business models in FOSS-based companies** (2006). <http://opensource.mit.edu/papers/OSSEMP07-daffara.pdf> [01.2010]. Cf. also: Raphael Leiteritz, «Open Source-Geschäftsmodelle», in: B. Lutterbeck, R. A. Gehring (Ed.), **Open Source Jahrbuch 2004 – Zwischen Softwareentwicklung und Gesellschaftsmodell**, Berlin: Lehmanns Media, 2004. <http://www.opensourcejahrbuch.de/portal/scripts/download?article=II-5-Leiteritz.pdf> [01.2010].

³¹ By formal I mean that formal membership in an organization (as an employee, for instance, or otherwise tied by contract) or a formal title are not necessary to participate in the project. These kinds of projects naturally have mechanisms at their disposal to close certain processes.

³² <http://www.apache.org/foundation> [01.2010].

³³ <http://www.wikimedia.org> [01.2010].

³⁴ By the end of 2006, Wikipedia was the sixth most frequently visited destination online with approx. 285'000 hits per minute. http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Frequently_Asked_Questions_-_How_is_the_revenue_spent.3F [03.2010].

³⁵ Roughly a third of this amount was acquired through individual donations. The rest came from foundations and other institutional funding. Annual Report, 2007–08, <http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Donate/Transparency/de> [03.2010].

³⁶ Free riding is the term used in economics to designate the use of a general resource without individually covering its costs.

³⁷ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qt_\(toolkit\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qt_(toolkit)) [01.2010].

the vast majority of all the programs on the market. QT is produced by the Norwegian company Trolltech and used, among others, in the project KDE³⁸, which is currently the most extensive Open Source project.³⁹ Following vehement controversies, Trolltech decided in 2005 to license the program, which was originally not under GPL, under GPL for all platforms as well, but at the same time to also offer other license conditions for a fee. In this way, the toolkit became quite widespread and established as a standard tool for interface developers, but on the other hand, it is also available to companies that do not want to distribute Free Software themselves. For these companies, it is worth paying for a product that they could also use without payment. Yet even for the paying companies it is an advantage that the program is also freely available, because this way it remains guaranteed that many developers work with this program. The disadvantage of dual licensing is that all developers must agree to this model. In practice, this leads to the situation that the circle of those actively working on the project remains limited to the employees of the company managing the rights. However, this is not necessarily a major disadvantage.⁴⁰

Most works of visual art are not produced in open, cooperative networks, but rather by individual artists or small, mostly relatively clearly structured groups. These generally hold all copyrights, so it would not be a problem to re-license a work, previously under a free license, for the market again, for instance in a limited, altered edition.

4.2.3. Customizing

Free and Open Source Software, especially when it is developed in formally open networks (which is usually the case), is generic for structural reasons. For it is the generic core of a problem that is shared by many and around which cooperation is organized in larger groups. The application of software, however, is almost always unique, especially if it passes a certain stage of complexity. No two implementations of a web server or a Content Management System (CMS) are identical, because the tasks solved using the software are different from case to case. A great demand for services arises to bridge this space between the generic, cooperatively produced and freely available solution and the unique application that is relevant in a specific individual case. This demand is met by an already highly differentiated, rapidly growing offer of services, ranging from tiny enterprises to multinational corporations like IBM or HP.

It can generally be observed that despite all copyability, technologically complex software works are highly dependent on context, and the transfer from one context to another, for instance from one server to another, can be very difficult. In this sense, customizing means not only adapting existing generic software to specific requirements, but also the transfer of an existing software configuration

³⁸ <http://www.kde.org> [03.2010].

³⁹ Cf. Eva Brucherseifer, «Die KDE-Entwicklergemeinde - wer ist das?», in: *Open-Source-Jahrbuch 2004*, (op. cit.) <http://www.opensourcejahrbuch.de/portal/scripts/download?article=I-6-Brucherseifer.pdf> [01.2010].

⁴⁰ In January 2008 the company Trolltech was taken over by Nokia for \$150 million.

to a different use context, whereby then only a minimal change is needed in relation to the appearance. In the field of online art, issues of archiving or server migration belong to this area.

4.2.4. Support

Next to customization, the area of support certainly creates the greatest demand for commercial services based on free goods. A central criticism of products produced in open networks is that responsibility and accountability are often unclear. Although most problems can also be solved within the open network (by consulting forums and mailing lists), this can take a great deal of time and effort and may also presuppose a high degree of knowledge on the part of the person trying to solve the problem. If a feasible and efficient way to solve problems that may occur is lacking, the question arises as to the mid-term and long-term usability of free goods. This problem leads to a greater demand for support services, which is all the greater the more dynamic the environment is, in which the software is used. The most well known example of a business model based on the demand for support services (and customization) is probably the company Red Hat, which has made support and training for their own, free platform the central element of their business model for almost ten years.⁴¹ The company Canonical⁴², which operates the extremely successful GNU/Linux distribution Ubuntu⁴³, pursues a similar strategy.

Questions of long-term investment security also play a role in many aspects of the art and cultural market and thus also the question of support. In the field of very fragile, unstable media, especially in the highly dynamic online area, these questions are especially urgent. What exactly the support needs to consist of and which services can be provided depends very much on the individual artistic work, the value of which is to be maintained over a long period of time.

5. PERSPECTIVES

We are now only at the beginning of a development that will lead to a differentiation of the forms of owning and possessing immaterial goods, processes and other concentrations. Some of them will be based, as in the past, on exclusive legal titles. Other forms have already long been important in the field of culture, as the references to magicians, comedians and cooks have shown. These and similar practices, with or without free licenses, will probably even grow in significance. Some of these new forms will directly generate new business models, others center around social valorization that can only be indirectly translated into monetary dimensions.

What appears essential to me is that the dimensions, according to which this differentiation takes place – legal versus normative regulations, exclu-

⁴¹ Werner Knoblich, «Erfolgreich mit Open Source – Das Red-Hat-Open-Source-Geschäftsmodell», in: B. Lutterbeck, Matthias Bärwolff, R. A. Gehring (Ed.), *Open Source Jahrbuch 2006 – Zwischen Softwareentwicklung und Geschäftsmodell*, Berlin: Lehmanns Media, 2006. <http://www.opensourcejahrbuch.de/portal/scripts/download?article=osjb2006-04-02-knoblich.pdf> [01.2010].

⁴² <http://www.canonical.com> [03.2010].

⁴³ <http://www.ubuntu.com> [03.2010].

sivity versus free access, financial versus social added value - are not to be understood as opposites and fixed categories, but instead represent the ends of a continuum. Most concrete cases, however, will not play out at these ends, but rather somewhere in the middle, where all these elements relate to one another in the most diverse mixed forms and are first able to become stabilized in their specific relation to one another.

Free goods and commercial value creation are not fundamental opposites. On the contrary. It is the specific features of these goods that create entirely new needs. It could be briefly formulated that what is specific about services based on free goods is not the focus on exclusive possession, but rather the stabilization of social relationships.

Naturally the field of Free Software is structured quite differently from that of (online) art, not least of all because online art also does not necessarily fall into the realm of free goods. Nevertheless, I find it plausible to presume that the (monetary) economic potential in this field could also be found primarily in the establishment and stabilization of social relationships, and less in conventional practices of exclusive possession. In terms of these kinds of expectations, classical objects, as they are distributed by established institutions in the art market, will remain central, not least of all because the market, with its conventions and practices, has been created exactly for these kinds of objects. If online art wants to play by the rules of the established art market, then it seems to me that Peter Schneemann's conservative analysis in this publication - that online art will have to adapt to the logic of objects - is thoroughly correct. I am optimistic, however, that the market can change, similarly to the way this is already more or less clearly evident in other fields of software, knowledge and cultural production.

Translated from the German by Aileen Derieg

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ISABEL ZÜRCHER
SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR A COMMON HERITAGE?
NET-BASED ART IN PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

VIDEO ART HAD TO BRANCH OUT INTO INSTALLATION BEFORE IT COULD ESTABLISH ITSELF ON THE ART MARKET. TODAY'S NET-BASED ARTISTS ALSO CREATE SPACE-SPECIFIC PRESENTATIONS TO DISPLAY THEIR WORKS IN GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS. THIS IS NOT ENOUGH, HOWEVER, TO COUNTER THE SCEPTICISM ABOUT ACQUIRING WORKS WHOSE LONG-TERM PRESERVATION DEPENDS ON THE DYNAMICS OF THE INTERNET. IN RECOMMENDING THE CREATION OF A «SWISS PLATFORM FOR NEW MEDIA ART,» **OWNING ONLINE ART** CONCRETISES CONCERNS THAT WERE ALREADY VOICED TEN YEARS AGO.

«Pure webwork/website is still hard to sell... installation could possibly sell better.»¹ – Even if all the criteria for acquisition are met – contemporary relevance, aesthetic quality, place within an artist's oeuvre – net-based art is still minimally represented in public collections. This, in spite of many initiatives and models for its mediation. Building blocks for a «centre of attention on the net» already exist, including **projets internet** at the Centre pour l'image contemporaine in Geneva or the Basel cultural server **Xcult**.² American museums are playing an exemplary role in terms of taking institutional responsibility for the technical updating of the works, thus freeing the artists from unpaid maintenance. The Whitney Museum of Modern Art, the Dia Centre New York and MoMa have committed themselves to the documentation and preservation of web projects.³ The **Variable Media Network** (VMN) brings curators and restorers from different institutions together to work on the permanent integration, restoration and conservation of works in media characterized by mutability.⁴ The VMN has artists fill out a detailed questionnaire in which they are asked about their intentions and for information that can then be used for purposes of documentation and conservation. «Museums have interviewed artists about their work before, but the VMI is radically explicit about the mutability of much contemporary art and attempts to provide a standard framework for both artists and museum personnel to understand what really matters to the artist for any particular work of art.»⁵ The **National Information Standards Organization** has issued recommendations for the creation of high-quality digital collections,⁶ while specialists on both sides of the Atlantic are working on the preservation of and access to digital archives.⁷ Reinhard Storz, co-editor of the present publication, provides an annotated list of museums, private collections and galleries that have distinguished themselves in the mediation of net-based art.⁸

As Peter Schneemann wrote in his article,⁹ if works accessible online are to find their place in the world of the institutional promotion and mediation of visual art, collections will need to redirect the concept of «authorship» away from unique and datable work and toward processes and programming languages. They will also have to abandon the preconceptions against the so-called ephemeral and elaborate suitable procedures for inventory and documentation. The long-established practice of coll-

¹ See Shu Lea Cheang in «Artist's Statements» in the present publication, p. 128.

² See <http://xcult.ch>, <http://www.centreimage.ch/projetsInternet.php> [02.2010]. Barbara Basting, «Bundeskulturserver ja bitte. Knotenpunkt für die Kultur: Wie Internetkunst gefördert werden soll,» in: *Wochenzeitung*, 28.9.2000, p. 19, at: <http://woz.ch/archiv/old/00/39/7629.html> [02.2010].

³ See <http://artport.whitney.org>, <http://www.diacenter.org/webproj/index.html>, <http://moma.org/onlineprojects/index.html>. Barbara Basting outlines the collection strategies of various American institutions in «Netz Kunst und die Museen – Aspekte der Institutionalisierung einer neuen Kunstform,» Ms dated 11. 3. 2002, p. 2ff. At: <http://www.xcult.org/texte/basting/02/basting.pdf> [02.2010].

⁴ <http://www.variablemedia.net>: the VNM's latest publication is available for download there. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum / Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science, and Technology (Ed.), **Permanence through Change; The Variable Media Approach**, New York / Montreal, 2003.

⁵ Steve Dietz, «Collecting New-Media Art: Just Like Anything Else, Only Different,» in: Bruce Altshuler (ed.), **Collecting the New**, Princeton University Press, Princeton / Oxford 2005, p. 85 – 101; here p. 98.

⁶ See «A framework of Guidance for Building Good Digital Collections» at: <http://www.niso.org/publications/rp/framework3.pdf> [03.2010].

⁷ Research projects and networks for the protection of digital data address not just net-based art and literature but also the long-term preservation of important cultural data (see e.g. <http://www.langzeitarchivierung.de>). The question as to museums as «senders» raised at the **Museums and the Internet** conference in Hanover (2008) is also applicable to the distribution of net-based works by museums (see <http://www.mai-tagung.de/maitagung+2008/abstracts.htm>). Exhibition projects and conferences of the Karlsruhe Center for Art and Media Technologies (ZKM) approach the Internet as a place for the distribution and dissemination of digital works (see e.g. «From Archive

ecting conceptual art should dissipate scepticism toward the immaterial: «There are plenty of ephemeral, instruction-based works in museum collections, from Jana Sterbak's **Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic** (1987) to LeWitt's **Four Geometric Figures in a Room**. There are plenty of <anti-institutional> artists collected by museums, from Hans Haacke to Andrea Fraser. There are certainly examples of unbounded and open works, from Ray Johnson's correspondence art to Yoko Ono's **Scream** score. Why is there so little new-media art in museum collections?»¹⁰ Steve Dietz, curator of new media at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1996–2003), speaks of a «collector's crisis» relative to electronic and net-based works. The considerable production of works of digital and interactive art since the 1990s is far from being represented in museum collections. Dietz attributes this only partly to the artistic tendency to turn away from the cultural control of museums and toward a broader audience. More to the point, according to him, is the difference between the open culture of the Internet and the traditional role of museums as «gatekeepers» for the admission of new works into the art-historical and critical canon: «For museums to acquire open-licensed art would require them to transform from collecting institutions to circulating institutions.»¹¹ American collection policy is attempting to deal with the tension between net-based art and the unique, immutable work by opening up a dialogue with the producing artists. What came out of this is that the artists are more interested in the distribution of their works than in earning the distinction of uniqueness: «Artists are more interested in making them accessible than rare.»¹² An e-mail poll conducted by OOA confirmed this provisional conclusion. For artists, the claim for ownership was secondary to a concept of authorship – often hard to make out from the outside – that considered the work and its distribution as interactive: «This interactive communication with the public was the form of my art but at the same time it was the means of distribution» (Martine Neddham, alias Aka Mouchette). Birgit Kempker replied to the question of her place of presentation by pointing out the uncontrollability of data published online: «The net builds its own information tunnel through which I can contact and am sometimes contacted. I notice it when I am recontacted through the net.» The repeated passive linking of her website also guarantees Jodi a wide base of reception. As for Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, they stated in so many words that they owed her international reputation as an artist to the Internet: «Many blogs and forums link to our work, and we're pleased and fascinated with how the Web has made us who we are.» The global communication system of the Internet relativizes the role of museums as venues for display and mediation.¹³ «Net-artist who have become well-known no longer need to have their works shown in museums; on the contrary, the

to living Database» of April 24, 2009 or «access_unlimited» of Oct. 9, 2009, symposia in conjunction with the Mediaartbase, <http://www.mediaartbase.de>, [03.2010].

⁸ See Reinhard Storz, «Internet-Based Art in Museums, Private Art Collections and Galleries» in the present publication, p. 97–113.

⁹ See Peter Schneemann, «Problems of Compatibility: On the Relationship Between Net-based Art and Market in a Media History Perspective» in the present publication, p. 19–28.

¹⁰ Dietz (op. cit.), p. 93.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 94.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See «Artist's Statements» in the present publication, p. 125–164.

museum need these artists if they want to show what is happening in today's art world.» In 2000, the net-artist Nathalie Bookchin said: «I see a power shift in that curators and critics should be concerned with net-art, and not the other way around.»¹⁴

The Internet,¹⁵ called an «imaginary museum» from early on and seriously considered as a platform for artistic activity with rules of its own, does not seem to be readily compatible with the concrete business of museums. For artists today, the admission of net-based works into collections often remains an unfulfilled wish (while the first generation of net-artists considered museums as being opponents to their own anarchistic stance). Curators trained to work with traditional media cite computer problems and their own uncertainty as to criteria of quality as obstacles to acquisition. There are further problems involving presentation in actual space. Serious critics complain sometimes about the many monitors to be found at exhibitions of new media art, the lack of sensuous qualities, and being overwhelmed when interactive works require too much time and effort to be viewed. Beatrix Ruf, Director of the Zurich Kunsthalle, is sceptical about the attractiveness of the Internet as a medium for art: «Of course there are people who spend all their time on the net. But for me, going on the net requires above all a different qualitative effort... It is a temporal and experiential space. Until now, I have never been ready to invest three hours of my time for that.»¹⁶ The adherence to net-based art among contemporary art professionals swings between the extremes of a perceived didactic control of the spectator and of a fascination with the game of choosing one's own way through a work. «I am one of those people who prefer seeing a projection than <tooling around> on a computer. Often I find it lacks sensuousness. Unless the net-art is beamed and enlarged, which is nice.»¹⁷ Christoph Vögele, Director of the Solothurn Kunstmuseum, appreciates presentations that have a sensuous aspect **inside** the museum, not those that reconstruct the aesthetics of an office: «We acquired Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg's **Wiese** («Lawn,» 2005) for our collection. Because the monitor looks good, you don't get the feeling of having a box into which you have to go, but see a picture made of light that reaches out to you.»¹⁸ Many artists work on spatial presentations of their net-based art that make computer screens unnecessary for Internet connections. In this respect, net-based art has learned the lesson of video art: the option of spatial extension with beamer projections made a new experience of video possible, and so it established itself in public and private collections.¹⁹ Stephan Kunz, a curator at the Aargau Kunsthaus, believes that institutions have a duty to engage in the mediation of net-based art. Unlike personal computers, which are usually used for work and research purposes, the museum offers space for more

¹⁴ Nathalie Bookchin, quoted by Barbara Basting in: «Netzkunst und die Museen - Aspekte der Institutionalisierung einer neuen Kunstform» Ms. dated 3.11.2002, p. 4. at: <http://www.xcult.org/texte/basting/02/basting.pdf> [02.2010].

¹⁵ See Tilman Baumgärtel, «Das Internet als imaginäres Museum» Oct. 1998, at: <http://duplox.wzb.eu/texte/tb> [02.2010].

¹⁶ Beatrix Ruf, Director of the Zurich Kunsthalle, in a conversation on July 23, 2008.

¹⁷ Christoph Vögele, Director of the Solothurn Kunstmuseum, in a conversation on June 17, 2009.

¹⁸ Ibid. Vögele and other curators' support for the presence of online-art in their galleries also involves the consideration of attracting the public to their respective institutions.

¹⁹ Diego and Gilli Stampa in conversation on Aug. 5, 2008.

concentrated viewing. Exhibitions are a good means to weigh a long-term commitment to a work: «In exhibitions you can show interesting things, as well as try things out, in a positive sense. Then, in the course of the exhibition, maybe I realize that it interests me more than just for two or three months. I could even imagine having it in our collection.»²⁰ The former curator of the Walker Art Center also had a two-step acquisition strategy. The acquisition for the permanent collection was preceded by a test phase in the so-called **Study Collection**: «This allowed me to collect work that I felt strongly about but that the institution was not necessarily fully equipped to deal with at that point. More important, however, the Study Collection allowed me to preserve work that provided a context for the artwork I was collecting, such as the **Art Dirt** webcasts, which included interviews with many of the artists in the digital art collection.»²¹ It is the mission of up-to-date museums to take both art works and their context under their protective wings: «Museums are moving toward such integration of their collections, archives, and libraries, at least intra-institutionally. It remains a goal to expand accessibility inter-institutionally.»²²

A SWISS PLATFORM FOR NEW MEDIA ART

Felix Stalder first formulated the idea of a «Swiss Platform for New Media Art» in the context of the **OOA** project, but also against the background of the question whether institutional «collecting» necessarily had to be communicated by means of exhibitions, or whether institutions could not also highlight their collections in a virtual space.²³ The public visibility of the individual works, their centralized upkeep entrusted to several public and private collections, as well as the net-specific model of a community based on common interests and efforts probably still goes against the grain of ongoing collection practices. Museums also see their collecting activity as a way to clarify their profile by having their own special areas of interest. At the same time, the idea of a central «pool» holds the promise of being able to deal together with the unpredictable and unknown factors of conservation and restoration.

«Internet-based art has become an established genre of contemporary art and should therefore be admitted into collections devoted to this area. However, net art often overwhelms individual art institutions and collectors because the technical effort for installation and upkeep is considered to be too great. Moreover, there is the fact that the potential collecting institutions do not dispose of enough expertise to determine which works are suitable for a collection and how to deal with the specific curatorial challenge of the individual works.»²⁴

²⁰ The first presentation works of net-based art in Aarau occurred on the occasion of the Annual exhibition for the local-based artists. The catalogue cited only the urls, nothing was shown in the galleries themselves.

²¹ Dietz (op. cit.), p. 96.

²² Ibid.

²³ Felix Stalder, **Schweizer Plattform für Medienkunst**. Unpublished project outline in the context of **Owning Online Art**, Jan. 2008.

²⁴ Ibid. (More quotes follow).

The aim of a «Swiss Platform for New Media Art» would be to constitute, in the medium- and long-term, a collection of net-based works and guarantee their accessibility through a common portal.

«Internet-based projects are characterized by the fact that they can be viewed simultaneously at any number of different places. This creates the possibility of bringing them together on a shared infrastructure and so make them accessible to collectors and the public, whether online or under traditional exhibition conditions. The technical work can be coordinated better in this way and the individual institutions do not have to acquire the necessary know-how, which will be provided by the operators of the «Swiss Platform for New Media Art.»

This platform is organised on a membership basis, with members contributing to the service costs by paying an annual fee (to be determined). The operator of the platform have no budget for new acquisitions themselves, but can submit suggestions based on their knowledge of current production. They are the contact persons for curatorial, technological and conservational questions.²⁵ As intermediaries between the artists and collections, they can draft sales contracts, develop standards for long-term documentation and make estimates for the installation and maintenance of individual works. The owners of the centrally serviced and online viewable works are the individual members, who can develop space-specific installations as needed in conjunction with the platform and the artists. The public benefits by having access to quality work with commentaries and links by means of a single, cooperatively serviced portal.

«The network can be joined by anyone interested in the collection of net art. This includes public and private institutions with a mandate to collect contemporary art, private collectors of contemporary art, private institutions with an interest in making net art accessible in the long term (art schools, art foundations) and individual sponsors.»

Membership is an acknowledgement of the commitment to an artistic production that lies outside of museums, and not just because of its «anti-institutional» roots. For acquisition committees, the annual fees are a regular reminder of net-based art, and the platform provides its members with a showcase of their collecting activity that is accessible on an international scale. Collections that acquire works invest not only in materialisation but also focus on strategies for mediation and distribution. The introduction of a «Swiss Platform for New Media Art» balances out the usual self-profiling and distanced postures of institutional collections with a model of cooperation and mutual communication; in so doing it comes close, structurally speaking, to the successfully estab-

²⁵ Among other things, it was the limitation to the role of service that hampered the realization by the business partners of the *Owning Online Art* project. A high degree of identification with artistic issues and their dissemination was a major factor for Reinhard Storz and Annette Schindler in their original initiative to create a gallery of net-based art and in the present model of a Digital Art Collection with integrated Store. This identification plays only a secondary role for the operators of the platform outlined here.

²⁶ Stephan Kunz in a talk with the author and Markus Schwander on June 13, 2008.

²⁷ Joseph Beuys quoted by Jacqueline Burckhardt, President of the Swiss Society of Graphic Arts (Schweizerische Graphischen Gesellschaft) in the foreword to the exhibition catalogue *Im Auftrag. Druckgraphik 1918 bis 1998*, Graphic Arts Collection of the ETH Zurich, 1998-99, p.1.

²⁸ See Erik Dettwiler in «Artist's Statements» in the present publication, p.130.

lished platforms **Rhizome** and **The Thing** (which also attracted the attention of institutional collections as essential «nodes» for net-based art). Through the collective ownership of data and programs, the association would also be involved in a broader discussion about the rights of authors and copyrights for images. It would have to be taken for granted that the works accessible online would initially be treated as «special cases» (technically) and be integrated into critical discussions only on the occasion of exhibitions and publications.

Stephan Kunz made this clear in his talks with us: the idea of a «Swiss Platform for New Media Art» is not entirely new. «Maybe net-based art should be treated like graphic art, along the lines of the Swiss Society for Graphic Arts, which publishes a special newsletter for 125 subscribers. The work is done for all Swiss museums, and so it would also be in the «pool.» The art is then available to all subscribers who make it available in turn.»²⁶ While the reproducibility of graphic art editions keeps their price relatively low on the market, it can lead to modes of cooperative promotion and distribution. «I am interested in the distribution of physical supports in the form of editions because I am interested in the dissemination of ideas.»²⁷ Modes of propagation should matter to us, especially in the case of a medium in which the work is considered as a mutable process, an individual interaction or a «communicative document».²⁸

Translated from the German by Jean-Marie Clarke

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**REINHARD STORZ
INTERNET-BASED ART IN MUSEUMS, PRIVATE ART
COLLECTIONS AND GALLERIES**

April 2010

THIS STUDY GIVES INFORMATION ON LONG-STANDING AND CURRENT COLLECTIONS OF NET-BASED ART AND PRESENTS GALLERIES AND ART FAIRS THAT ALSO OFFER OR SHOW NET-BASED MEDIA ART. THE ONLINE VERSION OF THIS STUDY PROVIDES A DOCUMENTATION (SCREEN SHOTS) OF THE WEB INTERFACES OF ALL THE INSTITUTIONS DISCUSSED.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research collates information on the past and current status of net-based art in art collections, the art market and the exhibition practice of art institutions. Using selected examples, it describes new and old approaches to market offers and the collection of net-based art. Just like archaeologists search under the surface of the Earth for traces of past life in zones classified by era, in our web investigations, we consult the archive buttons of museums to find out about any net-based art they may have collected in the past. Sometimes only fragments of earlier online exhibition projects and collections can still be accessed, but it is often the case that old collections are still accessible even if it has been some time since they were set up or updated. As the research shows, it would be wise with the current examples to widen the focus and talk about the concept of digital media art rather than net art alone. The increasing bandwidth available for transmission of data via the Internet now enables us to publish audio and video art forms on the net as well. For instance, remix and samplings of existing material – which are concerned more with small picture formats, the formal meaning of loops and potential dissemination to a large and disparate net audience – create different types of content and aesthetic qualities in this genre to those seen in older video art. We will therefore include such movies and 3D animations in our investigation into net-based art.

We define a net art collection as a curated collection of works hosted on the server of that collection, or a collection whose website states that the art works are owned by that collection. With this type of collection, work is usually produced and financed as part of a contractual obligation (as a commission) or the finished work is acquired by the collection. Variations on such «collections» include curated themed projects or online exhibitions of net art works that are available via the project's own interface, with the exhibited works being hosted on the project's server. Net art collections have also been created on web platforms which serve to promote net art either independently or institutionally. In terms of their structure and aesthetics, these platforms are more reminiscent of archives than art collections and the works hosted on the platform server remain the property of the artist. However, these platforms still fulfill our requirement that the collection must be a curated collection of works with its own server. Another type of collection that can be distinguished from the types discussed above is «links list». These are compilations of titles created with or without the knowledge of the artists that link to selected works on other servers. Such lists are not collections of works in the strictest sense, and they also often have a problem with broken links within a short space of time. This type of collection is similar to the original principle of a hypertext and has produced some important examples. We will use the term «links list» for these examples, particularly when discussing early developments.

2 HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF NET ART COLLECTIONS

Various art institutions in the USA have promoted net art for a limited period of time or have organized exhibitions containing net-based works, with the exhibition interface still available via the museum's homepage.¹ From 1997 to 2003, the **Walker Art Collection Minneapolis** operated **Gallery 9**, an information platform and <link list> of the work of over one hundred net artists.² Within this framework, the Walker Art Center established the **Digital Arts Study Collection**, one of whose most prominent collection pieces was the net art platform **äda'web** containing online works by well-known artists.³ The **Whitney Museum of American Art** NYC has a link to a so-called **Artport** on its website under «Special Exhibitions», which is defined as a «Portal to net art - online gallery space for commissioned net art projects». Alongside commissioned works, the **Artport** also contains a maintained links list to net art. Established since 2001, the inventory does not appear to have been further updated after 2006.⁴ The **Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles** operates a digital gallery under the Collections section, where net-based works dating from 2001 to 2004 are available.⁵ And the **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art**⁶ has had a link on its homepage to an **e.space** till 2008, which links primarily to commissioned works from the **Art in Technological Times** exhibition in 2001.⁷ Finally, there are links to two net-based works on the website of the **Guggenheim Museum New York** under «Collection > Artwork Type > Internet Art». In 2008, the links to the works themselves were removed from the site and the works are now only documented with a picture. One of the works (**netflag**) is, however, still visible on the Guggenheim server.⁹

European net art collections were established at the end of the 1990s by the **Foundation Cartier**¹⁰ in Paris and the **Stedelijk Museum** in Amsterdam, but they were only in existence for a short period of time. The **Capricorn** exhibition from 1996 is documented in the Stedelijk Museum's archive with links to some still intact net art works.¹¹ The **Centre Pompidou** in Paris also bought net art. Besides traces dating back to 2003¹² acquisitions of net art are linked on the information site of **Espace des Collections Nouveaux Médias**.¹³ An offer from 2006 is summarizing the conditions: «We are willing to buy an unlimited multiple of the Internet work in a CD ROM format. The external links, if any, should be taken off. The Internet works are going to be presented at the Espace Nouveaux Médias and at the Internet site of the museum. The Centre Pompidou buys Internet works for approximately 500 euros.»¹⁴ In Switzerland, the **Centre pour l'Image Contemporaine** in Geneva established a small collection of net-based works between 1997 and 2000, which were still accessible via the Centre website under «Projets Internet» in April 2010.¹⁵ Only some fragments of the Net Art Section of **documenta X** in Kassel from 1997 can still be accessed. Together with the document interface, some of the works are now hosted on the culture server **ljudmila.org** in Ljubljana.¹⁶ In Budapest, the **C3: Center for Culture & Communication Foundation** created the

C3 Collection with media art and net art by local as well as international artists between 1996 and 2003.¹⁷ Financed by various private foundations, **C3's** aim is still to link the worlds of art, science and technology. In France, the **Espace Multimédia Gantner** based in the Bourgogne region near Belfort organized a **Collection d'oeuvres d'art numérique** which incorporated an offline version containing works by European and American net artists.¹⁸ A small collection of net art works from 2001 can be found on the server of the magazine publisher **Heise**, which for some years had financed **Telepolis**, an influential online magazine for media culture. Works from six artists and artist groups were commissioned and exhibited here under the title «Shopping Windows».¹⁹ For a long time, the **Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie ZKM** in Karlsruhe pioneered the way in which net art was defined and procured in Europe. Since the 1990s, ZKM has been developing a media art collection, but no net art works are included in the collection list.²⁰ However, the web interface for the historically important net art exhibition **net_condition** (1999/2000) at the ZKM has been retained. Its concept is that of a links list, and the works displayed are located on the artists' servers.²¹ Future exhibitions and dissemination of net art collections by internationally influential media art institutions such as the ZKM or at important festivals such as the **Ars Electronica** in Linz should not be ruled out, as it is possible that neither the artists nor the supporting institutions were aware of how these works would increase in value at the time when they were created.²² A collection of historical net art items is currently being worked on at the **Ludwig Boltzmann Institute für Media.Art.Research** in Linz. The research project **netpioneers 1.0** is investigating materials from the art platform **thing.net** (NYC 1993–2002), **thing.at** (Vienna 1993–2004) and **public netbase** (Vienna 1994–2006), as well as a work by the Swiss artist group **etoy**.²³ Whether net-based works from the **thing** projects will be re-published in the form of an «art collection» or scientific archive remains to be seen.

3. CURRENT NET-BASED ART COLLECTIONS

RHIZOME AT THE NEW MUSEUM

In New York in 2003, the Internet platform **rhizome.org**²⁴, a platform known worldwide for promoting and displaying digital and net-based art works since 1996, entered into cooperation with the **New Museum**, which was founded in 1977 as the **Museum of Contemporary Art** on Bowery Street in New York.²⁵ As a so-called «affiliate» of the museum, **Rhizome** remained an independent project but was able to take advantage of material and logistic advantages and – thanks to the museum context – was also able to present its collection of media art to a wider audience of art enthusiasts. In return for a comparatively low financial contribution, the **New Museum** acquired a high level of specialist competence from its new partner concerning issues related to digital media art, as well as a rich

information archive and the opportunity to network with the worldwide media art community. With the **ArtBase** and annual commissions, **Rhizome** has accomplished important work in terms of promoting and procuring net-based art, but it remains unclear which projects **Rhizome** hosts on its own server and which it merely links to from the website. In an e-mail dated 2/3/09, the project's self-conception as an «online art collection» was at least clear: «Rhizome is pleased to announce that the 2010 Commissions cycle is now open. Founded in 2001, the Rhizome Commissions Program is designed to support emerging artists with financial and institutional resources. In the seventh year of funding for the Program, Rhizome will award grants, with amounts ranging from \$1'000 to \$5'000, for the creation of significant works of new media art. Artists who receive a commission will also be invited to speak at **Rhizome's** affiliate, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and to archive their work in the ArtBase, a comprehensive online art collection.»

DIA ART FOUNDATION

The **Dia Art Foundation** NYC has been regularly commissioning artistic web projects since 1995²⁶. As of May 2009, the collection comprised 34 works, some by famous artists from the international art world. This collection is indexed on the **Dia Art Foundation's** homepage under the heading Artist's Web Projects and is given equal status alongside the other five collections and the foundation's funding program. Since the **Dia Art Foundation** was established in 1974, the promotion of contemporary «risk-taking» art projects has been part of its remit. It is thus equally committed today to collecting net-based art projects as it was to supporting prominent land art projects (**Spiral Jetty**, **Lightning Field** and **Roden Crater**) in the 1970s.

TURBULENCE.ORG

The NYC-based funding program **Turbulence** is not a net art collection per se but does fulfill the criteria of being a curated collection of works with its own server, in a way that hardly any other platform does. **Turbulence.org's** aim and current self-conception is stated on its website in the top left-hand corner: «turbulence - commissioning and supporting net art for 13 years: 1996-2009».²⁷ As a subsidiary project of New Radio and Performing Arts Inc.²⁸, **Turbulence** supports up to twenty projects a year with resources of between \$2'000 and \$4'000 - as of spring 2010, a total of approximately 160 works have been awarded financial support. The works are exclusively hosted on the **Turbulence** server for the first three years. This hosting policy is advantageous for the public because it means that **turbulence.org** has no broken links. Along with **Rhizome**, **Turbulence's** funding program is vitally important for the support of net-based art. And as a net art collection based on its own server, **Turbulence** remains unrivaled, at least in as far as the extent of the collection and spectrum of ideas it covers. In contrast to **Rhizome**, which has an association with the New Museum of Contemporary Art, **Turbulence** remains a program with no link to the classic art business.

COMPUTERFINEARTS.COM

The **Computer Fine Arts Collection** is a collection explicitly designed as a «net art collection and archive».29 In 2001, the media artist Doron Golan began to build an online collection of art works published on the web. The collection was taken over in 2003 by the Cornell University Library and is part of their Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art, a Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections. Today, the **Computer Fine Arts Collection** is one of the most comprehensive collections of net-based art. With almost 100 artists represented, the collection seemed to follow an encyclopedia type listing up until 2007. As befits its intention of being both collection and archive, the list-like character of the collection's website is reminiscent of an alphabetically organized archive. Thanks to the **NETworking - Net Art From the Computer Fine Arts Collection** exhibition30, which took place in the Haifa Museum of Art from November 2007 until March 2008, the **Computer Fine Arts Collection** has a catalog of selected works available to download as a PDF file.31

TATE GALLERY GB

Out of all the large European museum collections, only the British **Tate Gallery** is involved in net-based art. In Spring 2009, it offered a collection of thirteen net art works on its website under the heading «Intermedia Art». These works were commissioned by the museum from 2000 onwards.32 The **Tate Gallery** stated that its aim in collecting these works was, «to support artists in applying new techniques and methods as well as providing more opportunities to distribute art work outside the exhibition room. The program will also address art that comments on the social and political implications of new technology and practices that challenge traditional ideas of the art object; including work that is process-driven, participatory or interactive.» The **Tate Gallery's** Intermedia Art website, which is sponsored by BT (originally British Telecom) also regularly uses the broadcasting possibilities of the web to publish so-called broadcasts, interviews, media art events and symposia from the various domains of Intermedia Art. The list for 2008 contains 14 online offers.

MUSEO EXTREMEÑO E IBEROAMERICANO DE ARTE CONTEMPORANEO (MEIAC)

The Spanish Museo **MEIAC** in Badajoz has been collecting net art for several years under the title **NETescopio - Visor de Arte en Red** (English: **Net Art Viewer**)33. The collection today comprises 40 works by 36 artists, and between 100 and 7'000 euros was paid for each individual work.34 The interface of the online collection contains two links to each work: a link to a copy of the work on the museum server and a link to the work on the artist's server. As part of the project **Museo Inmaterial**, the collection's catalog was described as follows: «NETescopio es un archivo en línea en continuo desarrollo destinado a preservar obras artísticas generadas para la red. Este nuevo proyecto del MEIAC, enmarcado dentro del concepto de Museo Inmaterial, tiene por objetivo el resguardo, la difusión y la catalogación de dichas obras utilizando para ello el

mismo medio de Internet, posibilitando de esa forma su crecimiento y actualización constantes.» An exhibition entitled **Netescopio – Desmontages** containing 31 net art works took place in the Museo **MEIAC** from November 2008 to February 2009, for which an online catalog was also set up.³⁵

LX 2.0

LX 2.0 is a curated online project by Galerie Lisboa 20 arte contemporanea. Although the gallery's sales program is focused on works created using older forms of art media, from paintings to videos, the **LX 2.0** project has commissioned net-based art since 2007 and archived these works on its platform³⁶. According to gallery owner Miguel Nabinho's program notes, «new media art» is currently not a mainstream part of the commercial art world but it would be naive to think that this non-commercial status will last indefinitely. At the moment, the **LX 2.0** project concept does not have commercial goals for the works that have been commissioned. Galerie Lisboa 20 arte contemporanea's **LX 2.0** project looks like one possible option for the commercial future of net-based art. This means a combination of commercial work and curatorial practice like that practiced by [DAM] in Berlin, for example (see below).

WWW.NEEN.ORG / SUPERNEEN.COM

The **Neen** Project was exhibited in the Gagosian Gallery in NY in 2000, and was also credited as «the first Internet Art Movement». Founded by the internationally successful artist Miltos Manetas, who produces net-based art alongside paintings and videos, the website www.neen.org³⁷ quickly became a platform for young artists from various countries who all provide links to their net-based works here. In 2001, Manetas wrote in the **Neen** manifesto that the newly launched term «neen» would come to be associated with an as yet undefined generation of artists and designers. In the meantime, a long links list of over 160 works has been compiled on www.neen.org. The list's quality is evidence of curatorial care and attention and group identity.

MANETAS COLLECTION

While neen.org is merely a links list for a «virtual» collection, the **Manetas Collection**, which was established on the Internet in 2005 by Miltos Manetas, contained ten «web-based artworks» as of January 2009.³⁸ Manetas' way of listing artist, title of work and collection in the header of the html page (e.g. Elastic Enthusiastic, Angelo Plessas, Courtesy Miltos Manetas Collection, 2004) was a model for later collections. Other ideas, such as linking the work with a «title domain» (using the same example: www.elasticenthusiastic.com) were already being used as early as 1997 for Frieze/Kossatz's work www.anworten.de³⁹ and by the sales forum of the net gallery **Art.Teleportacia** in 1998.⁴⁰ The website www.manetas-collection.com is not always accessible, and occasionally comes up with the message «Manetas Collection is closed for installation» with a request for a password.⁴¹

4. ONLINE GALLERIES FOR NET ART AND EARLY INITIATIVES TO SELL NET-BASED ART

ART.TELEPORTACIA.ORG (JULY 1998 – 1999)

The first online gallery for net art was founded in 1998 by the Russian media artist Olia Lialina under the name **Art.Teleportacia**, but was wound up following little success in online sales.⁴² The idea of establishing this gallery was motivated more by the intention to inspire discourse about the marketability and thus also the value of new media art for museums rather than by financial expectations. Reactions to art.teleportacia appeared in the New York Times and in the then authoritative German online magazine **Telepolis**.⁴³ Lialina named the gallery's offer of five works by well-known net artists «Miniatures of the heroic Period» which, with its ironic undertone, was understood as an art historical term for the birth of a new art form. The originals were made available for purchase as a web address (URL), the price per work was a maximum of \$2'000.⁴⁴ Today, a good ten years later, the gallery project and the five artists whose works were displayed, Heath Bunting, Jodi, Alexei Shulgin, Vuk Cosic and Olia Lialina, have already secured their place in the still early history of net art. The main aspects of the gallery project are documented on Olia Lialina's work platform.⁴⁵ Some further elements (texts) from the original project can be found in an «appropriation» by the Italian net artist group 0100101110101101.org, which turned the acquisition of others' projects into a form of art in 1999⁴⁶, but still includes caricature-like contortions and anomalies in the copies. In the same year, Heath Bunting, one of the artists from **Art.Teleportacia**, fostered artistic commentary on the financial failure of the gallery project. Under the project name **Donate net.art to a collector**⁴⁷, he invited artists to donate their online works to art collections via the Internet. However, art collectors have to pay fees of \$1'000 a month or \$5'000 a year to receive net.art for free.

GIZMOLAND.COM (2000 – 2001)

From May 2000 to June 2001, the French media art curators Isabelle Arvers and Jean-Christophe Mahé operated the Internet platform **gizmoland.com**⁴⁸ as an «outil de vente, de promotion et d'information». ⁴⁹ The site was promoted as a «Boutique» for publishing and selling small digital works from the fields of «electronic music, graphic design, animation, games and interactive films». The prices were very low, ranging from 5 to 30 francs, and work was paid for by credit card (carte bleue). According to a statement by Isabelle Arvers, who later became «Commissaire Nouveaux Médias» at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and oversaw its net art program, the art market aspect of gizmoland.com, with its low prices and free parallel offering of daily cultural information and media-theoretical texts, remained more in the background.

ARTCART.DE (2000 – 2002)

The online gallery for net art **Artcart** was founded in 2000 by Mainz artist Mario Hergueta.⁵⁰ The program comprised some 20 titles of works offered as multiples and listed prices of between \$ 50 and \$ 2'000. These were paid for online by credit card. The list of works was no longer updated or maintained from the end of 2001, and every third link to a work now produces an error message. As of 2009, the gallery's web files are no longer linked to the index site www.artcart.de and the following farewell sentence now comes up on the site: «If there is no system to guarantee reliable distribution, the work disappears.» After **Art.Teleportacia**, **Artcart** was the second gallery to be founded that specialized in net art, and like **Art.Teleportacia**, it was an artist-inspired initiative. A page documenting the **Artcart** project can be found on the founder's website.⁵¹

EARLY SALES OF NET ART WORKS

Net art was already being supported financially by foundations and institutions as early as 1996. In 1998, the first net-based art works were bought by art institutions and collectors.⁵² The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis bought the net art platform **äda'web**, which was founded in 1995, together with all its individual works and made it available to the Internet public via the Buttons «Collection» / «NET.ART» on its website.⁵³ According to the artist, the Fondation Cartier Paris bought the works **self** (1998) and **Longitude** (1999) by Valéry Grancher – a «Contrat de Vente» was received for the works.⁵⁴ German art historian and net art theoretician Hans Dieter Huber bought the work www.antworten.de by the media artists Holger Friese and Max Kossatz for DM 3'000, complete with hard drive, software applications and codes, not least to find out how such a sales transaction functioned and what a suitable contract would look like.⁵⁵ In a long article for the **New York Times** the art critic Matthew Mirapaul discussed the question of whether the monetary value of net art could be determined.⁵⁶ In 1999, the Russian online gallery **Art.Teleportacia** sold Olia Lialina's work **If You Want to Clean Your Screen** to the Belgian Design Studio **entropy8zuper**, which had designed its own collection website⁵⁷. In the same year, Wolfgang Staehle, the media artist and founder of the well-known New York art platform **thing.net**, put the oldest **Thing** interface (from 1996) and **Thing** domain up for sale on ebay. Staehle considered a bid of \$ 1'000 submitted by a curator of the Guggenheim Museum to be unsatisfactory.⁵⁸ A number of other prominent investigations and tests concerning the market launch of net art should be mentioned here: in 2000, the New York artist John F. Simon Jr. offered personalized versions of his java applet work **Every Icon** online. These could be bought via Amazon for \$ 20 and put on the Internet via the buyer's own server.⁵⁹ A detailed license agreement regulates owners' rights⁶⁰. In 2002, the Italian artist Carlo Zanni initiated a three-day online workshop entitled **2P_\$: Peer to Peer Selling Processes for net_things** dealing with the issue of selling net-based art. International media artists

and curators expressed their opinions on Zanni's question «Is it possible to sell networked based artworks?» In addition, in 2004 Zanni developed a series of portable server sculptures entitled **Altarboy**, which was aimed at facilitating the collection of net art.⁶¹ In Germany in 2003, the Volksfürsorge collection bought a version of Cornelia Sollfranks **net.art generator** for its large contemporary art collection. The corporate director of Volksfürsorge took part in an interview with the artist.⁶² In 2004, the Irish net theoretician Garrett Lynch wrote a summary of issues surrounding the sale of net art for the **Net Art Review**.⁶³

5. NET ART AND DIGITAL MEDIA ART OFFERINGS IN ESTABLISHED GALLERIES AND AT ART FAIRS

In the USA and Europe, there are some galleries since the 1980s which have specialized in early forms of media art. Video art (tapes and installations) and electronic/computer-based interactive installations form part of their collections. The proportion of these galleries is very small when compared to the total number of galleries in existence. As many artists today use video as well as other mediums, video art works are offered even by many ordinary galleries for a number of years. It appears that the same thing may happen to net-based works: Since 2008, the Chinese gallery **Osage**⁶⁴ has been exhibiting the net-based work **Milk** by the artist Shu Lea Cheang alongside photographic and installation works, and in Spring 2009, the Zurich-based gallery **Nicola Von Senger** exhibited the work of Viennese artist Thomas Feuerstein, including his net-based installation **Manifest**⁶⁵. The Italian gallery Project **Gentili** shows the net-based installation **GeoGoo** by the artist couple jodi.⁶⁶ And as part of its gallery program at the art trade fair **Art Basel** in 2009, the **Vitamin Creative Space** from Guangzhou marketed animations by the Chinese artist Cao Fei for 26'000 Euro. The animations were created as part of her Second Life **RMB City** project.⁶⁷ It is also interesting that digital media art focused offers were launched at various art trade fairs in 2008 and 2009. These initiatives still take the form of special exhibitions and off-program events rather than full-blown art fair offers.

235 MEDIA ART GALLERY, COLOGNE (SINCE 1982)

The Cologne-based company **235 Media GmbH**⁶⁸ led by Ulrich Leistner and Axel Wirths is one of the most important media art galleries in the world today and its catalog comprises video works and interactive installations by more than 120 media artists from 17 countries. **235 Media** also offers technical media and curatorial services for museums. Owner Axel Wirths discussed the decision not to deal in net art, saying, «Up to now, we have made a conscious decision to not become involved in this genre because we wanted to concentrate on our core aims. However, I consider the Internet to be the greatest and most creative medium for art and I see a lot of opportunities here.»⁶⁹ When it was founded in 1982,

235 Media was a pioneer in the field of media art. Although video art plays an important role in contemporary art development, and although interactive sculptures are now accepted as part of art history, the owners of **235 Media** have recognized that advisory and curatorial services must also be part of the remit of a specialized media art gallery. In 2006, 235 Media launched the **imai - inter media art institute foundation** together with the City of Düsseldorf. This foundation is a media art agency that now oversees the comprehensive video art collection built up by **235 Media** since the 1980s, as well as the distribution channels associated with this collection.⁷⁰

POSTMASTERS GALLERY, NEW YORK (SINCE 1984 / 1996)

The **Postmasters Gallery**⁷¹, managed by Magdalena Sawon and Tamas Banovich, displays digital installations and screen-based works alongside paintings, sculptures and photography. Artists whose work includes web-based elements, such as Wolfgang Staehle, John Klima, etoy and Kristin Lucas are among those displayed in the gallery. However, with the exception of the installative webcam projections by Staehle, no net art works are listed in the gallery's exhibition catalog.

The **Postmasters Gallery's** early commitment to new media art and the quality of the exhibited works and artists should be regarded as an international model. The online functionality of the gallery's website is limited to illustrations and information texts.

BITFORMS GALLERY, NEW YORK (SINCE 2002)

The New York art dealer Steve Sacks founded the **Bitforms Gallery**⁷² in 2002, which specializes in the sale of digital and digitally created art. Alongside prints of digitally generated pictures, you can also find interactive 'Software Art' which is offered on CD-Rom in various editions, ranging from 10-250 pieces. **Bitforms** represents two artists, Golan Levin and Mark Napier, who have made an international name for themselves in the world of net art. Alongside fixed works by these artists, the **Bitforms** online catalog also contains links to three online works by Napier which are the only works in the catalog not to be marked with «inquire» or «purchase» buttons⁷³. In an interview from 2003, Steve Sacks explained how he wanted to sell Mark Napier's online work **Waiting Room**: «Since there is only one piece that exists on a server, we sold this work in shares. 50 shares at \$1'000 per share.»⁷⁴ Although the **Bitforms Gallery** pays little attention to net art dealing, its focus on digital media art and the multimedia functionality of its web interface means that it should be considered a pioneering business for the purposes of our investigation.

BRYCE WOLKOWITZ GALLERY, NEW YORK (SINCE 2002)

Since its foundation in 2002, the **Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery**⁷⁵ has dedicated itself to the various forms of and connections between moving image, new media, sculpture and photography. With its program, the gallery intends to highlight «the growing influence of

technology on our lives and on contemporary art». The gallery offers both historic and current media art items, as well as conservational advice for institutions and private collectors - examples include questions concerning technical updates or archiving and upkeep. At the art trade fair **SCOPE Basel** in 2008, Wolkowitz displayed works by Lialina/Espenscheid and Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries on an offline wall-mounted screen. Online versions of these works are also available free of charge online.⁷⁶ The price for one of the ten copies of the offline version of the work **Traveling to Utopia** by Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries was set at \$10'000. The customer receives the work as a Quicktime movie on a Mac Mini and then only has to connect it to a wall-mounted screen. The same work is free to access in its online form. A similar situation can be found with John F. Simon's Java applet **Every Icon**, which Wolkowitz offers in regular gallery programs along with special hardware. Just a few years ago, you could buy personalized versions of **Every Icon** for \$20 from the artist (without hardware) and put it on the net via your own server.⁷⁷

[DAM] GALERIE, BERLIN (SINCE 2003)

The gallery owner Wolf Lieser founded the **Digital Art Museum [DAM]**⁷⁸ as early as 1998. As a platform for digital art, it has the aim of bringing contemporary digital art to a wide audience through exhibitions and other means. In 2003, Lieser also opened the **[DAM] Gallery** in Berlin with young contemporary positions as well as pioneers of digitale art. The gallery presents digital prints, interactive series, generative works, transformation pictures and film-style collages in numerous group and individual exhibitions. The double concept of museum and gallery enables Wolf Lieser to present visitors with difficult-to-market digital media art works in the museum space while exhibiting a market-oriented range of works in the gallery. Thematic exhibitions can be realized within the museum context as well. The museum can react to the lack of knowledge of digital media art issues exhibited by most art collectors and curators with a long-standing range of information, which in turn promotes sales of works in the gallery. The **[DAM]** company promotes itself on its website with the following sentence: «We are your competent partner regarding exhibitions, building a collection, public art and virtual art projects on the Internet, in the field of Digital Art.» For the most part, it is difficult to see what the **[DAM]** gallery's commercial intentions and offers are from the website.

DIGITAL & VIDEO ART FAIR DIVA

The **DiVA Art Fair** is the oldest trade fair for digital art, which, according to its guidelines, requires participating galleries to offer mainly video and/or digital art works.⁷⁹ Works in traditional media such as drawing, photos or installations are only accepted if they are linked in some way to video or new media. «The exhibitor agrees to present primarily video and/or digital artworks. Exhibitors may present works of different media than video

or digital art as long as the work is related to video or new media. This includes traditional media such as drawing, photo or installation. However, there may be NO display of works that are not related to video or new media.» **DiVA** took place eleven times between 2003 and 2008 at the same time as traditional art fairs, and took on a new self-contained form each time, renting space in hotels or making ship containers available on the street for its galleries. **DiVA**'s high point came in 2005 and 2006 when it was present in six cities. In 2008 **DiVA** reduced its presence at the art fairs in New York and Paris, and was present with a media lounge in the harbor basin for **Art Basel** in 2009.

HOLY FIRE. ART OF THE DIGITAL AGE. «OFF PROGRAM» EVENT AT ART BRUSSELS 2008

The curated exhibition **Holy Fire** took place as an «off program» event at the Belgian art fair **Art Brussels** in 2008.⁸⁰ It presented 27 items by international artists who have all made a name for themselves in the world of digital media art since the middle of the 1990s. All the displayed works came from collections or were made available by galleries. As is evident from the exhibition concept designed by curators Yves Bernard & Domenico Quaranta, the aim of the exhibition is to explicitly demonstrate to visitors at the art fair that the displayed works can be collected. Self-definition on the website: «Holy Fire is probably the first exhibition to show only collectible new media artworks already on the art market, in the form of traditional media (prints, videos, sculptures) or customized new media objects. Holy Fire presents contemporary artworks made with contemporary technologies and designed to be collectible.»

KIOSK. ARTIFACTS OF A POST-DIGITAL AGE. EXHIBITION IN THE FRAME OF STRP, ART & TECH FESTIVAL EINDHOVEN/NL (2009)

The following year, Bernard & Quaranta curated the Kiosk. Artifacts of a Post-Digital Age exhibition as a follow up exhibition to **Holy Fire**⁸¹. Incorporated into the art & technology festival **STRP** Eindhoven, this exhibition also presented 17 media art objects which were selected on the basis of their suitability for art collections. Self-definition: «Many people collect art while others collect technology. Then there are the pioneering types who look for a combination of art and technology. They collect art objects that are continually changing, or as Yves Bernard and Domenico Quaranta put it: «They love screens. They love bits with atoms. They love things that move and change, because they live in a world that moves and changes.» There is a good summary of the exhibition on the art blog www.we-make-money-not-art.com, including pictures and videos.⁸²

ARTO'_INTERNATIONAL ART FAIR IN OPEN CITY, ROME (2009)

For its 2009 outing, Italian art trade fair **ARTE contemporaneomoderna ROMA** announced its intention of inviting Marco Mancuso, the editor of **Digicult**, an internationally renowned online publi-

cation dedicated to digital art, to expand the range of galleries exhibiting at the art fair by selecting 6 galleries to display works by well-known artists from the new media segment.⁸³ Quotation from **Digicult** report: «Marco Macuso and the curators' team from Digicult, the web platform dedicated to art and new digital experiences, will complete the selection of galleries with a sector dedicated to research carried out by new media, which have gained a momentous access to the international art scene. A commission of 3 Italian and 3 international galleries complete the fair's selection board.» No information has been made available on how this idea panned out.

CONTEMPORARY ART RUHR, C.A.R. 2009

The media art fair that launched in the fall of 2009 as part of the art trade fair **Contemporary Art Ruhr** at the Zeche Zollverein will again take place in 2010.⁸⁴ In a letter to interested exhibitors, the theme appears to be art that goes beyond the boundaries of traditional presentation frameworks. The following is stated in the concept text for the Forum and Media Art Fair section: «amongst the excellent industrial architecture of the coke mixing plant, which houses huge coal bunkers and pits, innovative protagonists present art that goes beyond the usual frameworks. Themes are: media art, film/video, installations, sculptures, multimedia projects, light art, interactive & Internet-based works, electronic music, performances. A particular focus is the field of photography.»

E-ARTS BEYOND. SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL GALLERY EXHIBITION OF MEDIA ART 2009

In China, the art fair project **e-Arts Beyond** took place for the first time in September 2009 during the **Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair**.⁸⁵ It is an initiative of the Shanghai Cultural Development Foundation and **e-ARTS Shanghai**, which has organized the successful e-ARTS festival dedicated to electronic and digital art since 2007. At its first outing in September 2009, the art fair project **e-Arts Beyond** launched an exhibition organized by Zhang Ga under the title **base target=new** which will contain media art works from selected galleries. According to the program, only galleries that are considered leaders in offering new media art were invited to **base target=new**. Quotation from the concept: «base target=new is a highly select, invitation only exhibition presenting pioneering galleries in placing (new) media art at the forefront of the contemporary art landscape. On view will be seminal and recent works representative of a wide gamut of artistic positions and voices with media-specific formal approaches by an array of established artists and emerging talents.» Some documentary photographs taken at **e-Arts Beyond** are published on the website of DASTore.⁸⁶

NOTES

2. HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF NET ART COLLECTIONS

- 1 For developments in the USA before 2002, see Barbara Basting's article «Net art and museums - aspects of the institutionalization of a new form of art», 2002, at (<http://www.xcult.org/texte/basting/02/basting.pdf>).
- 2 <http://gallery9.walkerart.org>
- 3 Digital Arts Study Collection of Gallery 9/Walker Art Center: see (<http://www.walkerart.org/gallery9/dasc>).
- 4 See (<http://artport.whitney.org>) and (<http://www.whitney.org/bitstreams>).
- 5 <http://www.moca.org>
- 6 <http://www.sfmoma.org>
- 7 <http://010101.sfmoma.org>
- 8 <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/show-list/art-work-type/?search=Internet%20Art>
- 9 <http://netflag.guggenheim.org/netflag>
- 10 At the end of the 90s, there used to be a direct link from the homepage of Fondation Cartier to their net-based art collection which included the interactive work «Verbarium» (1998) by Christa Sommerer and Laurent Migonneau and the works **Self** (1998) and **Longitude 38** (1999) by Valérie Grancher. All traces of this on the Fondation Cartier website seem to have been deleted.
- 11 In 1998/99, there was a button with the title «net art» on the Stedelijk Museum website. Details on the exhibition **Under Capricorn - The World Over** (1996), which included contributions of net-based works by various artists, are still available in the exhibition archive. Examples of work included **here** are here by Laurie Anderson and **Spring Thoughts** by Merel Mirage. See (<http://www.stedelijk.nl/oc2/page.asp?pageid=592&url=/detectflash.asp>) (<http://www.stedelijk.nl/capricorn/anderson/index.html>).
- 12 <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Musee.nsf/0/B0352D1466099CB3C1256DB300678F96?OpenDocument&Key=&L=1>
- 13 <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Musee.nsf/0/06B7B2F49213841BC125703700538FD0?OpenDocument&Key=&L=1>
- 14 E-mail (on 07.03.2006) to Shu Lea Cheang.
- 15 <http://www.centreimage.ch/projetsInternet.php>
- 16 <http://www.ljudmila.org/~vuk/dx>
- 17 http://www.c3.hu/collection/index_en.php
- 18 <http://www.cg90.fr/partageonsnospassionsdansleTerritoire/Espace-Multimedia-Gantner/La-collection-belfort.html>
- 19 <http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/magazin/nk/shopping>
- 20 [http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader\\$2812](http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader$2812)
- 21 <http://on1.zkm.de/netcondition>
- 22 If you persevere, you occasionally come across websites that have been forgotten on otherwise well-maintained servers of prominent institutions, but these do not contain links to their content. One example is the website -wvdc on a ZKM server (<http://www1.zkm.de/-wvdc>). The letters wvdc stand for net artist and curator Walter van der Cruysen who realized various net-based projects for the ZKM in 1996/97. This page contains a link to the net movie **Deep Ascii** by the Ascii Art Ensemble.
- 23 <http://media.lbg.ac.at/de/content.php?iMenuID=97&iContentID=104>

3. CURRENT NET-BASED ART COLLECTIONS

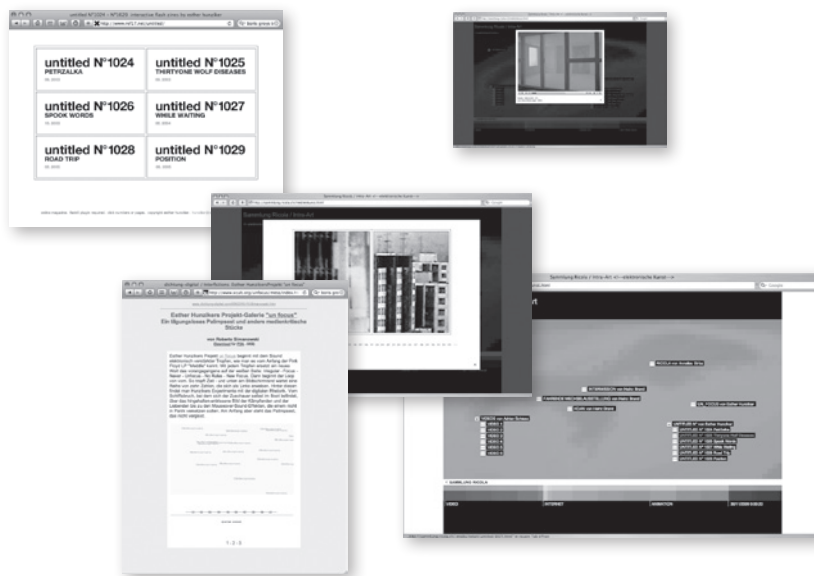
- 24 <http://rhizome.org>
- 25 <http://www.newmuseum.org>
- 26 <http://www.diacenter.org/webproj/index.html>
- 27 <http://turbulence.org>
- 28 <http://new-radio.org>
- 29 <http://www.computerfinearts.com>
- 30 <http://www.hma.org.il/Museum/Templates/showpage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=841&FID=560>
- 31 http://www.computerfinearts.com/Haifa_show/NETworking_Catalogue.pdf
- 32 http://www.tate.org.uk/intermediaart/archive/net_art_date.shtm
- 33 <http://netescopio.meiac.es>
- 34 <http://www.desvirtual.com/category/exhibitions/>
- 35 <http://netescopio.meiac.es>
- 36 www.lisboa20.pt/lx20

- 37 <http://www.superneen.org>
- 38 <http://manetascollection.com>
- 39 Informationen unter <http://h-friese.netart-datenbank.org>
- 40 Information on the sales conditions for art.teleportacia gallery can be found at (<http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/copies/art.teleportacia.org/office/faq.html>) and at (<http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/copies/art.teleportacia.org/office/customer.html>)
- 41 Screenshot from 28.03.2009
- 4. ONLINE GALLERIES FOR NET ART AND EARLY INITIATIVES TO SELL NET-BASED ART**
- 42 <http://art.teleportacia.org/exhibition/miniatures>
- 43 Articles on establishing galleries and the question of the marketability of net art was published in 1998 in the **New York Times** (<http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/98/11/cyber/artsatlarge/19artsatlarge.html>) and in the German online magazine **Telepolis** (<http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/3/3276/1.html>).
- 44 See note 40.
- 45 <http://art.teleportacia.org>
- 46 <http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/copies/art.teleportacia.org/art-mac.html>
- 47 <http://www.irational.org/donate>
- 48 Documents (Screenshots) of gizmoland.com: <http://iarvers.free.fr/pages/exposition.html>
- 49 Quotation from the text «Sur la terre des Gizmos» by Isabelle Arvers, (http://www.isabelle-arvers.com/pressreview/gizmoland_graphiland_2000.jpg).
- 50 <http://www.artcart.de/index4.html>
- 51 <http://mario.hergueta.org/projects/curating/artcart/>
- 52 See note 43 and 63.
- 53 <http://collections.walkerart.org/item/object/10600>
- 54 Granchers «Contrat de Vente» von 1998 (<http://www.nomemory.org/data1/contrat.html>)
- 55 The price was DM 3'000. On Huber's purchases (<http://archives.arte-tv.com/hebdo/metropolis/dtext/19990123.htm>), contract: (<http://www.fuenfnullzwei.de/hp2001/vertrag.html>), collection of materials: (<http://www.fuenfnullzwei.de/press.html>) and (<http://www.fuenfnullzwei.de/press/tagesspiegel/wahnsinn.pdf>).
- 56 See note 43.
- 57 <http://www.entropy8zuper.org/possession>
- 58 Tilman Baumgärtel, Website auction: «The Thing unter dem Hammer», in: **Telepolis**, 12.05.1999. Online at (<http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/3/3372/1.html>).
- 59 <http://www.xcult.org/digital/05-netart/everyIcon/eicon.html>
- 60 For the License Agreement see the Quellcode of <http://www.xcult.org/digital/05-netart/everyIcon/eicon.html>
- 61 <http://www.zanni.org/html/works/altarboy-oriana/altarboyoriana.htm>
- 62 <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/rohrpost-0401/msg00133.html>
- 63 http://www.netartreview.net/logs/2004_02_01_backlog.html
- 5. NET ART AND DIGITAL MEDIA ART OFFERINGS IN ESTABLISHED GALLERIES AND AT ART FAIRS**
- 64 <http://www.osagegallery.com>
- 65 http://www.nicolavonsenger.com/d_thomas.feuerstein/Feuerstein_Presstext.pdf
- 66 http://www.projectgentili.com/exhibition_images.php?id=47#
- 67 <http://www.vitamincreativespace.com>
- 68 <http://www.235media.com>
- 69 Interview with Axel Wirths in: Monika Fleischmann & Ulrike Reinhard (ed.): **Digitale Transformationen. Medienkunst als Schnittstelle von Kunst, Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft.** Heidelberg: whois, 2004, p. 188.
- 70 <http://www.imaionline.de>
- 71 <http://www.postmastersart.com>
- 72 <http://www.bitforms.com>
- 73 This online ordering function was no longer in operation when we last visited [05.2009].
- 74 Steve Sacks, «bitforms», in: **Code**, catalog Ars Electronica Linz 2003, p. 221. Online unter (http://90.146.8.18/en/archives/festival_archive/festival_catalogs/festival_artikel.asp?iProjectID=12510)
- 75 <http://www.brycewolkowitz.com/www>
- 76 <http://www.oart.ch/recherche/pict/30-galleries/wolkowitz1.html>

- 77 <http://www.xcult.org/digital/05-netart/everyIcon/eicon.html>
- 78 <http://www.dam.org>
- 79 <http://www.divafair.com>
- 80 <http://www.imal.org/HolyFire>
- 81 <http://www.strp.nl/strp/artist/125>
- 82 <http://www.we-make-money-not-art.com/archives/2009/04/kiosk-artifacts-of-a-post-digit.php>
- 83 <http://www.digicult.it/En/2008/Artecontemporaneomodernaroma.asp>
- 84 <http://www.contemporaryartuhr.de>
- 85 <http://www.shearts.org>
- 86 <http://www.digital-art-store.com/news/earts/01.html>

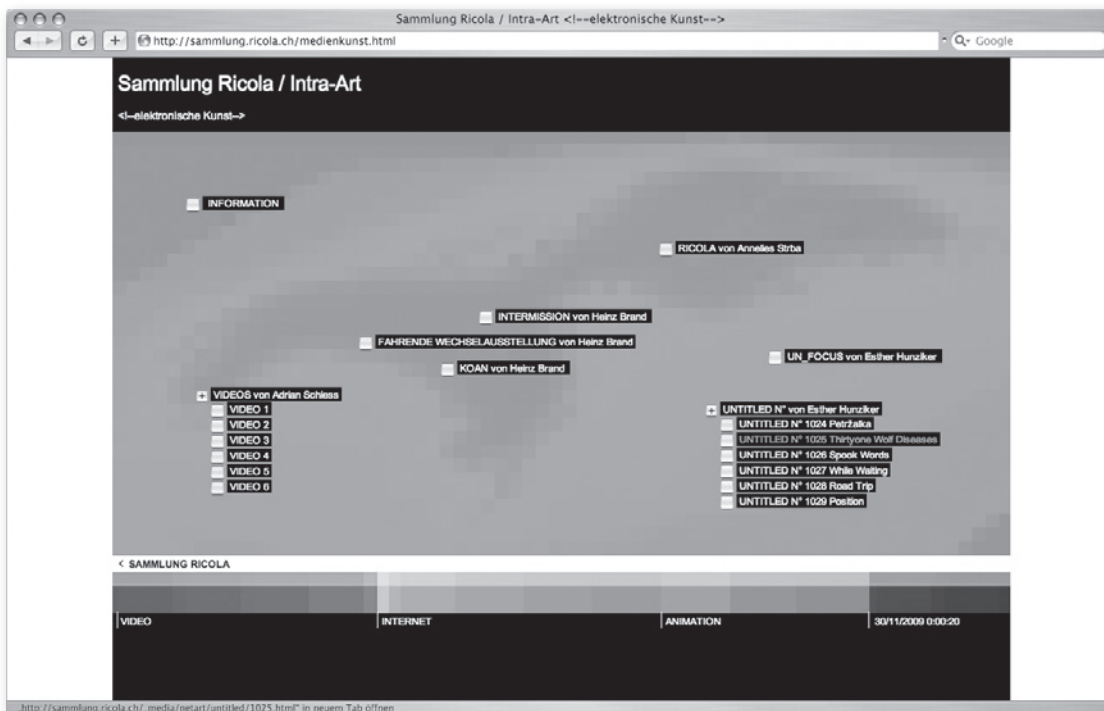
REINHARD STORZ

art and media historian and, has been the editor of www.xcult.org, a forum for net culture, since 1995. He also curates online projects with international artists and authors. He is lecturer in Art and Media History at the UAS Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design in Basel and co-director of the research project Owing Online Art. <http://www.xcult.org>, <http://www.beam-me.net> [03.2010].



**ROMAN KURZMEYER
SWISS NET-BASED ART – A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF
THE RICOLA COLLECTION**

WITH THE ACQUISITION IN 2008 OF ESTHER HUNZIKER'S **UN_FOCUS** (2000), THE RICOLA COLLECTION OPENED A NEW CHAPTER IN ITS LONG HISTORY: IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT A NET-BASED WORK OF ART FOUND ITS WAY INTO THE COMPANY'S COLLECTION. ROMAN KURZMEYER OUTLINES THE COLLECTION'S HISTORY AND THE EFFORTS TO INTRODUCE THE PERSONNEL TO NEW MEDIA ART AND CURRENT TENDENCIES IN CONTEMPORARY ART.



Ricola Collection: navigation of the intranet webpage

In his article «Esther Hunzikers Projekt-Galerie un_focus: Ein tilgungsloses Palimpsest und andere medienkritische Stücke» (2002), the media theorist Roberto Simanowski called this work «a fine collection of experiments in which the various possibilities of digital rhetoric are demonstrated in the best textbook manner.»¹ In other words, this was a very wise first step in the exploration of a new area of collecting art. In addition to owning an offline version, the Ricola Collection is mentioned on the title page of this work and was issued a certificate in which the artist describes the work and its conditions of use. With the acquisition of this important net-based artwork, the owner agrees to let the artist keep the work online (www.ref17.net/unfocus) and freely accessible as long as technical conditions and feasibility permit. Along with this work, Ricola also acquired a series of flash movies by Hunziker with the title **Untitled No 1024 – No 1029** (2003 – 05)². These six works are divided into as many subjects and feature photographs, drawings, graphics, sounds and music that can be animated by mouse clicks. Unlike **un_focus** (2000), which was sold to the Ricola Collection as an original, the other works by Esther Hunziker were marketed as editions.

This move into the field of online art is not intended to supersede the traditional media in the collection, but to complete them. The paintings, drawings, photographs and installations of the Ricola Collection are exhibited in the company's buildings and facilities, and the personnel can access the online art via the firm's internal intranet site. The few older video and animation works in the firm's collection can also be viewed on this site.

¹ Cf. <http://www.xcult.org/unfocus/meta/index.htm> [02.2010].

² <http://www.ref17.net/untitled> [03.2010].

HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION³

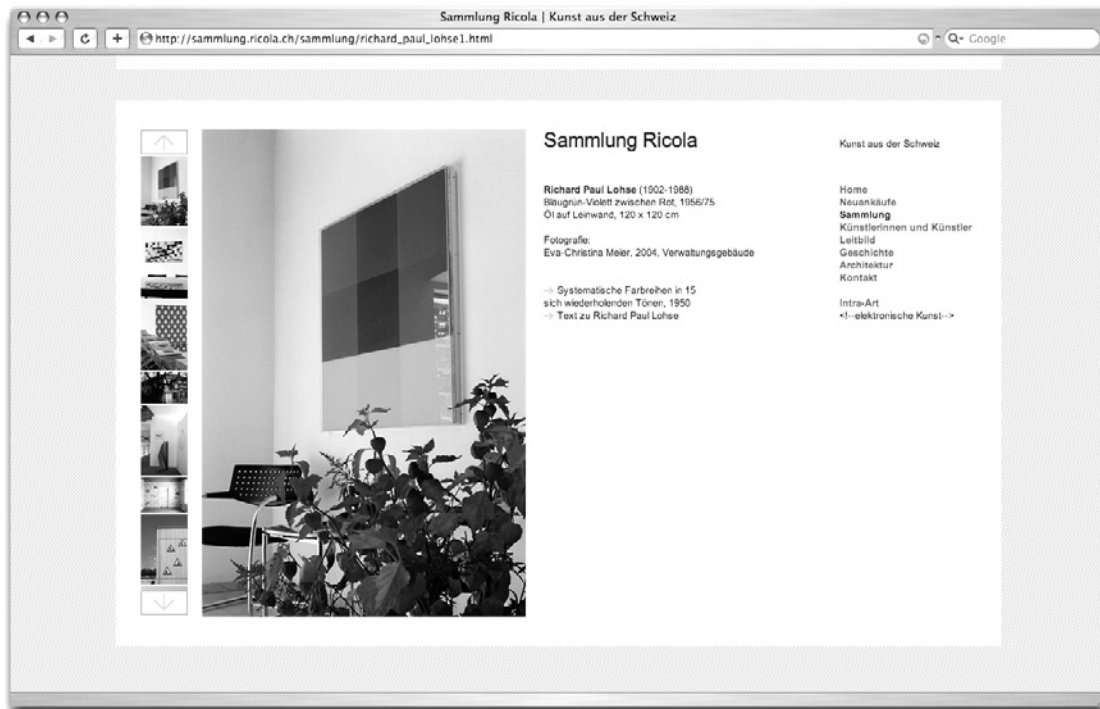
The Ricola AG company in Laufen (CH) manufactures herbal candy and employs 350 persons worldwide, exporting its products to 50 European, Asian and North-American countries. The company was founded in the 1930s by Emil Richterich-Beck, a man of modest background who took the step from running a bakery to manufacturing candy at a time of growing economic and social uncertainty. As a successful entrepreneur it was a matter of course for him that he also had a cultural and social responsibility. He began to collect contemporary art in the 1940s, starting with paintings, prints and sculpture by artists in his home region, the Laufental. Thanks to this activity he enjoyed lifelong friendships with artists like Jacques Düblin, Albert Schilling and especially August Cueni, whose work Richterich-Beck supported throughout his career. In the 1950s and 60s, he expanded his collection of local and regional art to include works by important 20th-century Swiss painters like Cuno Amiet, Hans Berger, Wilhelm Gimmi, Max Gubler, Giovanni Giacometti and René Auberjonois. The works were exhibited in Emil and Rosa Richterich-Beck's apartment on Baselstrasse 31 in Laufen and in the adjacent company offices.

Their sons Hans Peter and Alfred Richterich created the Ricola Collection proper in 1975 and it has been growing ever since. The collection includes Swiss art from the 1950s onward and is displayed in the buildings of the Ricola Group; not just in the areas accessible to the public but also in the hallways, offices, lounges, meeting rooms and, whenever possible, in the factory spaces themselves. The works in the collection can be seen at the company headquarters in Laufen, as well as in their domestic and foreign subsidiaries. At the American plant, for example, there are works by Swiss artists who worked in the U.S.A. The collection begins with the early works of the Zurich concretists, with a special emphasis by Alfred Richterich on the artists Richard Paul Lohse and Camille Graeser. It includes important paintings of art-theoretical inspiration from the last decades and up to the present and the youngest generation of Swiss artists. In addition to individual works, mostly from the artists' early periods, the Ricola Collection presents series of works of special relevance by artists such as Helmut Federle, Guido Nussbaum, John Armleder, Jacques Herzog, Adrian Schiess, or, among the younger artists, Christine Streuli, Shirana Shahbazi and Mai-Thu Perret.

COLLECTING

One of the purposes of collecting art is to shape tradition. This is true of art collections in general, but even more so of collections of contemporary art, since only in retrospect can we see the part played by the collector in defining current trends. The task of a collection of recent art is to elaborate a

³ For a more exhaustive treatment with illustrations, see Roman Kurzmeier (ed.), *Sammlung Ricola: Kunst aus der Schweiz* («The Ricola Collection: Art from Switzerland»), Laufen: Ricola Holding, 2005.

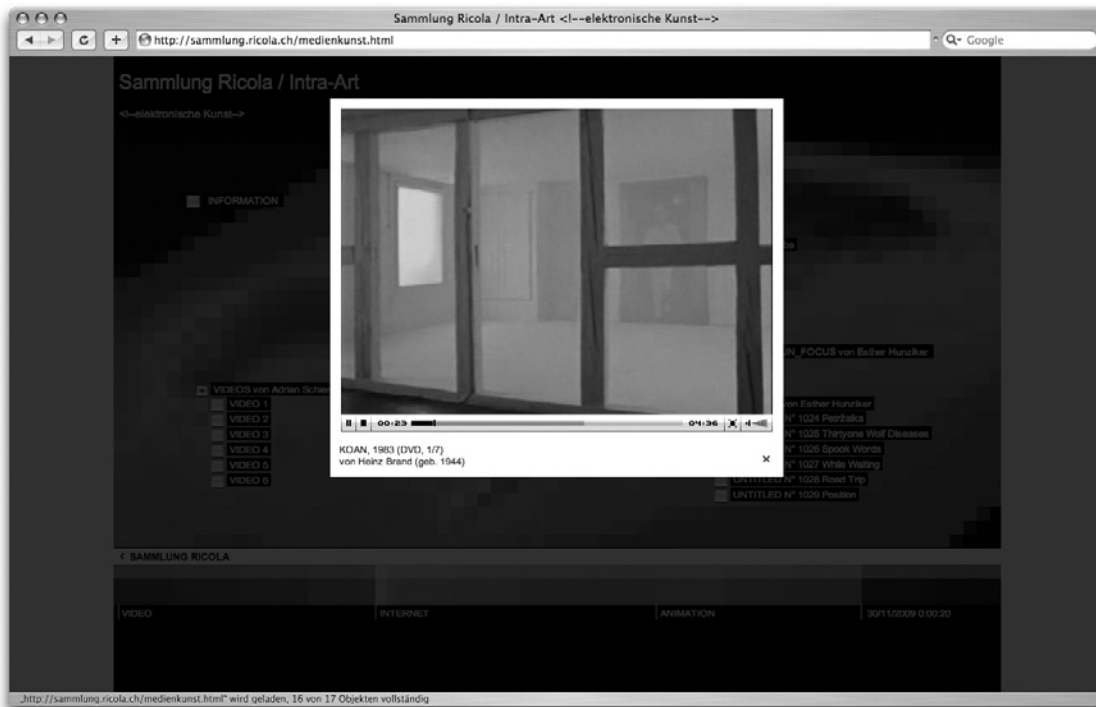


Ricola Collection: intranet collection catalogue

picture and idea of what this new art is through a selection of representative works. This not only permits a learning process for the collector himself but also offers an approach to those who look at the collection. This task can be accomplished only within the context of all the objects in the collection. Collecting therefore demands time, as well as financial resources, interest in art and a certain flair. It is a cultural activity in the basic sense of the word, a selection process in which the incipient criteria of the beginnings crystallize in the course of time.

The Ricola collectors initially focused almost exclusively on the then-contemporary painting production. The decision to collect works of electronic and net-based art has been balanced by a surprising new strategy: the acquisition of 20th-century works that are particularly relevant to the art of today. This new strategy has led to the acquisition of a box by the Winterthur artist Clara Friedrich-Jezler (1894 – 1969) and two works by the Aargau painter Rudolf Urech-Seon (1876 – 1959), whose late period was characterized by a very personal and lyrical abstraction. Clara Friedrich participated in the pioneer exhibition «Zeitprobleme in der Schweizer Malerei und Plastik»⁴ at the Kunsthaus in Zurich in 1936, experienced a certain success, but then stopped working as an artist. Her work is correspondingly sparse and represented mostly in museums, with very little of it appearing on the art market. For all her innovations, Clara Friedrich remains one of the great unknown figures in the recent art history of Switzerland. Accordingly, her work has had little ef-

⁴ **Zeitprobleme in der Schweizer Malerei und Plastik** («Problems in Contemporary Swiss Painting and Sculpture»), Exhibition of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft at the Kunsthaus Zurich, June 13–July 22 1936.



Ricola Collection: work presentation of electronic art on the intranet (Heinz Brand)

fect beyond a small circle of initiates. This new acquisition is stroke of luck for the Ricola Collection: Friedrich's box piece is a dynamic assemblage consisting of a painted glass on top of a painted cardboard box. Her piece completes the works of the Zurich concretists in the Ricola Collection and anticipates later developments in 20th-century art. In this work we can see that the relativity and alterability of visual images had already become a central concern back then - and not just recently in net-based art.

DISSEMINATION

The collecting of 20th-century Swiss art and the presentation of these works in the offices and plants of the Ricola group plays a major part in the firm's cultural policy, as well as being an expression of its integrative cultural concept. The basic aim of the collectors and company owners is to create a meaningful work environment. The decoration of this environment with artworks whose value and meaning in many cases has not yet been established or has changed since their acquisition, gives employees the opportunity to occupy themselves with the intellectual trends and ideas in their culture and see how they work. The acquisition of net-based art does not appreciably change this basic concept. Net-based art uses a new medium that has become an integral part of our daily lives and radically changed the work environment. Its dissemination calls for new forms. While paintings, drawings,

photographs, objects and installations can be displayed in the offices and other workspaces and are directly accessible, the works of net-based art can only be viewed individually and in their own «space» on a computer.

The Ricola Collection website designed by Esther Hunziker makes these different spaces visible. The website presents information about the collection's history, the collectors' philosophy, the firm's cultural and architectural policy, as well as the artists represented in the collection. It also provides a virtual tour of the works on display in the company buildings. There is a separate site called «Intra-Art» that opens into the virtual space of the electronic artworks. The paintings, drawings, photographs, objects and installations in the collection are all shown in situ, which enables viewers to contextualize the art within the work spaces and see documents of the physical presence of the artworks in their environment. The number of works shown on the site is continually increasing, apace with their presentation. Artworks that have never been put on public display are not shown on the website. This website documents our efforts at dissemination. It gives the employees a glimpse of the artworks, as well as of the archival work in progress. For example, individual artists are invited each year to talk about their work to the personnel; in the future these events will be filmed and viewable on the website.

The Ricola Collection is still in an indefinite initial phase as far as the collection of net-based art is concerned. In addition to the selective expansion of this collection and the corresponding reflection about the definition of space and place through these artworks, there is also the pressing question as to the possibilities and limits in rooting contemporary art in the everyday work environment. Unlike the artworks on public display, which cannot be ignored in the work environment - and so stimulate the personnel to make remarks and ask questions - the website and the net-based art presented on it are visible only to those who are curious and interested enough to visit the site online.

Translated from the German by Jean-Marie Clarke

ROMAN KURZMEYER

teaches Art Theory at the UAS Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design in Basel and is curator of the Ricola Collection. He has also curated exhibitions and projects in the Swiss mountain municipality of Amden (www.xcult.org/amden) since 1999. He is co-editor of the catalogue documenting all the exhibitions organized by Harald Szeemann (1933-2005) and author of the monograph **Kunst überfordern: Aldo Walker (1938-2000)**. In 2009, he presented **Boden und Wand/Wand und Fenster/Zeit** (with Polly Apfelbaum, Katharina Grosse, Bruno Jakob, Adrian Schiess, Christine Streuli, Niele Toroni and Duane Zaloudek) at the Helmhaus in Zurich. Roman Kurzmeier was awarded the Prix Meret Oppenheim in 2004.



ANNETTE SCHINDLER AND REINHARD STORZ DIGITAL ART COLLECTION / STORE

February 2010

A COLLECTION OF DIGITAL MEDIA ART WITH AN INTEGRATED ART STORE IS COMING INTO BEING IN BASEL UNDER THE NAME OF DA COLLECTION AND DA STORE. AS LOCAL SPACE FOR THE COLLECTION IS NOT YET AVAILABLE, THE DA INITIATIVE USES ITS WEBSITE AS AN ELECTRONIC DISPLAY ROOM AND CATALOGUE. IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE IT WILL HAVE FACILITIES AT THE «HOUSE OF ELECTRONIC ART» TO BE BUILT IN BASEL. THE IDEA FOR THE DA COLLECTION / STORE WAS DEVELOPED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE **OOA** APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT.

DA Collection collects international, national and local works that are illustrative of the development of digital media art. It also sees itself as a national archive that documents the history of Swiss media art and the net art scene. It is available for use by diverse study projects. Lines of enquiry and texts that have emerged within the framework of a research project, parallel to the development of the collection, will also be used for this purpose.

There are few collections of digital media art in the world today. **DA Collection** is therefore seen as a model that in practice presents a range of possibilities regarding owning, archiving and conserving digital art. The stock collection includes work owned privately by the two founders (the authors of this article), purchases made with the help of third parties, work loaned by artists and work from the archive of the Swiss cultural server Xcult. For the time being, DA Collection will have its own display room where, in addition to its own permanent collection, it will also regularly display larger pieces on loan from artists and museums. Works or parts of the DA Collection can be lent to institutions in Switzerland or abroad for installation and presentation. Along with setting up the collection, the focus will be on developing restoration techniques and strategies with the aim of preserving media art. We are therefore looking to collaborate with experts from Switzerland or from parts of Germany and France that border Basel.

The **DA Store** is the second pillar of the DA project. Here we offer a growing selection of digital art works for sale, including objects and installations, Internet-based productions and computer-generated animation. In the interests of collectors of digital art, we have combined with the artists to identify work packages for the DA Store, which deal with the issues of ownership, reproduction and restoration. The revenue from the DA Store is used to run DA Collection and to acquire new work.

DA Collection/DA Store sees itself as a pioneer project that extends beyond the borders of Switzerland. There have for instance been few practical answers to the question of how to collect Internet art. Such artwork is contrary to the traditional understanding of ownership in art and fundamental categories are challenged, such as work concept and reception, as well as the permanence of art works. The DA Store endeavours to motivate collectors to include art projects that are universally accessible via the World Wide Web and, in their interactive form, can also be influenced by the observer. As we often do not know how long these works will last, we offer conservation and restoration know-how and services or provide suggestions on how work can continue to exist in documented form.

In contemporary art, similar questions are already being asked of other formats such as photographic imaging techniques, art videos, land art and performance. Much like digital media art, works in all these media are also part of our cultural heritage. Public collections in particular are entrusted with the task of preserving this heritage and are therefore under increasing pressure to turn their attention to the aspect of conservation as well. In the process DA Collection/DA Store seeks to support the rationale and to provide practical assistance.

One of the motives for launching the DA Store/DA Collection project is the observation that although there is always an interest in buying media art - for example on the part of municipal purchasing commissions - it is considered risky because of the many uncertainties involved. Museum curators also appear reluctant to display media art because of apparently insurmountable technical hurdles. Yet digitalisation has radically changed most of the techniques of production, culture and imaging in our society to an extent that is perhaps comparable in the history of images only with the impact of the invention of photography. Internet usage continues to soar. Digital media is shaping the cultural practices of a new generation just as television and cinema shaped earlier generations. Art - often digital art - explores the means and strategies of imaging in society and reflects on their limits.

The prospects of the DA are good. As part of a «House of Electronic Arts» in the Dreispitz area of Basel, the DA Collection/Store - together with **Plug.in** and the **Shift Festival** - will soon be able to move into rooms of its own. Also in connection with Plug.in in Basel and the Conservation and Restoration Department of the Bern University of the Arts, the DA Collection is part of the Swiss-European research project **Digital Media Art on the Upper Rhine. Conservation-Restoration-Securing the Future**, which is supported by the fund for Territorial European Cooperation. Thanks to the assistance of Tabea Lurk, specialized in the archiving and conservation of digital media art, the DA Collection/Store project will be able to continue expanding in the coming years.

In the meantime, the DA Collection/Store is making its first public appearances in a beta version. In September 2009, the DA Store was invited to show works by six artists and group projects at **eARTS beyond - International Gallery Exhibition of Media Art Shanghai**. Within the framework of the international art fair **Shanghai Contemporary** and the **eArts Festival**, the DA Store was able to present works in an exhibition space at the Oriental Pearl television tower in Shanghai (together with 13 renowned Asian, American and European galleries). From January to March 2010, net-based artworks are being presented on six computer consoles developed in connection with the **OOA Research Project** at the exhibition **Beam me up** at Plug.in Basel. With the **Beam me up** project, these will be

part of the DA Collection and, in some cases, offered for sale at the DA Store.

www.digital-art-collection.net

www.digital-art-store.com

Translated from the German by Tolingo, Hamburg

ANNETTE SCHINDLER

studied Art History and Sociology at the universities of Zurich and Madrid and wrote her thesis on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of taste. Annette Schindler directed the Swiss Institute in New York (1997-2000) and the Kunsthaus Glarus in Switzerland (1992-1997). Her exhibitions, publications and projects have contributed to contemporary discussions of feminist approaches, critical art practice, digital cultural production and techno-culture. In 2000 she became the director of Plug.in in Basel, a new media art space devoted to the dissemination of new media cultural production. She is a co-founder of kunstfreiheit.ch. <http://www.weallplugin.org> [03.2010].

REINHARD STORZ

art and media historian and, has been the editor of www.xcult.org, a forum for net culture, since 1995. He also curates online projects with international artists and authors. He is lecturer in Art and Media History at the UAS Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design in Basel and co-director of the research project **Owning OnLine Art**. <http://www.xcult.org>, <http://www.beam-me.net> [03.2010].



ARTIST'S STATEMENTS

SEVENTEEN ARTISTS KNOWN FOR THEIR NET-BASED ART WORK FILLED OUT OUR QUESTIONNAIRE, GIVING INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR CONDITIONS OF PRODUCTION AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEIR OWN WORK AND ITS COMMERCIALIZATION. AN IMPORTANT POINT WAS THE PRESERVATION OF EXISTING WORKS: THIS REPRESENTS EXTRA WORK THAT THEIR AUTHORS USUALLY DO WITHOUT REMUNERATION. GERMAN INTERVIEWS HAVE NOT BEEN TRANSLATED.

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BEAT BROGLE

geboren 1964, lebt und arbeitet als freier Künstler in Berlin.
<http://www.onewordmovie.ch/brogle/index.html> [03.2010]

1. Wie sah deine erste netzbasierte Arbeit aus?

Onewordmovie (owm) is an online platform which organizes, based on user-supplied terms, the flood of images on the Internet into an animated film. A word turns into images, images turn into a movie. This project plays with the tension between online and cinematic approaches to images. What images are associated with what words? **owm** reveals a glimpse into the collective psychology of online cultures by showing patterns of word-image associations, as created by millions of people around the world.

Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in deinem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Sie sind gleich wichtig wie andere Arbeiten, wobei ich mit **owm** international Beachtung fand.

2. Wo präsentierst du deine Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)? Welche Plattformen nutzt du zum Informationsaustausch?

Im Netz, als installative Arbeiten im Kunstraum und an Festivals. Wir haben ein Feedback-Tool auf unserer Seite, über dieses sind anfänglich viele Kommentare und Anfragen an uns gekommen.

Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution deiner Arbeit?

Blogs beobachte ich zu wenig, wir haben aber die Erfahrung gemacht, dass in Japan z.B. die Gamer-Szene über Blogs unsere Arbeit verbreitet hat. Durch Google-Suche stosse ich immer wieder darauf, dass meine Arbeit in Blogs besprochen wird.

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe deiner Werke an deinem Einkommen? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus deiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Meine Netzprojekte finanziere ich über Projekteingaben. Verkäufe gibt es mit den netzgenerierten Bildern (Digital Prints auf Glasplatten kaschiert), dabei verhält es sich wie mit dem Verkauf von Malerei oder Fotografie. Ich konnte ein Kunst am Bau-Projekt für die Swisscom realisieren. Und ich bekomme Einladungen für Vorträge und Workshops.

4. Inwieweit siehst du deine digitalen Werke als Ware?

Es handelt sich um Kunst. Im Moment, da jemand bereit ist, dafür zu bezahlen, wird es zur Ware. Ich habe kein Problem damit, wenn das jemand tut. Wer digitale Kunst kauft, weiss, dass der Wert

virtuell ist. Die Wertfrage liegt bei der Akzeptanz, bei den Künstlern, Kuratoren und Galeristen, welche «guten» netzbasierten Arbeiten den Raum in der zeitgenössischen Kunst einräumen, so wie sie es mit jedem andern «guten» Kunstwerk auch tun.

5. Ist es dir wichtig, deine netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten? Kannst du die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Indem sie sich ja aus dem «zeitgeistigen» Pool bedienen, verändern sich die Arbeiten ständig. Die Pflege ist das grösste Problem. Ich arbeite mit Programmierern, die ich bezahlen muss. Die Pflege der Arbeit ist die Hälfte der Arbeit, ein grosser Unterschied zu den andern Medien. Der Code muss dauernd angepasst werden können. Am besten ist es, wenn der Programmierer, der den Code geschrieben hat, das Projekt auch weiter betreut, alle Übergabe- und Abgabeszenarios haben bis anhin extrem viel Zeit und Aufwand gekostet. Netzarbeiten können nach drei Monaten schon restaurationsbedürftig sein, das müsste in die Finanzplanung mit einbezogen werden. Im Falle des Swisscom-Projekts haben wir einen Wartungsvertrag ausgearbeitet.

6. Möchtest du, dass deine netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen? Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus deiner Sicht erfüllt sein?

Es scheint mir wichtig, dass es nicht eine explizite Sammlung für Netzkunst ist, sondern dass Netzkunst mit andern visuellen Kunstformen zusammen gezeigt wird. Dafür müsste aber eine Plattform geschaffen werden, welche netzspezifische Probleme in den Museen und Sammlungen berücksichtigt.

SHU LEA CHEANG

born 1954 in Taiwan, currently living in Paris.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shu_Lea_Cheang
http://dbpedia.org/page/Shu_Lea_Cheang [03.2010]

1. How significant are online-based projects in your overall artistic production?

My online-based work includes webwork, netbased installation and networked performance. Most of my work can fall into these three categories at this time.

2. Where do you present your work (institutions, festivals, websites, etc.)? Which platforms do you use for exchange of information? What role do blogs or Internet forums play in the distribution of your work?

Museums, galleries, festivals and solely on the web. In Europe, we habitually post on SPECTRE for releasing a new work. But it's more like a drop of water in the ocean. I never know who gets the information. Yes, I think with all social network platform, blog, facebook, youtube, daily motion, we do get more exposure.

3. A musician's or writer's income is made up of different sources. Besides CD or book sales there are opportunities for commissions, performances, readings or teaching. What portion of your income are from sales of your works? What other possibilities for earning money have resulted from your artistic activity so far?

Yes, I work on commissions. Mostly venues provide production budget for my work. Workshop, artist in residency, term-based teaching also provide income. Recently I did sell some work which helps a lot.

4. To what extent do you consider your digital work as a marketable commodity?

Certain of my works are more sellable than others, I guess. Pure webwork/website is still hard to sell... Installation could possibly sell better. My work ranges from marketable commodity to purely collective exercise/experience work (like networked performance). I feel the need to switch myself between thinking about market and to connect and collaborate.

5. Is it important to you to preserve your online-based works permanently? Can you ensure maintenance yourself or can/must maintenance be carried out by other qualified personnel?

This is a big question. Yes, I can only restate again how important it is for preserving online work.

In my case, my major commission BRANDON at the Guggenheim Museum was once lost (removed from sponsored server) and kept offline for a few years. It was finally resurrected by the museum with a digital art preservation grant... Until now, I don't see the site getting fully recovered from its full length presentation in

1998-99. As the browser, platform and programming language change, it takes efforts to update the platform. All my work is facing this danger... and is not fully functional at times. But yeah, it does take some efforts. For the past nine years, I have been working with a wonderful German programmer who has actually been keeping an archive for me. Still, all sites need to be updated as browser/platform forward with time.

6. Would you like your online-based works to be introduced to a public collection? In your opinion, what conditions need to be met for this purpose?

I had some encounter with Pompidou museum a few years ago about collecting my webwork. It didn't work out. They set out wanting me to give my webwork in a CD-rom, which happens to be an art form I totally skipped. Recently in Novi Sad, we talked about net art collection with the contemporary museum. Yes, it is very important for museums, public agency to start collecting web work. The main problem is upkeep. By collecting, a copy should be made in this collection. As artists may be relying on hosting server which could get unstable. But at this point, I see few museums having the capacity or understanding to really systematically collecting web work.

ERIK DETTWILER

geboren 1970, lebt und arbeitet in Berlin und Zürich.

<http://www.dewil.ch> (Homepage), <http://vid.dewil.ch> (Videos), <http://blog.dewil.ch> (Blog), <http://www.citysharing.ch> (seit 2006, seit 2007 gemeinsam mit Rayelle Niemann) [alle 03.2010]

1. Wie sah deine erste netzbasierte Arbeit aus? Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in deinem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Die erste netzbasierte Arbeit war eine Text-Bild-Animations-Komposition (HTML/Flash) eines dreimonatigen Aufenthalts in New York 1999/2000. Meine netzbasierten Arbeiten/Projekte haben am ehesten einen dokumentarischen, reflektierenden oder kommunikativen Charakter: Zusammenführungen von Text und Bild (bewegtes Bild, Fotografie).

2. Wo präsentierst du deine Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)? Welche Plattformen nutzt du zum Informationsaustausch? Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution deiner Arbeit?

Mit meiner netzbasierten Arbeit suche ich nicht eine konkrete Öffentlichkeit (Festivals, etc.). Ich sehe diese Projekte als Ergänzung zu meinem sonstigen künstlerischen Arbeiten: Video, Fotografie. Ich nutze eigene Websites wie <http://www.dewil.ch> und seit kurzem versuche ich - mehr oder weniger - regelmässig einen Blog <http://blog.dewil.ch> zu pflegen. Hin und wieder habe ich einzelne Projekte auf <http://www.xcult.org> platziert. Vor etwa zwei Jahren habe ich begonnen, eine Website, die aus einem Symposium in Bukarest (Mai 2006) hervorgegangen ist - weiterzuentwickeln. <http://www.citysharing.ch> versucht eine kultur- und spartenübergreifende (Internet-)Plattform mit künstlerischen Beiträgen aufzubauen, um die Stadt als soziales, wirtschaftliches und politisches Konglomerat zu erfassen, zu hinterfragen und durch individuelle Perspektiven aufzufächern. Seit einem Jahr wird www.citysharing.ch in Zusammenarbeit mit Rayelle Niemann (Zürich/Kairo) weitergedacht, -gebaut und -gepflegt.

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe deiner Werke an deinem Einkommen? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus deiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Ich unterrichte seit 2000 an der F+F, Zürich im Kontext von Computer/Internet, mit wechselnden Pensen in den Lehrgängen Freie Kunst, Kommunikationsdesign oder Gestalterausbildung. Ich programmiere auch Websites in einem kommerziellen Kontext (XHTML, CSS, PHP/MySQL, Flash). Ich habe bisher noch nie ein netzbasierendes Projekt verkauft, wüsste auch nicht, wie ich das anstellen

sollte. Der Verkauf von netzbasierter Arbeit interessiert mich eigentlich weniger... Wenn ich Kunst verkaufe, dann betrifft es die Medien Video, Fotografie (Installationen, Einzelwerke oder Editionen).

4. Inwieweit siehst du deine digitalen Werke als Ware?

Ich sehe meine netzbasierten Werke eher als kommunikative Dokumente denn als Ware.

5. Ist es dir wichtig, deine netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten? Kannst du die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Ja, wieso nicht, Dauer ist aber so eine relative Angelegenheit, besonders auch im Kontext von Internet. Die technische Wartung hält sich momentan in Grenzen (plattformabhängig/Zukunft?).

6. Möchtest du, dass deine netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen? Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus deiner Sicht erfüllt sein?

Ich würde es vielmehr begrüßen, wenn Institute vermehrt netzbasierte Arbeiten/Projekte direkt unterstützen oder/und bei KünstlerInnen direkt in Auftrag geben würden. Ähnlich wie dies schon seit langem in den USA oder in England geschieht. In der Schweiz ist in dieser Hinsicht (leider) noch wenig Bewusstsein vorhanden.

EXONEMO

Yae Akaiwa and Kensuke Sembo live and work in Tokyo.
<http://www.exonemo.com> [03.2010]

1. How significant are online-based projects in your overall artistic production?

Recently our works are not only online-based but most of them are connected to the web in some way so it's still a very important field for us.

2. Where do you present your work (institutions, festivals, websites, etc.)? Which platforms do you use for exchange of information? What role do blogs or Internet forums play in the distribution of your work?

We present our works mainly on the website, gallery, festival and event. We don't exchange information by words on blogs or forums so far, but we post information about our activities on our website and sometimes on SNS community.

3. A musician's or writer's income is made up of different sources. Besides CD or book sales there are opportunities for commissions, performances, readings or teaching. What portion of your income are from sales of your works? What other possibilities for earning money have resulted from your artistic activity so far?

We've just started selling artwork so income from the sales are still poor. We also get artist fee for presenting work but mostly it's not enough.

4. To what extent do you consider your digital work as a marketable commodity?

On the game or music scene, buying contents in digital form online has been getting usual but it won't become the same situation on the art scene yet. On the game or music scene, there are platforms like the iTunes Store or the Steam¹ which can control intensively the process of purchasing data so daily users buy digital data casually but there is no such a platform like iTS or Steam on the art scene.

5. Is it important to you to preserve your online-based works permanently? Can you ensure maintenance yourself or can/must maintenance be carried out by other qualified personnel?

We want to preserve online-based work but it's very difficult individually to keep updating the program in response to the changing platforms. For instance, the Internet Archive² is a way for archiving digital work online, but the program-based work cannot be preserved on such a form. We hope that there is a museum that keeps all platforms (or emulators) so that old and new online works can run on them.

¹ <http://store.steampowered.com>
[03.2010].

² <http://www.archive.org> [03.2010].

6. Would you like your online-based works to be introduced to a public collection? In your opinion, what conditions need to be met for this purpose?

As I mentioned above, to experience online-based work (and also software work) in the future, museums need to preserve the work including platform or emulator. Running the software on the same environment that it was developed on is important. If the old work is run on a new environment, the expression of the work will be different.

THOMAS FEUERSTEIN

geboren 1968, lebt und arbeitet in Wien.

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Feuerstein, <http://feuerstein.myzel.net>
[beide 03.2010]

1. Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in deinem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Dies variiert von Projekt zu Projekt; quantitativ etwa 5%, qualitativ im Sinne von Zeitaufwand etc. weit mehr, etwa 30%.

2. Wo präsentierst du deine Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)? Welche Plattformen nutzt du zum Informationsaustausch? Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution deiner Arbeit?

Auf Festivals in den 1990er Jahren; da meine Projekte meist in verschiedenen Medien realisiert werden, in letzter Zeit meist in «herkömmlichen Ausstellungen» (Galerien, Museen, Kunstvereine...); zum Teil auf Internetseiten (wobei ich hier zwischen Dokumentationen und spezifischen Web-Projekten unterscheide).

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe deiner Werke an deinem Einkommen? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus deiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Bis vor einigen Jahren bildeten Einkünfte aus Lehrtätigkeiten und Textonorare die Haupteinnahmequelle. Seit etwa drei Jahren lebe ich ausschliesslich vom Verkauf meiner künstlerischen Arbeit, wobei digitale Produktionen wenig ins Gewicht fallen.

4. Inwieweit siehst du deine digitalen Werke als Ware auf dem Kunstmarkt?

Derzeit sind meine digitalen Arbeiten kaum Teil des Kunstmarkts. In den 1990er Jahren vertrat ich die Ansicht, dass eine konsequente Marktabstinenz meine künstlerische Autonomie sichert. Da diese Haltung Abhängigkeiten und fremdbestimmte Verpflichtungen mit sich brachte, bin ich heute für meine Situation vom Gegenteil überzeugt.

5. Ist es dir wichtig, deine netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten? Kannst du die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Die Erhaltung ist mir zum Teil wichtig, insgesamt aber vom jeweiligen Projekt abhängig. Die Wartung unterliegt nicht meinem Diktat, kann von jedem übernommen werden.

6. Möchtest du, dass deine netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen? Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus deiner Sicht erfüllt sein?

Für einige Arbeiten wäre dies sinnvoll. Wichtig wäre, dass bestimmte Kontexte transparent gemacht werden - vor allem, wenn virtuelle Teile eines Projektes mit realen korrespondieren.

HOLGER FRIESE

geboren 1968, lebt und arbeitet als Künstler in Berlin.
<http://www.antworten.de>, <http://www.fuenfnullzwei.de> [beide 03.2010]

1. Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in deinem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Ein guter Teil meiner Reputation als Künstler basiert auf meinen beiden Werken **unendlich, fast..**³ (1995) und **www.antworten.de**⁴ (1997). Durch die frühe Arbeit im Medium Internet wurde ich zur documenta X eingeladen und konnte somit meine Ausstellungsvita mit der Teilnahme an der vielleicht wichtigsten Ausstellung zeitgenössischer Kunst beginnen. Die in den Jahren danach folgenden Ausstellungsteilnahmen und der Status als «net artist» 2003 ermöglichte es mir, ein Projekt für den Kunst am Bau-Wettbewerb der Universität Konstanz einzureichen (und nach dem Gewinn des Wettbewerbs meine Arbeit **the 16bit library** (2005) zu realisieren). Somit haben netzbasierte Werke einen hohen Stellenwert in meinem künstlerischen Schaffen, weil sie für mich als «Türöffner» funktionierte haben. Ich habe mich aber nie als «net artist» gesehen, sondern immer als zeitgenössischer Künstler, der unter anderem mit digitalen Mitteln arbeitet. Exemplarisch hier **the 16bit library**: eine Rauminstallation, die das Internet als integralen Teil nutzt, aber in der reduzierten Form des HTTP Protokolls.

2. Wo präsentierst du deine Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)? Welche Plattformen nutzt du zum Informationsaustausch? Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution deiner Arbeit?

Meine alten Arbeiten wurden einfach ins Netz gestellt und sich selbst überlassen. Ich habe nicht wirklich Werbung für die Arbeiten betrieben. **www.antworten.de** war bis 2002 ein Selbstläufer aufgrund des Domainnamens und **unendlich, fast..** wurde primär über die documenta X und über ein paar Linklisten bekannt. Mit **www.inmeinernaehe.de**⁵ (1999) war das nicht mehr möglich. Die reine Live-Schaltung des Projekts generierte nur noch minimale Hitzahlen. Erst durch die Ausstellung der Installation wurde die Arbeit sowohl online wie offline wahrgenommen. Aber nun spezifisch zu den Fragen:

Distribution: Meine Arbeiten werden auf meiner eigenen Homepage dokumentiert und wenn sich die Gelegenheit ergibt im Rahmen von Ausstellungen, Vorträgen oder Artikeln präsentiert.

Plattformen: Ich nutze keine digitalen Plattformen, gibt es die überhaupt? Die Plattform ist, denke ich, immer noch das persönliche Gespräch und mit Abstrichen die E-mail Kommunikation.

Blogs und Foren: Aktiv spielen sie in der Distribution keine Rolle. Als Surfer finde ich hier und da Anregungen und informiere mich über technische Sachverhalte.

³ <http://www.ljudmila.org/~vuk/dx/english/surfaces/infinite.htm> [03.2010].

⁴ <http://www.antworten.de> [03.2010].

⁵ <http://www.inmeinernaehe.de> [03.2010].

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe deiner Werke an deinem Einkommen? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus deiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Verkäufe: Der Verkauf von Werken macht ca. 10% meines Einkommens aus. Entwurfshonorare, Vorträge und Lehrtätigkeiten ca. 30%. Der Rest wird durch angewandtes Grafik- und Mediendesign bestritten.

Geldverdienen: In den Jahren 2000-07 war ich als Geschäftsführer der **FROZEN_BULL artproduction** und 2006-08 als Inhaber von **Parts for the Arts** als Kunstproduzent tätig.

4. Inwieweit siehst du deine digitalen Werke als Ware auf dem Kunstmarkt?

Wie jedes andere Kunstwerk auch. Wenn es einen potenziellen Käufer gibt, kann jedes Werk gehandelt werden.

5. Ist es dir wichtig, deine netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten?

Dauer: Na, aber sicher doch!

Kannst du die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Meine Arbeiten sind prinzipiell so konzipiert, dass ich sie selbst pflegen kann (Ausnahmen bestätigen die Regel). Prinzipiell sollte man als Künstler nur Werke schaffen, die man auch technisch durchdringt und somit in der Lage ist sie selbst zu erhalten. Eine gute Dokumentation hilft hier auch.

6. Möchtest du, dass deine netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen? Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus deiner Sicht erfüllt sein?

Sammlung: Sicherlich, denn nur eine öffentliche Sammlung wird auf lange Sicht den Erhalt der digitalen Werke gewährleisten können, und ich habe prinzipiell etwas gegen den secondary market.

Bedingungen: Würde meine erhältlichen Arbeiten auf der Grundlage eines modifizierten Siegelaub-Vertrags⁶ als Schenkung einbringen.

⁶ vgl. Künstler- Verkaufs- und Rechtsabtretungs-Vertrag, Seth Siegelaub, 1971, abrufbar unter: <http://www.wagabundart.eu/resources/siegelaub-d-a.pdf> [03.2010].

HERVÉ GRAUMANN

born 1963, lives and works as an artist in Geneva.
<http://www.graumann.net> [03.2010]

1. What did your first online-based work look like?

I don't remember exactly, some text work maybe. I also first put some Director works online, with shockwave.

How significant are online-based projects in your overall artistic production?

Currently less than before.

2. Where do you present your work (institutions, festivals, websites, etc.)?

Not really.

Which platforms do you use for exchange of information?

None.

What role do blogs or Internet forums play in the distribution of your work?

I show my works on my website, some people see them, some of them contact me.

3. A musician's or writer's income is made up of different sources. Besides CD or book sales there are opportunities for commissions, performances, readings or teaching. What portion of your income are from sales of your works?

It depends on the year... Incomes are not in a regular basis in this field. Sometimes a good portion, sometimes not...

What other possibilities for earning money have resulted from your artistic activity so far?

I am teaching.

4. To what extent do you consider your digital work as a marketable commodity?

Normally everything can be sold... So maybe when it is sold I can consider it as a marketable commodity, otherwise it's simply a visible work that can be shared online.

5. Is it important to you to preserve your online-based works permanently? Can you ensure maintenance yourself or can/must maintenance be carried out by other qualified personnel?

Yes I do some upgrades sometimes but I can't afford a specialist do to it for me. And for example with Flash, I can't script in ActionScript 3, hum...

Shockwave plugin cannot play older works with Intel Macs (maybe with Rosetta but who restarts the browser under Rosetta?), in my opinion, they should have built a player so we could still see the works...

6. Would you like your online-based works to be introduced to a public collection?

Yes, but how?

In your opinion, what conditions need to be met for this purpose?

Interested collectors of such works.

ESTHER HUNZIKER

geboren 1969, arbeitet als freie Künstlerin im Bereich neue Medien in Basel.
<http://www.eh-01.ch> [03.2010]

1. Wie sah deine erste netzbasierte Arbeit aus?

Mein erstes Online-Projekt war **un_focus** aus dem Jahr 2001. «Ein tilgungsloses Palimpsest und andere medienkritische Stücke». **un_focus** ist eine Art Online-Galerie, eine «intermediale Galerie der digitalen Installationen» (nach Simanowski), die zehn Arbeiten beinhaltet.⁷

Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in deinem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Ich habe in den letzten Jahren einige Online-Projekte realisiert, grosse und kleine Arbeiten. Sie haben einen hohen Stellenwert in meinem künstlerischen Schaffen. Das Internet als Plattform war eine zeitlang mein Hauptmedium.

2. Wo präsentierst du deine Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)? Welche Plattformen nutzt du zum Informationsaustausch? Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution deiner Arbeit?

Vor allem auf Festivals und Internetseiten, auch an Ausstellungen, dies aber eher selten, und wenn, dann sind es meist neue Medien-spezifische Ausstellungen. Der Weg in die «normale» Kunstszene ist mit dem Stempel «Medienkünstlerin» oder (noch schlimmer) «Netzkünstlerin» eher schwierig, leider. Ich nutze zur Distribution praktisch keine Online-Foren oder -Blogs. youtube, myspace, facebook, twitter, second-life oder was auch immer sind für mich eher Zeitfressmaschinen der Belanglosigkeiten. Die Suche im Heuhaufen. Eine Seite mit spezifisch ausgesuchten Links zu einem Thema oder Online-Ausstellungen sind etwas anderes – hier bin ich froh, wenn meine Arbeiten verlinkt oder kommentiert werden.

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe deiner Werke an deinem Einkommen? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus deiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Bis vor kurzem spielten Verkäufe eine sehr geringe Rolle. In den letzten Monaten habe ich aber gerade drei digitale Werke an Sammlungen verkauft. Zweimal **untitled**⁸ als Edition (6-er Auflage) und einmal **un_focus** als Unikat. Das Einkommen aus meiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit ergibt sich vor allem aus Preisen, Projekt- oder Werkbeiträgen, oder wie im aktuellen Fall von **beam-me-up**⁹ auch aus einem Auftrag. Alle meine grösseren Online-Projekte der letzten Jahre konnte ich durch öffentliche Beiträge finanzieren.

⁷ <http://www.ref17.net/unfocus> [03.2010].

⁸ <http://www.ref17.net/untitled> [03.2010].

⁹ <http://www.beam-me.net> [03.2010].

4. Inwieweit siehst du deine digitalen Werke als Ware?

Meine digitalen Werke sehe ich erst dann als Ware, wenn ich Überlegungen zum Verkauf anstelle. Ich überlege mir nie im vornherein, wie ich die Arbeit verkaufen könnte und habe bis anhin auch nie eine digitale Arbeit als Ware hergestellt, ausser **beckett01.suit**¹⁰, eine Schrift, die als freier Download zur Verfügung stand und als CD-Edition günstig zu kaufen war. Ich überlege mir erst seit kurzem, wie ich die digitalen Werke als Ware sehen und verkaufen kann, zum einen, weil eine Nachfrage da ist, zum anderen in Diskussionen mit einer Galerie, die meine Arbeiten verkaufen will.

5. Ist es dir wichtig, deine netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten? Kannst du die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Ja, es wäre schon ein Verlust für mich, wenn die Arbeiten verschwinden würden, weil sie technisch nicht mehr funktionieren. Ich habe auch alle meine analogen Videos digitalisiert in der Hoffnung, dass sie so länger überleben. Meine Online-Arbeiten habe ich auch immer wieder neuen Code-Ansprüchen angepasst, so dass sie auf dem aktuellen Stand sind. Die digitalen Werke sind jedoch keine Bronzestatuen, und das ist auch gut so.

6. Möchtest du, dass deine netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen? Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus deiner Sicht erfüllt sein?

Die Grundbedingung, die dazu erfüllt werden muss, ist das Verständnis für digitale Werke in den Ankaufsgremien. Ängste, Unsicherheiten, Unwissen, Desinteresse etc. müssen abgebaut werden. Die Mediathek Baselland zum Beispiel, die sich neu «Sammlung neue Medien Baselland» nennt, hat bis anhin keine netzbasierte Arbeit angekauft. Hier muss zuerst ein Umdenken stattfinden, dass nicht nur Videos angekauft werden können. Gleichzeitig müssen aber auch digitale Werke angeboten werden, Werke mit klaren Offerten. Was genau kaufe ich, zu welchen Konditionen, wieso sollte ich es kaufen (wenn es auch online öffentlich ist), etc. etc.

Es hat mich sehr erstaunt und extrem gefreut, dass Roman Kurzmeyer die Arbeit **un_focus** als Original für die Sammlung Ricola gekauft hat. Eine Arbeit als Original, zu einem hohen Preis zu verkaufen ist natürlich spannender als nur «günstige» Editionen zu verkaufen.

¹⁰ http://www.ref17.net/hunziker/zine_edition/beckett01.html [03.2010].

JODI

Joan Heemskerk (born 1968) and Dirk Paesmans (born 1965) live and work in Dordrecht (NL).
http://www.jodi.org/, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jodi_(art_collective) [beide 03.2010]

Von: jodi [jodi@jodi.org]
Gesendet: Sonntag, 8. März 2009 13:57
An: Storz Ritschard, Reinhard
Betreff: Re: a question (from Paris)

How long are u still there?
its a nice city--
specially to work on ordinateurs
en plus je parle Frabrukelois;..
///
jai fait mon mieux tres vite en bas
bon salut
des Pays BLA
//
asta DJOIDDIDDDDDDDDDDDDDDD
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Questionnaire:

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3. A musician's or writer's income is made up of different sources. Besides CD or book sales there are opportunities for commissions, performances, readings or teaching. What portion of your income are from sales of your works? What other possibilities for earning money have resulted from your artistic activity so far?

10% sales 40% fees commissions etc. 40% grants 10% private;

4. To what extent do you consider your digital work as a marketable commodity?

100%

5. Is it important to you to preserve your online-based works permanently? Can you ensure maintenance yourself or can/must maintenance be carried out by other qualified personnel?

yes we try to preserve (all)
 yes we maintain our own sites
 (sites which are bought are transferred to buyer account)
 no Qualified personnel (website cost 100eu/y)

6. Would you like your online-based works to be introduced to a public collection? In your opinion, what conditions need to be met for this purpose?

what type of pub collection? ///
 www.lesarchivesdusansculottenouveaubla.bl/%porcrnt/arch/tra/*.
 asp?=eng
 or tinyurl;=*
 --
 the web is the biggest "public collection ever -- it's digital
 street --
 --

with this type of research you exaggerate problemzz, there are ov course difficulties for network"artprojects -- but the solution to "support and re: present (inside Other sites" "is not agood one.../...

"w? -- URL "http://www.xxx.net" is the %Place %Site%Specific %Situation for a webwork - it is maybe the most powerfull element in "new media" ever and certainly themost innovating , it gives "a digital file" a "unique" Place in the networks % forever;)=/ to replace play around with these URLs/is not a g0od id - to maintain them at the same%Location; Yes!

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BIRGIT KEMPKER

geboren 1956, lebt und arbeitet als Schriftstellerin in Basel.

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birgit_Kempker, <http://www.xcult.org/kempker>
[beide 03.2010]

1. Wie sah deine erste netzbasierte Arbeit aus? Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in deinem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Es war ein animierter Satz, Reinhard Storz hat ihn animiert für Xcult.¹¹ «Wer Sätze kennt kennt Tiere.» Das Vernetzen ist sowieso in der Textarbeit, besonders in meiner, selbstverständlich, es dann explizit zu tun und daran z.B. mit Reinhard zusammen etwas zu tüfteln und in elektronische Zusammenhänge, die glitzern und flitzen, zu stellen, ist mir arteigen.

2. Wo präsentierst du deine Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)? Welche Plattformen nutzt du zum Informationsaustausch? Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution deiner Arbeit?

Das Netz baut seine eigenen Informationstunnel, durch die werde ich manchmal erreicht und erreiche ich, das merke ich daran, dass ich wieder durchs Netz zurückerreicht werde. Ich habe dazu immer noch ein nahezu magisches elektrisches Verhältnis und liebe das. Selbst habe ich diese Tunnel (aus Trägheit und besonders aus technischem Unvermögen) noch zu wenig benutzt, bin aber dran, und mir scheint, es ist sehr wichtig, auch im Bereich «Normalbuch» sogar, aber auch Hörspielen und Unikatbüchern, wie ich sie gerade mache mit integrierter DVD (Film, Repère), sozusagen autonome Verteil- und Austauschstrategien zu entwickeln und den Buchhandel, die Vertreter und das ganze schleppende Kulturvermittlungsbetriebsverfahrenungetüm zu umgehen, denn dort werden Entscheidungen getroffen (und Geld verdient), die mit den Interessen dieses Kulturvermittlungsbetriebsverfahrenungetüms zu tun haben. Autoren als Schriftstellerinnen und Schriftsteller sind meiner Erfahrung nach oft konservativ (nicht negativ) und die, die nicht vor die Wand laufen, sondern schön geschmiert mit rutschen im Kunstexistenzrummel, haben weniger existenziellen Bedarf, was zu ändern, jüngere eher und auch andere Möglichkeiten, es gibt viele Ausnahmen.

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe deiner Werke an deinem Einkommen? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus deiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Der Verkauf der Werke bringt weniger Geld als sie kosten. Es sind die Begleitumstände, die Geld bringen, Lesungen, Aufträge,

¹¹ <http://www.xcult.org> [03.2010].

Stipendien, Werkunterstützungen und in meinem Fall das Unterrichten in Kunstschulen, Workshops, etc.

4. Inwieweit siehst du deine digitalen Werke als Ware?

Austauschware vielleicht, wenn Ware, konkret sehe ich meine Arbeit als Liebesarbeit, was soll die kosten? Es sollte Liebesgaben für LiebesarbeiterInnen geben. Sie tun ihr Bestes. Wir tun ihr Bestes. Aber was ist Ware?

5. Ist es dir wichtig, deine netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten? Kannst du die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Ja, diese Fragen um das Erhalten hindern auch, Arbeiten überhaupt erst anzugehen. Die Wartung sollte zu Lebzeiten (in meinem Fall) unbedingt personenunabhängig zu bewerkstelligen sein. Wenn ich tot bin, ist es mir egal und b haben meine Arbeiten im Netz etwas mit Austausch unter Lebenden zu tun (bist jetzt, bin gerade dran, die Erweiterungen davon zu erforschen).

Es gibt aber viel einfachere Fragen, z.B. wie lange bleibt ein Werk auf dem Server und lohnt es sich überhaupt für kurze Zeit. Da meine Arbeiten etwas mit Austausch zu tun habe, sollten sie länger dauern können, es gibt auch Grenzen, wie die **sphinx** auf Xcult, wenn sie nur noch im Netz existiert und von der ersten Welt keinen Rückenwind, keine Auftritte, also keine Aufmerksamkeit mehr bekommt, fehlt halt Strom in der Sache, trotz Steckdosen.

6. Möchtest du, dass deine netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen?

Ja.

Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus deiner Sicht erfüllt sein?

Kontakt. Geld und vor allem Interesse an der Arbeit und technische Pflege.

MARC LEE

geboren 1969, lebt als freier Künstler in Zürich.

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Lee, <http://www.igo1.net> [Beide 03.2010]

1. Wie sah deine erste netzbasierte Arbeit aus?

Die erste Arbeit von 1999 hiess **nun**¹² und ist noch online abrufbar.

Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in deinem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Fast alle meine Arbeiten sind netzbasiert.

2. Wo präsentierst du deine Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)?

Medienkunstaussstellungen, z.B. Plug.in Basel, ZKM Karlsruhe, Media Art Biennale Seoul, Contemporary Art Biennale Sevilla, New Museum New York, Transmediale Berlin, Viper Luzern/Basel, Ars Electronica Linz, CeC Dehli, Read_Me Festival Moskau und ICC Tokyo.

Welche Plattformen nutzt du zum Informationsaustausch?

E-mails, Skype, Websites.

Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution deiner Arbeit?

Ist je nach Arbeit sehr unterschiedlich, z.B. für die Verbreitung bei **Dogmeat.org**¹³ und **O-N-N**¹⁴ spielten Blogs und Foren eine zentrale Rolle. Bei **Loogie.net**¹⁵ und **Breaking The News**¹⁶ mehr oder weniger keine.

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe deiner Werke an deinem Einkommen?

Ich habe nur ein Mal was verkauft.

Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus deiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Vorträge, Leihgebühren, Künstlerhonorare, Stipendien, Auftragsarbeiten, auch Websites für Kulturinstitutionen.

4. Inwieweit siehst du deine digitalen Werke als Ware?

Je nach Art der Arbeit. Einige sind vergleichbar mit einer Performance, da sehe ich keine Ware. Andere funktionieren eher wie ein Bild, da würde ich den Datenträger als Ware bezeichnen, welcher sich ja auch verändert, wenn er beschrieben wird.

¹² <http://www.nun.ch/netz.html> [03.2010].

¹³ <http://www.igo1.net/index.php/Main/Dogmeat> [03.2010].

¹⁴ <http://www.igo1.net/index.php/Main/O-N-N> [03.2010].

¹⁵ <http://www.igo1.net/index.php/Loogie/NetTV> [03.2010].

¹⁶ <http://www.igo1.net/index.php/Main/News-Jockey> [03.2010].

5. Ist es dir wichtig, deine netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten?

Ja.

Kannst du die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Die Pflege kann ich selber gewährleisten, sie kann aber auch von einer anderen Person geleistet werden.

6. Möchtest du, dass deine netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen?

Ja.

Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus deiner Sicht erfüllt sein?

1. Finanzieller Beitrag
2. Bei Ausstellungen Originaltitel und Autor nennen
3. Wenn die öffentliche Sammlung die Arbeit verändert oder weiterentwickelt, ist das okay.

MARTINE NEDDAM (AKA MOUCHETTE)

lives and works as an artist in Amsterdam

<http://www.neddham.info>, <http://neddam.org>, <http://mouchette.net> [all 03.2010]

1. What did your first online-based work look like? How significant are online-based projects in your overall artistic production?

My first online-based work looked like the website of a young girl of 13 years old. In the beginning of the existence of the web, such a young girl's website was quite believable. For some viewers it was seen as art, for others as an internet-phenomenon, with every different opinion in-between. I was happy with this ambiguity and always maintained my anonymity as the author of the website.

When I started creating art on the net in 1996, I was already developed as an artist. I was exhibiting in galleries and museums. I was using language as raw material for my art, but it took all kind of forms, objects on wall or in the space, three-dimensional installations using light and text. I had been creating many large size public commissions for the public space in different countries of Europe.

For me, art on the internet was just in a straight line with what I had been doing before, I was still using text as my artistic material, I was still creating situations in the public space. But for the artistic institution, my work disappeared. Internet art had no existence and no value for the art institutions that were previously buying, curating or commissioning my work. Besides, I was not using my name anymore, I was hiding behind a virtual character, so even when some curators liked the internet work I was doing with Mouchette, they usually couldn't accept to play the game of the virtual character and conceal the name of the author, as I wanted and didn't want to become the accomplice of the identity creation.

2. Where do you present your work (institutions, festivals, websites, etc.)? Which platforms do you use for exchange of information? What role do blogs or Internet forums play in the distribution of your work?

I present my work mostly on the websites of the virtual characters.¹⁷ I maintain a big database of registered users, they are the public of my art and I connect with them directly through the webpages and the e-mails. Since 1997 and 1998, long before blogs existed, I started creating interactive pages where the public could communicate with the virtual characters. This interactive communication with the public was the form of my art but at the same time it was the means of distribution. Therefore I played the role of the museums and art institutions but I was designing it as my art. In technical terms I was also designing customized interfaces (with PHP, MySQL and Javascript) to structure the exchange with the public, it was the kind of software that

¹⁷ <http://mouchette.net> and <http://davidstill.org> [03.2010].

blogs and forums are made of, but homemade and suited to my artistic needs. To this day I'm still using these interfaces as a part of the art, maintaining the software and the contact with the public as a part of the art.

Festivals and institutions dealing with art on internet also existed since the beginning. They contacted me through my websites and I participated to many festivals and won many prizes, without having to disclose my real life identity. Only the actual work on internet mattered, all the communication with the institutions happened online. These institutions for internet art were very significant because they were experimental, they were trying to create specific forms of distribution, specific forms of archiving etc.... They were our partners in artistic creation because they participated in the reflection around a new form of art. They were short-lived for most of them, they disappeared very quickly, sometimes without leaving any traces, but they were meaningful nevertheless.

Universities, art school and art colleges were (and still are) very important for the distribution of the work. Professors and art teachers are very keen on preserving experimental forms of art, and students are very open to new forms of art that are part of their actual environment like internet is, especially when they can have such a direct and personal contact with the work. Art education plays a big role in the preservation and distribution of art on internet.

3. A musician's or writer's income is made up of different sources. Besides CD or book sales there are opportunities for commissions, performances, readings or teaching. What portion of your income are from sales of your works? What other possibilities for earning money have resulted from your artistic activity so far?

I hardly ever sold internet work, or only once or twice, very exceptionally. The rest of the income that I derived from my internet work came from prizes, research grants, lectures and website presentations (small money), residency honorarium, and exceptionally a commission for an internet work. A strong reputation as an internet pioneer added to my credentials and I was invited as a guest lecturer or professor in universities.

4. To what extent do you consider your digital work as a marketable commodity?

Any work of art, no matter how immaterial it is becomes a marketable commodity when it enters the art market. I wish my art would enter the art market one day so as to benefit from that kind of circulation. I'm glad it was never made as a marketable commodity and I don't think entering the art market would alter its nature.

5. Is it important to you to preserve your online-based works permanently?

Yes, definitely. I often wonder what would become of my art the day I die. I wish people would still care for it and wish to keep it alive.

Can you ensure maintenance yourself or can/must maintenance be carried out by other qualified personnel?

For the time being, I ensure all the maintenance myself and I'm the only one who knows how to do it. I wish I will be given the opportunity to instruct people how to maintain it so that its life doesn't totally depend on me.

6. Would you like your online-based works to be introduced to a public collection?

Yes, definitely.

In your opinion, what conditions need to be met for this purpose? That the interactive functions and the dialogue with the online public would be kept alive and active, that the database of participation would be maintained in the same way I do it.

In the context of Archive 2020, [virtueelplatform](http://virtueelplatform.nl/en)¹⁸ asked Martine Neddam to write down some of the technical experiences that she encountered in the years that she has been making Internet art.

ERWIN REDL

born 1963 in Austria. He lives and works in New York.

<http://www.paramedia.net/>, <http://www.rhizome.org/profile.php?6058> [both 03.2010]

1. What did your first online-based work look like? How significant are online-based projects in your overall artistic production?

My first online-based work was a simple text piece using basic poetic statements which got cut up, mixed and rearranged using chance operations. It was done in 1997. I did two internet pieces that year. The same year I started to work on large-scale light installations which currently is my main medium.

2. Where do you present your work (institutions, festivals, websites, etc.)? Which platforms do you use for exchange of information? What role do blogs or Internet forums play in the distribution of your work?

The two online-based pieces of mine were completed in 1997. I haven't done any additional internet work since. At this point I don't subscribe to blogs or social networking sites.

3. A musician's or writer's income is made up of different sources. Besides CD or book sales there are opportunities for commissions, performances, readings or teaching. What portion of your income are from sales of your works? What other possibilities for earning money have resulted from your artistic activity so far?

The two internet-based pieces of mine are not a significant source of income for me. My current media are large-scale light installations and drawings. The sale of those works is the sole source of my earnings.

4. To what extent do you consider your digital work as a marketable commodity?

Digital work is definitely marketable but due to the lack of an «original» or due to the fact that it can be reproduced indefinitely without loss of quality traditional acquisition and collection strategies might not be adequate.

5. Is it important to you to preserve your online-based works permanently? Can you ensure maintenance yourself or can/must maintenance be carried out by other qualified personnel?

I think it is crucial to preserve online-based works permanently. It is necessary that artists are knowledgeable about the technology they use in order to maintain their work. At the same time museums or anyone who collects digital work has to have qualified personnel on staff to maintain digital work. Digital work simply has to get the same attention from museum conservators as traditional media like painting, drawing or sculpture.

6. Would you like your online-based works to be introduced to a public collection? In your opinion, what conditions need to be met for this purpose?

My online-based work is already in a public collection. The condition of course is that it is perfectly maintained in order to be presented correctly.

ALAN SONDHEIM

is an artist/thinker and lives in Brooklyn, New York.
<http://www.alansondheim.org>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Sondheim
[both 03.2010]

1. How significant are online-based projects in your overall artistic production?

Critical - almost all of my work is online-based; my texts appear online, my images as well. Video is always poor online and I prefer DVD distribution, or showing in film/video venues.

2. Where do you present your work (institutions, festivals, websites, etc.)? Which platforms do you use for exchange of information? What role do blogs or Internet forums play in the distribution of your work?

I present my work online in Second Life or through my webpage; I also show at conferences, workshops, and seminars. For platforms I use largely PC, although if a place has a Mac or Linux, I'm comfortable with those. I use e-mail a tremendous amount, as well as e-mail lists, and work through Linux for e-mail and scripting. Because I'm not university or gallery affiliated, I have to fend for myself in terms of software and hardware, and have used cracked programs, although I don't like to. Most of the programs I use are free such as Second Life, Blender, Gimp, and Linux/Unix scripts.

3. A musician's or writer's income is made up of different sources. Besides CD or book sales there are opportunities for commissions, performances, readings or teaching. What portion of your income are from sales of your works? What other possibilities for earning money have resulted from your artistic activity so far?

I only wish I could sell works! I get paid for teaching or demonstrating what I do, but I have nothing for people to collect - at least now I am too poor to print graphics, for example. Sometimes I get paid for conferences - if I'm asked to pay for a conference, I can't go. But I'd say really no money - maybe five percent - comes in from my work.

4. To what extent do you consider your digital work as a marketable commodity?

I don't - I don't know how to market it. I wish I did - I'd sell everything. This is difficult given that I'm doing a lot, say, in Second Life, and who knows how long that will last? I do make videos and graphics of what I've done in Second Life, but they seem worthless to me.

5. Is it important to you to preserve your online-based works permanently? Can you ensure maintenance yourself or can/must mainte-

nance be carried out by other qualified personnel?

Yes it's important but given the need for Second Life, for example - it's impossible. A lot of my work is useless - for example my VRML pieces - I can do nothing with them.

6. Would you like your online-based works to be introduced to a public collection? In your opinion, what conditions need to be met for this purpose?

At this point, anything at all. Hopefully on more than one harddrive.

7. Remarks

I wish I did have a way to make money from the work - Azure and I have pretty much nothing. I did have a consultancy and a grant last year - the first through the National Science Foundation (NSF), which is a federal agency, and the second, a grant from the New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA) that kept us going - we're still living off these. But when these dry up we're in real trouble!

DOMINIK STAUCH

geboren 1968, lebt und arbeitet in Thun.

<http://www.stau.ch>, <http://www.galeriebk.ch/gal/index.php?id=79> [beide 03.2010]

1. Wie sah deine erste netzbasierte Arbeit aus? Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in deinem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Meine erste grössere Arbeit war **<!--van doesburg, al held and rene daniels learn to fly-->**¹⁹ (2001). Eine interaktive Flash-Animation. Vorher hatte ich viel mit animierten Gifs experimentiert. Seither habe ich kleinere und grössere Arbeiten realisiert und auch versucht, Netzarbeiten mit dem öffentlichen Raum zu «verlinken».²⁰ Ich fühle mich aber nicht unbedingt als Netzkünstler. Eher als Allrounder.

2. Wo präsentierst du deine Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)? Welche Plattformen nutzt du zum Informationsaustausch? Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution deiner Arbeit?

<!--van doesburg ...--> konnte ich an der VIPER zeigen. Später auch am Filmfestival in Rotterdam. Das war ganz klar dank der VIPER. Mir fällt diesbezüglich auf, dass viele Kuratoren sich oft im WWW gar nicht auskennen, Festivals dienen da als Plattform. Meistens platziere ich meine Arbeiten auf meiner Homepage. Internetforen und Blogs nutze ich hauptsächlich, um Informationen zu sammeln. Für meine erste grössere Museumsausstellung (2005 im Museum Liner, Appenzell) entwickelte ich ein Netzprojekt, welches vom Museum Liner und **Sitemapping**²¹ finanziert wurde (www.colouritbeautiful.net). Es war ein Versuch, die virtuelle Welt mit dem Museum zu «verlinken».

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe deiner Werke an deinem Einkommen? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus deiner künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Mein Galerist verkauft ab und zu Arbeiten, das schwankt sehr. Im letzten Jahr hatte ich ein Berlin-Stipendium, eine Ausstellung im Kunsthaus Grenchen und überraschend gut verkauft. Mit Wettbewerben, Grafikeditionen, Kunst am Bau konnte ich mich bisher über Wasser halten. Wenn nötig mach ich auch mal einen Grafikauftrag. Es ist ein Seiltanz.

4. Inwieweit siehst du deine digitalen Werke als Ware?

Netzarbeiten habe ich noch nie verkauft. Aber aus Netzarbeiten haben sich schon verkäufliche Ar-

¹⁹ <http://www.xcult.org/airport/index.html> [03.2010].

²⁰ z. B. <http://mysouvenir.ch/> [03.2010].

²¹ <http://www.bak.admin.ch/themen/kulturfoerderung/00476/> [03.2010].

beiten entwickelt. Eigentlich sind Netzarbeiten ja Werke im öffentlichen Raum. So gesehen gehören sie bereits der Öffentlichkeit.

5. Ist es dir wichtig, deine netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten? Kannst du die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Ich arbeite eigentlich lieber an neuen Projekten, anstatt mich mit schon Realisiertem herum zu schlagen. Momentan überlege ich mir, ob ich - ähnlich wie Softwarefirmen - ein Projekt überarbeiten soll. Aus **Rock'n'Roll is Dead** würde dann **Rock'n'Roll is Dead 2.0**. **Rock'n'Roll is Dead** hab ich vor über einem Jahr vom Netz genommen. Es schien mir technisch veraltet. Ein Problem ist, dass im WWW Neues sehr schnell alt aussieht. Die technischen Entwicklungen gehen schnell voran. Das setzt voraus, dass du die Programmiersprachen studierst. In der freien Wirtschaft werden Unsummen für perfekt funktionierende Webauftritte ausgegeben, da kann meine Kunst nicht mithalten. Manchmal müssen Projektideen zur Seite gelegt werden, weil ich es mir nicht leisten kann, diese von Drittpersonen ausführen zu lassen.

6. Möchtest du, dass deine netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen? Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus deiner Sicht erfüllt sein?

Das wäre doch ganz schön... Netzbasierte Arbeiten werden aber auf dem Kunstmarkt nicht gleichwertig behandelt wie Bilder, Skulpturen oder Videos. Als Beispiel wieder das Museum Liner: Nach einem Direktionswechsel wurde ich vom Sekretariat telefonisch angefragt, ob es einen Grund gäbe mein Projekt weiterhin online zu behalten. Als ich antwortete, das Projekt sei doch noch nicht abgeschlossen, gab man mir noch ein Jahr. In der Zwischenzeit ist **www.colouritbeautiful.net** nicht mehr online. Das Museum hatte zwar das Projekt finanziert, sich aber nie für Resultate interessiert. Der Server wurde vor Abschluss des Projekts gekündigt, der Inhalt wurde vermutlich gelöscht. Ich wurde nie darüber informiert. Das sagt eigentlich schon alles.

MONICA STUDER UND CHRISTOPH VAN DEN BERG

Monica Studer (geb. 1960) und Christoph van den Berg (geb. 1962) leben in Basel.
<http://www.vuedesalpes.com>, <http://www.xcult.org/stuvdb> [Beide 03.2010]

1. Wie sah eure erste netzbasierte Arbeit aus? Welchen Stellenwert haben netzbasierte Projekte in eurem gesamten künstlerischen Schaffen?

Unsere erste netzbasierte Arbeit bestand darin, eine HTML-Datei von Server zu Server zu schicken. Die Datei zeigte immer jeweils ein Bild des Servers, auf dem sie gerade untergebracht war. Das suchen der nächsten Etappe oblag dem Betreiber des aktuellen Servers. Ein Link wies auf die vorherige Station, sodass sich eine Kette ergeben sollte (leider unternahm das Projekt keine allzu weiten Schritte, und der angestrebte Vernetzungs-Effekt unterblieb bis auf weiteres).

Netzbasierte Arbeiten sind für uns teilweise wichtig, teilweise funktionieren die Arbeiten nicht ohne das Netz. Ein Kern unserer Arbeit, die Website des **Hotel Vue des Alpes**²², ist für diese Werkgruppe unverzichtbar, denn sie stellt das Buchungssystem und mithin das physische Funktionieren des Projektes. Zurzeit sind wir allerdings weniger an den Eigenschaften des Netzes als Kunstort interessiert als in den letzten Jahren: Die phänomenischen Eckpunkte des Netzes sind im grossen Ganzen abgesteckt, die Nägel sind eingeschlagen und die Claims verteilt. Der Ruf «Go west», nein, «Go net» als Schlachtruf der Aufbruchsstimmung ist verhallt, das unbekannte Terrain vague, in das wir als Pioniere vorstossen wollten, hat zum Wohnzimmer des **twitter**-Universums mutiert. Allerdings sind grosse Teile unserer Arbeit vollkommen unabhängig vom Netz und präsentieren sich teilweise als physische Installationen oder Projektionen mit digitalen Elementen, teilweise als grossformatige Drucke als reines Resultat der Beschäftigung mit dem Digitalen.

2. Wo präsentiert ihr eure Arbeit (Institutionen, Festivals, Internetseiten, etc.)? Welche Plattformen nutzt ihr zum Informationsaustausch? Welche Rollen spielen Blogs oder Internetforen für die Distribution eurer Arbeit?

Da seit 1990 unser hauptsächliches Arbeitsinstrument der Computer ist, hat uns Reinhard Storz 1995/96 angefragt, ob wir Interesse hätten, eine netzbasierte Arbeit für **Xcult** zu machen. Er bot Plattform, Speicherplatz und Support an. Da uns zu dieser Zeit eine inhaltliche Auseinandersetzung mit dem Internet zu interessieren begann, entstand so die erste Arbeit im Netz. Über diese ersten Arbeiten auf **Xcult** ist der intensive Austausch mit Reinhard Storz entstanden, der in die Konzeptarbeit zu den kollaborativen Internet-Projekten **RAM-Show**²³, **shrink to fit**²⁴, **56kTV Bastard Channel**²⁵ und **beam me up**²⁶ gemündet hat.

²² <http://www.vuedesalpes.com>
[03.2010].

²³ http://www.xcult.org/ateliers/ramshow/issue20/show/index_neu.html [03.2010].

²⁴ http://www.xcult.org/kollekt/index_shrink.html [03.2010].

²⁵ <http://www.56k-bastard.tv>
[03.2010].

²⁶ <http://www.beam-me.net>
[03.2010].

Abgesehen von **Xcult** und der eigenen Site des **Vue des Alpes**-Projektes präsentieren wir unsere Arbeit heute überwiegend im Kontext von Museums-Institutionen und Ausstellungsorten, die nicht in erster Linie dem Digitalen oder Neuen Medien verpflichtet sind (<analoge> Institutionen). Festivals und das Internet machen einen sehr kleinen Teil der Präsentationen aus. Plattformen zum Austausch von Informationen nutzen wir eigentlich nur in technisch/informatischen Belangen, ansonsten fließt die Information aus den Plattformen nur in eine Richtung.

Wie sich gezeigt hat, sind Blogs und Internetforen für das Verbreiten der eigenen Arbeit im Kontext der analogen Institutionen nur sehr bedingt von Nutzen. Der Löwenanteil der Kontakte für die Distribution entsteht durch unsere Ausstellungen und Print-Publikationen, durch Mund-zu-Mund-Propaganda im Vermittlernetz. Das Internet ist hier eigentlich nur Träger für zusätzliche Information und für Bild- und Textmaterial.

Dort, wo es gilt, Spezialisten für digitale Kunst zu erreichen, ist freilich die Präsenz im Netz das erste Mittel der Wahl. Allerdings gilt auch hier, was im Analogen gilt: Ebenso wenig, wie es Sinn macht, mit der Mappe unter dem Arm hausieren zu gehen, kann man die Personen, die man erreichen will, mit Links und Spam zur eigenen Arbeit drängen.

3. Bei MusikerInnen oder SchriftstellerInnen setzt sich der Verdienst aus verschiedenen Quellen zusammen. Neben Verkäufen von CDs oder Büchern ergeben sich auch Möglichkeiten für Aufträge, Auftritte, Lesungen oder Lehrtätigkeiten. Welchen Anteil haben Verkäufe eurer Werke an eurem Einkommen? Welche anderen Möglichkeiten zum Geldverdienen haben sich aus eurer künstlerischen Tätigkeit bisher ergeben?

Wir leben seit ca. sechs Jahren überwiegend vom Verkauf unserer Arbeiten durch eine kommerzielle Kunstgalerie. Das sind zum großen Teil digitale Drucke, aber auch installative Arbeiten werden angekauft. Einen Anteil von etwa 10% verdienen wir mit Vorträgen, Workshops und Lehrtätigkeit. Sollte sich im Schlepptau der <Finanzkrise> der Verkauf zurückentwickeln, müssen wir unter Umständen wieder im kommerziellen Sektor digital handwerken, wie es vorher der Fall war, oder uns um staatliche oder private Fördergelder bewerben.

4. Inwieweit sehr ihr eure digitalen Werke als Ware?

Wir haben kein Problem damit, die Resultate künstlerischer Arbeit grundsätzlich als Ware oder Dienstleistung zu sehen, seien sie digital oder nicht; Ware in dem Sinn, dass es sich durchaus um verkäufliche Werke handelt. Wie bei jedem Verkauf lohnt es sich allerdings, sich jeweils Gedanken zu machen über Implikationen und Folgen des Handels, und dort, wo sich wegen der Neuheit des Mediums anerkannte Bedingungen des Verkaufes noch nicht allgemein durchgesetzt haben, Regeln oder Richtlinien zu bestimmen.

Es ist auch so, dass die Kunden der Galerie, die mit diesen Werken handelt, eine gewisse Stabilität durch das Aufstellen von ein-

deutigen Regeln schätzen: Sie gibt ihnen einen Vergleichsrahmen und einen Massstab, denn meist fehlt bei den neuen Arbeiten eine kunstmarktbezogene Einordnung durch Experten. Ist die Frage nach den konservatorischen Belangen und dem Unterhalt einer Arbeit offen oder unklar, sind nicht alle potenziellen Sammler bereit, selbst aktiv an diesen Punkten mitzudenken.

5. Ist es euch wichtig, eure netzbasierten Werke möglichst auf Dauer zu erhalten? Könnt ihr die Pflege selber gewährleisten oder muss/kann die Wartung von einer anderen Fachperson geleistet werden?

Wir finden es wichtig, dass auch im Netz eine Geschichte und Chronologie der künstlerischen Netzarbeiten ablesbar ist. Heute - 2009 - sind durch die Entwicklungen der Technologie und der schnelleren Übertragungsgeschwindigkeit andere Arbeiten möglich als vor zehn Jahren, und das wird nur ersichtlich, wenn die Dinosaurier der Netzkunst funktionsfähig online bleiben können. Dies gilt auch für Arbeiten wie **365 Vasen**, die auf ein Jahr beschränkt war, jedoch als Konzept, das auf der Site nachlesbar ist, immer noch Gültigkeit hat. **Still Life Take Away**²⁷ ist in der Dauer nicht limitiert, jedoch seit einiger Zeit nicht mehr im Fokus unserer Auseinandersetzung, sodass wir keine **still life**-Bestellungen mehr entgegen nehmen. Der Shop könnte jedoch sofort wieder aktiviert werden. Auch hier werden auf der Site Konzept und Gestaltung ersichtlich, auch wenn sich das Projekt zurzeit rein dokumentarisch darstellt.

Bei weiteren Arbeiten, die ohne Interaktion zwischen Publikum und uns funktionieren, sollte der Code immer wieder an den aktuell gültigen technischen Standard angepasst werden, es fehlt uns jedoch die Zeit für die Pflege. Die Anpassungen könnten von einer Fachperson vorgenommen werden, aber wir tendieren dazu, eher Zeit und Geld in neue Arbeiten zu investieren als in die Restauration, und nehmen so in Kauf, dass ältere Arbeiten leider nicht mehr vollumfänglich funktionieren.

Die konservatorische Pflege für ein Projekt zu externalisieren würde generell bedeuten, eine vollumfängliche, maschinenunabhängige Beschreibung zu erstellen, die auch noch in Jahren von einer Fachperson technisch umgesetzt und auf einem entsprechenden Anzeigegerät zur Präsentation gebracht werden kann. Nur: es ist gerade die kontextuelle Abhängigkeit von technischen Gegebenheiten (oder auch das thematische Zusammenspiel mit ihnen), die den Kern gewisser Arbeiten ausmacht. Spätere Veröffentlichungen eines digitalen Werkes werden daher fast zwingend den Charakter von Emulationen früherer Maschinen haben müssen, und es macht Spass sich vorzustellen, wie sich im künftigen Verlauf der Präsentationspraxis das Ringen um Authentizität zu einer Art «historically informed performance»²⁸ für Netzkunst entwickeln wird.

²⁷ http://www.digital-art-collection.net/collection/_arbeiten/svb.html [03.2010].

²⁸ http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historische_Aufführungspraxis: «Historische Aufführungspraxis, auch <historisch informierte Aufführungspraxis>, nennt man die Bemühung, die Musik vergangener Epochen mit authentischem Instrumentarium, historischer Spieltechnik und im Wissen um die künstlerischen Gestaltungsmittel der jeweiligen Zeit wiederzugeben. Ursprünglich bezog sich der Begriff auf die Alte Musik, auf die Interpretation der vor etwa 1830 entstandenen Werke. In den letzten Jahrzehnten beschäftigt sich die Historische Aufführungspraxis zunehmend mit Werken der Romantik und Spätromantik und des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts.» [03.2010].

6. Möchtet ihr, dass eure netzbasierten Werke in eine öffentliche Sammlung gelangen? Welche Bedingungen müssten dazu aus eurer Sicht erfüllt sein?

Öffentliche wie private Sammlungen sind uns willkommen. In erster Linie müsste unserer Ansicht nach die Zugänglichkeit und Verlinkbarkeit gewährleistet sein. Denkbar wäre beispielsweise eine Verlinkung über eine Institutions- oder Sammlungsseite, um dadurch Besitz oder Engagement der jeweiligen Sammlung sichtbar zu machen.

Unsere Erfahrung mit dem Verkauf von Online-Arbeiten ist gering: Aus **Vue des Alpes** wurde 2000 das Hotel als digitale Immobilie vom Kunstcredit Basel-Stadt gekauft. Als symbolisches Pfand sind sie im Besitz eines Architekturmodelles des Hotels. Wir sind, streng genommen, nur noch die Pächter.²⁹

Das Kunsthaus Aarau hat früh schon einen grösseren Komplex von Prints aus **Vue des Alpes** erworben, damit der Zusammenhang mit dem zentralen Internetprojekt verstanden werden kann, haben wir dem Museum eine Leihgabe der Offline-Version zur Verfügung gestellt.

Eine weitere Strategie bedient sich des Printmediums: Für FRAC Alsace haben wir ein Faltblatt (*dépliant touristique*³⁰) gestaltet, das die Website von **Vue des Alpes** bewirbt, und das die von der Sammlung erworbenen Prints eindeutig mit dem Internet-Projekt in Zusammenhang bringt.

Anfragen zum direkten Erwerb einer Internetarbeit sind bis jetzt ausgeblieben. Hauptsächlich werden von unserem Galeristen Prints verkauft. Von den installativen/digitalen Arbeiten wurde vom Kunstmuseum Solothurn **Wiese** und von einem Sammlerpaar die **Gleisenhorn Livecam** erworben.

Dass noch sehr zurückhaltend angekauft wird, hat bestimmt auch damit zu tun, dass es noch wenige spezialisierte Händler und Richtlinien für digitale Arbeiten gibt (s.o.). Seit kurzem ist jedoch zu beobachten, dass viele Galerien neu KünstlerInnen in ihr Programm aufnehmen, die mit digitalen Medien arbeiten.

²⁹ Aufmerksame Besucher des digitalen Hotels werden auf der rechten Seite des Hoteleinganges eine Plakette finden, auf der der Ankauf festgehalten ist.

³⁰ Collection FRAC Alsace, 2005: <http://frac-alsace.videomuseum.fr/Navigart/index.php?db=fracalw&qs=1> [03.2010].

YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES

Marc Voge and Young-hae Chang live and work in Seoul.

<http://www.yhchang.com>,

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young-Hae_Chang_Heavy_Industries [both 03.2010]

1. How significant are online-based projects in your overall artistic production?

Extremely significant. That's what we're all about.

2. Where do you present your work (institutions, festivals, websites, etc.)? Which platforms do you use for exchange of information? What role do blogs or Internet forums play in the distribution of your work?

We present our work both online and offline, and exploit both networks for exchanging information. Many blogs and forums link to our work, and we're pleased and fascinated with how the Web has made us who we are.

3. A musician's or writer's income is made up of different sources. Besides CD or book sales there are opportunities for commissions, performances, readings or teaching. What portion of your income are from sales of your works? What other possibilities for earning money have resulted from your artistic activity so far?

We make almost all our income from sales and commissions - such as the one for **56K Bastard Channel** which you were so kind to offer us - of our work. We also receive some speaking honorariums and screening fees.

4. To what extent do you consider your digital work as a marketable commodity?

To an overwhelming extent. We tell institutional collectors that they can present our work like a painting or a sculpture. We tell potential private collectors that they can hang our work over their sofas at home and in their office.

5. Is it important to you to preserve your online-based works permanently? Can you ensure maintenance yourself or can/must maintenance be carried out by other qualified personnel?

Yes, we like to think our work can be eternal, or at least here and there, on- and offline, until we're no longer around to care for it or about it. We maintain it ourselves but wouldn't mind if someone else did it for us.

6. Would you like your online-based works to be introduced to a public collection? In your opinion, what conditions need to be met for this purpose?

Some of our works are in public collections already. We no longer have much control over these works, but even if we did, we wouldn't know a sure-fire way to conserve them any better than what

the collectors are already doing. More than other art genres, new media is constantly evolving. This means that there is much improvisation when it comes to artists and collectors figuring out how to conserve artworks. There are very few if any enduring standards. We willingly admit this to collectors and invite them to collaborate with us in this ongoing and evolving process.

7. Remarks

Your survey and questions are important for us and, we think, for other new media artists, as well as for art professionals. Thank you for undertaking your research and inviting us to contribute our opinion. If we can be of any further help to you, please don't hesitate to contact us. Best of luck with your project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the following persons for their assistance: Annina Zimmermann for her dedication during the project submission process, Jan Torpus, Rod Galantay, Martin Wiedmer (IDK), Daniel Zehntner and Janine Graf (KTI) for their kind advice, Florence Zumbühl for administration, Isabel Zürcher and Nicole Boillat for their special effort, Alois Martin Müller for his support of the publication, Beat von Wartburg (CMS), Claus Donau (CMV), Urs Staub (BAK) and Raphael Rogenmoser (Migros Kulturprozent) for discussions and support, Barbara Basting for explanatory notes, Peter Bläuer, Beat Brogle, Verena Formanek, Johannes Gfeller, Birgit Kempker, Stephan Kunz, Nicolas Krupp, Marc Lee, Christoph Lichtin, Pierre-André Lienhard, Chantal Molleur, Irene Müller, André Rogger, Beatrix Ruf, Cornelia Sollfrank, Gilli and Diego Stampa, Monica Studer and Christoph van den Berg, Christoph Vögele for talks and information, all artists that have filled out our questionnaire and the entire research team for their good work.

IMPRINT

OWNING ONLINE ART - SELLING AND COLLECTING NETBASED ARTWORKS

Editors: Markus Schwander, Reinhard Storz

Translations: Aileen Derieg, Jean-Marie Clarke, Tolingo Hamburg

Editing: Isabel Zürcher

Design: Nicole Boillat (Edit-gestaltet)

FHNW, Basel, 2010

The research project **Owning Online Art - Study for a Netart Gallery** of the UAS Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design was funded by the Kommission für Technologie und Innovation (KTI).

This publication was supported by the UAS Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Art and Design, the Christoph Merian Foundation and the Migros Kulturprozent.

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