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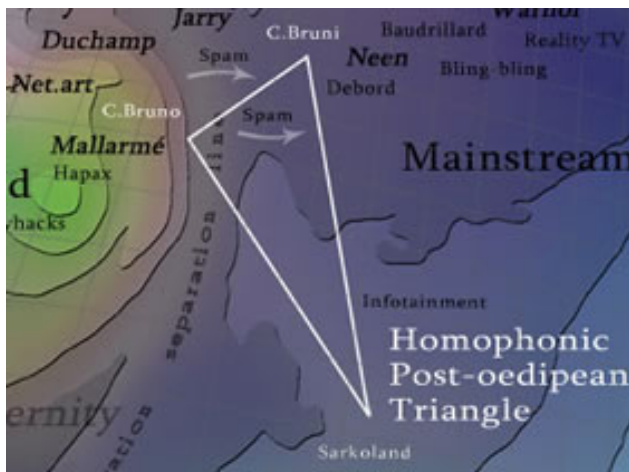
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Cristophe Bruno: From Dada To Google

Giulia Simi



Christophe Bruno - whom I previously interviewed in Digimag 25 (<http://www.digicult.it/digimag/artic le.asp?id=836>), is one of most known net.artists worldwide. Lucid, ironic, desecrating, he has faced since a long time issues related to language commodification and control by late-capitalism, from "Society of the Spectacle" to "The Age of Access".

For the "Google Adwords Happening", online performance consisting in a poetry advertising campaign through the renowned adwords system, he won a honorable mention at the 2003 Ars Electronica. The project, whose subtitle was "How to lose money with your art", tried to subvert the crux of contemporary art, increasingly market-oriented in the controversial "age of mechanical reproduction" currently in its advanced stage. He

was censored by Google - he will explain why in this interview - and his advertisements remained online only for 24 hours. Nonetheless, 12.000 visitors saw them. Words are cloned, emptied, monetized. Words are controlled, induced, counterfeited. Welcome to "semantic capitalism", last step of a society which seems to vampirize all of our thoughts, dreams, desires.

"**Dadameter**" is the title of his last great project, currently exposed in the virtual space of Jeu de Paume gallery in Paris (<http://www.jeudepaume.org/?page =article&sousmenu=107&idArt=788&lie u=9>). It is a satirical display of the "decay of the aura of language" - as the subtitle recites, with a clear tribute to Walter Benjamin - elaborating a cartography of words stored in the Internet to measure our distance from Dada. It was indeed Raymond Roussel, eccentric writer much loved by dadaists and surrealists, who inspired Bruno. His theatrical works, entirely based on combinatory word games which reveal the ambiguous, evocative and playful side of language, seem to precede somehow the mechanization

behaviour as consumers and optimize the Adwords system.

I decided to try to see if it was possible for me to build such cartographies but that time it was too difficult an enterprise because it involved quite complex mathematical and computing tools. Later I met a mathematician and programmer, Valeriu Lacatusu, thanks to whom the project became feasible.

But it's only in 2006 that I had the idea of linking the concept to the birth of Dada, through the key character of Raymond Roussel. The mechanisation of literary production developed by Roussel in the fields of homophony and equivocation, was echoing the enterprise of "taylorization of discourse" that Google had started in the field of meaning.

started to ask myself crazy questions such as what is the density of dadaism in language? The size of the region of language where homophony and equivocation are important, would in a way provide a measurement of our distance from Dada. That was the starting point of the project.

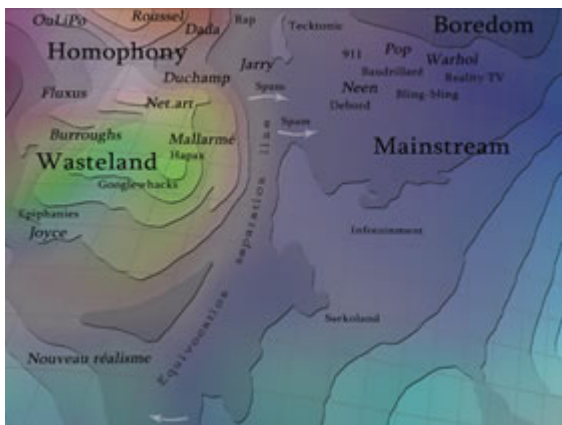


Giulia Simi: As you well explain in your video interview for Jeu de Paume gallery, the mechanisation of language (crucial concept in many of your works) has passed from a literary production - in Dada - to monetary one - in Google. What do you think about the future of speech?

Christophe Bruno: The "Dadameter" is subtitled "*global index of the decay of the aura of language*" and indeed my feeling is that there has been a paradigm shift in late capitalism in relation to the question of speech. The general picture seems to me as follows: in the sixties there has been a shift from the object to relations and flux, accordingly to the concept of "transfiguration of the commonplace" as well as to the transition towards the "age of access". Language, as it is stored on the web, is nothing but the coding of all existing human relations and this panoptic structure has become part of a dispositive of global surveillance and post-control. This decay of the aura of language, or zombification of speech, may also be seen as a decay of the aura of the relational, and there is a paradoxical interplay between this "global text" and the performative aspect of speech. The future of speech has to be understood in this context of a global articulation between spectacle

and post-control, between an absolute fetichisation of the relational, that counter-balance the decay of its aura.

he paradoxical fact that I was censored in the “Google Adwords Happening”, not because my speech was too meaningfull and outrageous, but because I had nothing to say (the clickthrough rate of my Adwords poetry was too low and therefore imperilled the market of language) is also worth to be noted here.



Giulia Simi: Google is often directly or indirectly present on your works, like in many net.artists’ projects. Maybe we can state that nowadays Google is almost a synonym of web. But did Google kill the web utopia? What the web would be without Google?

Christophe Bruno: The web utopia was killed quite soon, a bit before the

burst of the Internet bubble, before the advent of Google. Google was one of the most important actors in the transition from web 1 to web 2 and what Google achieved is not the death of the web utopia. Instead they were born in the context of this utopia and tried to revive it ; because they used and perverted this very utopia in order to reach the ultimate stage of commodification. Indeed the ecology of free speech promoted by Google is nothing but the core of their economic dynamics.

Giulia Simi: This project has required a long and complex elaborating process. At the end, thanks also to the mathematician Valeriu Lacatusu, Dadameter’s engine is an interesting tool scanning the huge database of language on the net. Have you ever thought to use it for other purposes – sociological/political for instance?

Christophe Bruno: Yes, and I’ve been contacted by companies working in these fields. But the main purpose of the Dadameter was satirical. So I don’t know what is going to happen in this schizophrenic context.

www.iterature.com/dadameter/

Art And Everyday Life In The After Future

Loretta Borrelli



On February 19th at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Carrara , Franco Berardi (Bifo) presented the “manifest of the after-futurism”. Domenico Quaranta, Tommaso Tozzi, Pier Luigi Cappucci, Matteo Chini e Giacomo Verde participated to the conference.

For this occasion, Massimo Cittadini organized inside the Academy an exposition where installations and videos realized by the students of the Academy were shown. The day after, exactly one century after the publication of the futurist manifesto, the text has been presented by the same author in Rome , inside the Luigi Pintor hall of the site in Carta. The other chairmen of the lecture were Renato Piccolini, Gianluca Peciola e Pierluigi Sullo.

The manifesto had already been released online in the days before the two events. An operation of ironic rewriting of the founding text of an avant-garde that doesn't propose itself, naturally, like being at the base of a new avant-garde adventure, but that on the contrary tries to resolve an important artistic experience of the 1900s in a flippant way, in few words making fun of itself. This rewriting respects the rhetorical hindrance of the original text trying to maintain its rhythm and sound: evidently, however, the aggressiveness and the machismo of the futurist manifesto are not there, not only through the introduction of new subjects, but also through a completely different idea of the modern everyday life.

This new manifesto becomes a pretext to start a debate on wider and more actual themes. The importance of these matters and the irony of the operation, make the idea of being after-futurists just for a few hours – while continuing to pondering on what is the future at the times of the Wave – reasonable and also amusing.



Loretta Borrelli: During the celebrations of the centennial of the futurist manifesto, the manifesto of the after-futurism proposes a critical analysis of this avant-garde, in spite of the majority of the initiatives on the same theme. Nevertheless, the operation has aroused more than few suspects, especially in those who deal with art and communication. That's the reason for my first question: why choose to rewrite the futurist manifesto to talk about issues so distant from that avant-garde?

Bifo: In this manifesto, the point of interest is not the futurism as an artistic movement. Future is the theme that it is worth to emphasize. We have to exploit the fact that by chance we can call the attention of the press, of those interested in arts and of those interested in communication. I have always been interested in Futurism. It not only

seemed to be the first self-aware avant-garde, but also an avant-garde that emphasized the relationship between artistic production and the productive, economic and social dimension. Add to this that, understandably, the celebrations of the futurism call the attention of the cultural class that today is at the power. Just look at how the council to Alemanno (Major of Rome, ndt) and the councilor of the culture committee in Rome , Umberto Croppi, predictably took this chance.

First of all I thought it essential to remember that futurism is not only fascism, futurism is "also" fascism. It would be stupid to deny a continuity between the Italian futurist movement and the fascist political result. Nevertheless futurism is more than that, in Italy , and above all, internationally. One hundred years later, we must perceive something more of the futurist experience than its continuity with the fascism. The central theme of the future is what it makes the futurism still actual. Let's take this chance not to celebrate an avant-garde one hundred years old, but to measure the distance with what has happened. Is the future still what it was? And here comes the question the manifesto tries to answer.



Loretta Borrelli: Time, in fact, seems to be the main subject of this manifesto. But it deals with cyber time, that is a time that belongs to the production processes of the semio-capital. In the manifesto this seems to be acquired, a new objective condition where to start with new processes.

Bifo: We must analyze things from the point of view of the biopolitic transformation that the capitalism has been through within this century. The time in the futurism is essentially that of the external objective mechanism, of the automobile, of the production line, of the lathe, of all these objects that accelerate the outward appearance of the human time. Today we live in a completely different dimension, the machine is not the automobile or the train or the airplane anymore. The machine is the biopolitic, nanotecnologic one. We face an internal acceleration that is made possible by the communication

technologies and by the psychopharmacology. We talk about accelerated time as internal time, as biopolitic time, more simply external time. In the manifesto there is an objective verification that the world and the machine have changed in these one hundred years; we should be able to apply to this intention a political, but also poetic and linguistic elaboration.

Both the Russian and the Italian futurism, have understandably exalted the speed to insist on the necessity to adjust the body and the human mind to the speed of the external machine. Today we have exactly the opposite problem. We must agree that the external machine is not up to the challenge of the potentialities of the biopolitics human. We must separate the biopolitic power from the contemporary collective knowledge, from the paralysis of capitalism, from the weight of the exterior machine and from the slowness of uniform time that forces us to be in a factory when the clock strikes 8:00 am. There is no need anymore of uniforming times, there is no need anymore of an exterior machine. We need a final liberation from the productive and sensible potentialities of the human body and mind, that goes beyond the “machine” dimension of the futurist thought. In this sense, it is no more about time, it is about singular temporality. Delaunay said that the

Italian futurism was able to interpret the implicit technological novelties in the cinema: there was some kind of bergsonian benediction at the beginning of the Italian futurism, of which the futurists themselves were very aware.

If we read Bergson today, like Deleuze reread him, we realize that he is not talking about objective time, but essentially about the singular temporality. Therefore we can recuperate the futurist dimension releasing it from its “pastism”. The pastism resides in the idea of speed, of the automobile, of the train. All kinds of scrap metal to leave in the 1900s.



Loretta Borrelli: The futurist manifesto proposed an attitude, a way of living where the concept of speed had a central role. Which attitude proposes this manifesto instead, what is its invitation?

Bifo: It is an invitation to get free, to

get independent. In this, we can get help from the whole work of Foucault concerning the creation of an interdependence between the body-mind and the institutions of the uniform time, concretely jails, schools, mental hospitals, factories, etc. Futurism takes into consideration the integration between uniform time and body-mind collective. Then the 1900s have brought us off the track. Nowadays, depending from a uniform time means to surrender to impotence, to paralysis. The proof of this all, is in the automobile. To a superficial observation, it can appear as a symbol of the industrial mobilization of the body, as the object that makes possible speed itself; in nowadays reality instead, the automobile is the evident proof of slowness, paralysis, neurosis, of the industrial past. Singular temporalities must respect their own rhythm, be it fast or slow. It is not our duty to establish an average social time: the singular time doesn't depend anymore, in fact, from a social norm.

Within the industrial system, that dependence was inevitable, but in the net world, in the world of the absolute acceleration made possible by new technologies, this relationship is not necessary anymore. In 1980, Alvin Toffler described in “La terza ondata” the beginning of the process of desincronization. With assembly lines, bodies are synchronized to the

rhythm machines impose, but when the production depends on automatic machines and the human job is simply one of creative intervention and planning, then it is not necessary anymore to synchronize to machines, and the human brain can regain the free temporality that is his own. We could translate this in very pragmatic political terms: we are used to thinking that it is necessary to depend on the cycle of social production. This is not true anymore; each and every one of us must be aware of the fact that the utmost expression and productivity of knowledge consists in the autonomy of the singular times, not in the dependence from the machine.

Unfortunately, there is something that still holds us back: salary, that is the fact that we continue to be forced to depend on the time we submit to working for our survival. I think that the crisis in which we are now will destroy the salary for good. This is the object of the battle that awaits us.



Loretta Borrelli: Talking about poetry, the manifesto reads: “There is no other beauty than autonomy. No work can be a masterpiece if it doesn’t express the intelligence of the possible. Poetry is a bridge thrown over the abyss of nothingness to create sharing among different imaginations, and to free singularities”. You used the definition that Deleuze uses when speaking of friendship: what value does this definition have when applied to poetry? What is the relationship with the autonomy?

Bifo: Indeed I thought of “Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?” (1991) by Deleuze and Guattari, who say that friendship is sharing a path that doesn’t exist and, therefore, it is a creation of that path. Actually this is exactly what, in an etymological sense, we call poetry. Poetry is the activity able to build a bridge where friends walk hand in hand. One thing belongs to friendship, and it is walking hand in hand, in other words sharing a path: and one thing belongs to poetry, and it is constructing the bridge on which friends walk. One thing belongs to creative imagination, that is to imagine in what direction we are going, and then one thing belongs to movement, that is to walk on that bridge that creative imagination has

built. The duty of creative imagination - namely poetry - in this moment is enormous. We must build a bridge on the abyss that the new-liberist capitalism has created.

How can singularities become strengths of majority if they are not able to innervate themselves as singularities inside the dominant communication? Do we have to think that movements simply remain escape and singularization processes in exodus? And that they don't regain a strength of central determination of the processes? This is how it worked in the 1990s and in the first years of 2000s, when, after all, the movement

was above all ethical protest, search of independent zones, of temporarily autonomous zones.

Today we don't need temporarily autonomous zones, but instead definitely autonomous zones. We need to establish a process that is not our will, but instead the catastrophe of the global capitalism. This is something that we still struggle to see fully. What is happening recalls on the scene the autonomy not as an exodus phenomenon for a minority that travels further, but as an overthrowing of the dominating social situation. We are called for an major assignment in the next months.



Loretta Borrelli: Regarding the relationship between art and everyday life, the manifesto reads: “We would like to make art a changing force of life, we would like to abolish the separation between poetry and mass communication, we would like to shift the dominion on the media from the merchants to the wise and the poets”. There is a reference to mass communication. Is it possible that this becomes – together with poetry – the mean through which we can start to change life?

Bifo: This points out that we did overcome the 1900s avant-gardes, but still, a memory of the avant-gardes remains, above all of Dadaism. The Dadaist cry of Christian Tzara: “abolish art; abolish everyday life; abolish the separation between art and everyday life”, remains like a trace not to forget entirely. The problem of the relationship between art and everyday life is topical, and today presents itself in the perverted form

of publicity, television, mass communication. Futurism inherits from Symbolism the awareness of the specificity of language, exploiting it on a communicative plan in order to create an active, aggressive and advertising language. It elaborates in political terms what symbolism had elaborated in purely poetic terms. Futurism is the beginning of publicity and political propaganda.

How do we consider today the problem of the relationship between everyday life, art and media? Media are the link between art and daily life. This is why we reclaim the power of independent creativeness, of the autonomous creativeness on the mediatic system. It is the battle that media-activism in the 1990s has begun.

The potentially subversive characteristics of language, of everyday life, have been analyzed in this movement not counterpoising the ideological slogan to the advertising slogan, but, rather, deconstructing the advertising message as tied to all shades of the detournement. Today this practice probably needs to jump, perhaps we need to find the linguistic forms suitable to the change that we live. The media-activism has accompanied an essentially smaller phase of the movement, the phase of ethical demonstration: Seattle , 15 February,

2003. A phase where the movement was essentially about ethical protest and minor autonomy. I am convinced that today we are going through a completely new phase, in which the movement must be able to express in a major way the potentialities of the social. What we need to discover shortly, is with what language.



Loretta Borrelli: When you write: “We want to sing the man and the woman caressing each other, to get to know each other and the world better”, bodies become the tool for the knowledge of the world, but looking at your past writings, a problem emerges. In those texts, the analysis of the mutation of the cognitive system is an analysis of the passage from the subjunctive mind to the connective mind. The conjunction is contact among bodies that create the rules of the relationship while they are living it. The connection is an interfacing of compatible entities whose rules of operation are

registered in the code. The conjunction is made of imperfect bodies exchanging ambiguous signs crusted of matter, while a connection requests bodies penetrable from flows of information purified by every imperfection. This involves a crisis in the transmission of the cultural and political inheritance between generations, but also an incapability of the connective generation to have an experience of knowledge through the body. How is it possible to provide for this condition that belongs to the net world in this period of world crisis and mobilizations?

Bifo: Some of the things that I saw up to six months ago - up to the Wave, to the election of a black President and the downfall of the catastrophe - need to be looked at in a completely different way in this moment. Some possibilities - which were precluded up to a few years ago - are reopened. Still it remains the fact that in the sexual unconscious of humanity, in the last decades, a harshness has come forth that we will pay in the next years: i.e. this harshness shows up in form of racism, in form of aggressiveness. What I’m trying to talk about is not a plain sociological discourse. I believe in fact that we are living a moment in which enormous possibilities on the social and political level are opening up, but at the same time we see a kind of paralysis of the subjectivity, or in other worlds, an

extreme difficulty for the subjectivity to move smoothly, not willingly.

I have the feeling that we are living and we will live in the next months a revolution without a subject. The revolution will show in things, in the fact that the principle of private ownership is definitely out-of-course, that capitalistic accumulation has arrived at a stop and is in recess, that the thought of growth has collapsed and will never return, that the consumerism is not possible and that people will be forced to live in a more pleasant way. It's like if we suffered the possibility not to work because of the salary, it is as if we suffered the constraint of not using the car anymore to stay two hours in a traffic jam.

It is however a process destined to crisis, during which something will happen in the subjective dimension. For the time being, nevertheless, in the subjective dimension I see very little. The Wave is an element of movement inserted inside the society. This has started something, but it did not get into contact with the great crisis. It is true the slogan "We don't pay your crisis" is repeated often, but it is still just a slogan for the moment. I'm waiting for the Wave to meet the economic cataclysm, at that point the revolution will become subjective. For the time being we have a revolution without subject, namely of the

economy; the one that sees poor Obama trying to find a possibility but without finding it, because it is not possible within capitalism. Barack Obama will keep on trying in the next month without succeeding, but not because of him. This will go on until we all realize that there is no solution if we remain enclosed in the paradigm of the capitalistic growth.



There are these two processes: the catastrophe of the capitalistic economy on one side, and on the other side the resurfacing of movements solicited by the awareness that the future is cancelled, little by little. The two things must meet, but in the middle there is fear of the other, which has been produced for thirty years of regime medias. In the middle there is the stiffening of the corporality that has been produced by the connections: the difficulty in this moment is essentially in the little sympathy that the bodies feel for one

another. It is a stiffening of the subjective that is first of all sexual, that is of the bodies, of the physicality, of the incapability of expression of one's desire.

The first connective generation, in the next months will cross its purgatory. A purgatory of self-education to relationships. Of course I'm not only talking about the subjective outbreaks of the boys that go in the streets to demonstrate, instead I'm talking above all about the great social body that is scared to stand out .

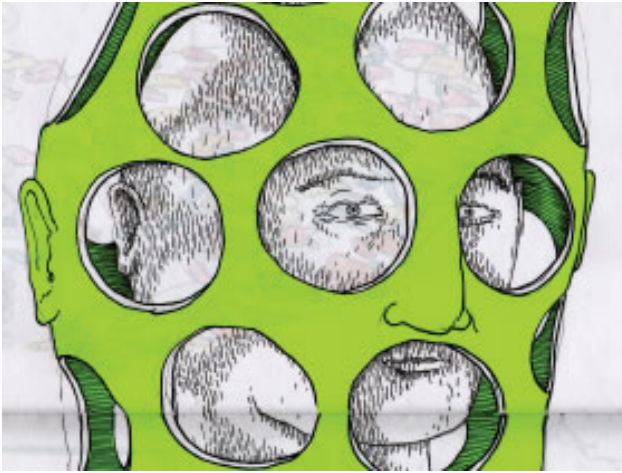
It is not only connectivity that has frozen the bodies, but also fear, racial, social, economic fear. In Italy , where we have an active production of fear, it is difficult to be able to avoid passage of civil and inter-ethnic war, and it is difficult that we can avoid a

phase of violent fascism. There will be a phase in which the bodies terrorized by the arrival of the crisis will single out the Romanians, for example, as guilty of everything; we are already there. Is it possible to conceive the imagination, the poetry in an etymological sense - the construction of bridges - as something where the division sex / language is surpassed? Is it possible to think a language communicating through libido? This is the problem. In this manifesto we attempt to introduce on the same thematic ground and in the same rhythmic structure a different communication of the language through libido.

<http://manifestodopofuturismo.notlog.com/>

The Influencers 2009: Analog Guerrillas

Barbara Sansone



This year from 5th to 7th February The Influencers festival was held at the premises of the CCCB in Barcelona. The minds that are behind this exciting event, at its fifth edition, are: Bani (lively and curious curator and designer), Eva and Franco Mattes (0100101110101101.org), and Marco Deseriis (journalist, researcher at the Department of Media, Culture and Communication of New York University and author of the book “Net Art, the art of connecting”). The large audience consists of people of all ages, many supporters who go every year to the Catalan capital just for this event not to be missed.

As the festival gives importance to the message on disadvantage of the medium, this year’s edition emphasized largely other components as opposed to the technological

quality of the assembled projects. To tread the boards of The Influencers, artists must work in unclassified areas, embrace transversal sectors (including the political and social ones), propose collective and entertaining actions, are not afraid to get into trouble, absorbing arts that come from the street and that want to go back to the street, against homologation and market mechanisms.

The star of the 5th edition was unquestionably Blu, an Italian writer who travels around the world and who attracted loads of admirers and curious people. Many of them, not satisfied, incessantly looked for him during the days of the festival to find the mysterious wall (the place was revealed only at the end of works. His gigantic shark made of 100 Euro bills, by itself lapsed to the inclemency of the elements, now sets off a street in the Carmel suburb.



This artist appeared with a Groucho Marx disguise, a mask and a wig, he didn't grant interviews and didn't reveal his name as well as any other information. As he is satisfied of his lifestyle where his inner creativity is the main luxury (an incontestable richness), he prefers the media to speak of more serious hidden facts, rather than deal with him. It's an admirable modesty, although his point view is somewhat questionable. Luckily the media don't exclusively talk about catastrophes, wars and injustice, but also about culture and art. And luckily there are journals merely devoted to these aspects of human history.

Among Blu's most remarkable creations, we remember the external decorations of the COX18 in Milan, lately storm centred on account of its unjust closure; the painting on the wall that was built by the Israelite government to isolate the Palestinian territories; a very interesting experience of animation ("Muto", a Creative Common movie you can download from the artist's web site) that was realized in Buenos Aires in less than three months with 4000 shots and (and designs).

During his presentation, Blu wanted to give a little space to some local colleagues, who denounced a more

and more extreme process existing in Barcelona since 15 years: the exclusion of art from the urban areas, the tendency to drabness and to institutionality, at the expense of some forms of expression that characterised this town and that represented spaces and social dimensions of great importance.



Another event guest of the festival was the New York group Improve Everywhere, embodied by the founder Charlie Todd who is famous for his urban actions (or Flash mob) organised with great groups of people who gather through web sites and social networks. In their web site we can see the results of their works: off-the-cuff musicals, metropolitan railcars full of people in pants, twins who act as human mirrors, raids at the Best Buy dressed in clerk suits, frozen travellers in stations. People's reactions are exhilarating: some are lost, some panic, some burst out laughing, some others try to

formulate hypotheses to explain the anomaly.

The taller related to the festival and organized in collaboration with Enmedio, was just the preparation of a mob in Barcelona: the bola. Unfortunately the event was decidedly below expectations, with the aggravating circumstance that who was not on the road by chance, but was placed there waiting for him, he had to suffer the cold gusts incessantly beating the town. The meeting that should have struck passengers actually camouflaged among the usual impenetrable crowd in Portal del Ángel. In addition, loads of people was advised and stood on

both sides of the street waiting for the event, jeopardizing the surprise result. Some other time perhaps.

Other guest stars of the festival were: Julius von Bisbarck and his “Fulgurator”. A student whose look is anything but ordinary (Cleopatra style bob and beard till the belly) and is already very famous ... how could he escape notice when he merges into the crowd of journalists to flash their shots. In his curriculum there are very interesting projects like the Stimmungsgasometer, an emoticon that reveals the Berliners’ general mood on the Schönenberg gasometer through a complex software that can read facial expressions.



Another peculiar experiment was the “Top Shot Helmet”, a hat giving him the aspect of an alien. From the top of a balloon a cam was shooting his promenade around the city, through a video-game frame technique. But the project that made him popular (and virtually rich if only he sold them to the advertising agencies and his ethics was less strong) is “The Fulgurator”: a camera in reverse that doesn’t shoot, but whose light sensor rapidly projects pictures as the photographers shoot photos with flashes. That’s how he generated (or rather caused a generation) the photo of Obama on the platform and next to a cross, the tourists’ photos with the Google logo on the triumphal arch and the photos of Mao with a dove on his face in Tiananmen square, Magritte style. The Fulgurator now looks like a camera, but at the beginning it had the shape of a gun as a symbol of mediatic weapon. But the risk of being arrested was too high...

After him the scene was set by our Wu Ming, which broke the dynamism and vividness of the meeting and broke off a great part of the audience, in spite of the themes’ exemplarity and depth. Maybe their Orpheus strategy (a way to contrast stories, information by giving other news, counterinformation) and the demonstration of how a deep analysis of a text and one word can completely invert the message. In this case they should have been presented in a lighter and more visual form.

That’s a shame, because after them, a great part of the audience was tired, hungry and it was quite late, so they couldn’t enjoy the meeting with other important artists like Wolfgang Stähle, who is one of the founder s of net.art, who invented “The thing”, and who is well-known on the history of art books.



Alas, a serious problem detained in US Mark Pauline from Survival Research

Labs, a group that works on industrial and war technologies extracted from the context to create robotic performances full of special effects. But Mark gave the public of the festival a short video-connection via Skype.

And moving away from the Italian, American and German context, there is a group from Czech Republic: Ztohoven, a name with two meanings (“Cento merde” e “Fuori di qui”). The group displayed the preview after the process they faced because of their intervention on occasion of one of their actions, Media Reality. The group managed to go into a meteorologic programme on Czech TV and show the images of an atomic explosion. After a long process for which they risked to go to prison, they were acquitted and they even won the price NG33 at the National Gallery in Prague. But although this event made them popular, they are used to the risk to go into trouble.

With the connection of the nucleus of 10 components with the dozens of collaborators, Ztohoven managed to cover with their manifestos many of the adverts stuck up the metro spotlights, until they organized an abusive vernissage; or they transformed the question mark into their own symbol, in which the heart is made of a red neon by Jiri David installed on Prague’s castle in honour

of the president Havel.



And a woman at last! Swoon, a delicate street artist full of anxiety. She’s well-known for her collage-pictures but also because she changed a reality into a dream: to go through a river on a boat of artists. After a first experience with the project “The Miss Rockaway Armada” (2006-2007), in 2008 she created “Swimming Cities of The Switchback Sea”, a well-articulated itinerant installation this time made of seven boats.

Who couldn’t participate to the event and now is in despair, should simply look at the festival web site, where the conference videos will be published , and by now you can watch the past editions.

www.theinfluencers.org

www.cccb.org

www.enmedio.info/

Generative Modules By Guido Smider

Teresa De Feo



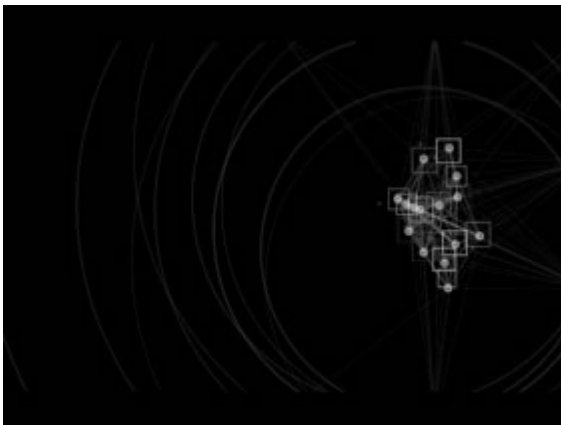
The “Do-it-yourself” practice amongst young electronic artists seems to be increasingly popular, as is the crossing-over of expression and the convergence of media used. We could say the result is something that always has an aspect which is virtually three dimensional, configured as a usable space, created by the convergence of sound, images and live influences.

Those who are passionate about and work with music, therefore, who adopt digital instruments, with an obvious spirit of shrewd desire and experimentation, cannot conceive sound connected directly to its visual influences, through its capacity to create spontaneously in a vital almost organic space, most of all in the case of those who work with music and applications generated in real time.

Sound, images, live influences, the search for spontaneity of synthesis of these elements, build terms of a new modality in the way to approach “music”.

his is clearly visible in the work of a young Italian artist, Guido Smider, who deals with sound in a coherent and confident way, working with sound on video, researching new chemicals of synthesis and creating new software for the generation and elaboration of these elements. Guido Smider, after a first approach with analogical music, is interested in the synthesis of sound and sound samples, as well as applications in real time, creating software and installations based on randomised and generative music. With his vocation for developing do-it-yourself ways of creating software for the elaboration of audio/video, we suggest his most recent work, “Noiseplug”, and the exhibition installation work “Neural” is just as interesting, created with Lorenzo Fernandez. He has recently published an EP with Belgian label Anoise, a soloist with Beatpick and another with an American Net Label called Noise Joy. Without further ado, let us speak directly to the artist in

this long interview.



Teresa De Feo: Your profile states that you started with purely analogical rhythms. Where does your interest in electronic music, especially randomized and generative music, come from, which pushed you to create new software in order to compose your songs?

Guido Smider: After some years of studying drums as a teenager, I was forced to quit because I had acoustic problems connected to my domestic situation. So I began to get passionate about synthetic rhythms and electronic sounds thanks to having bought an analogical synthesiser and a computer. I applied to the faculty of Music & Computer Studies in Milan and I gave way to my passion for DSP and synthesis of sound through the help of theory.

In fact I believe that the computer is a fantastic means to generate shapes in sound waves and complex sounds,

but the commercialisation of software and sample packages is ironing out the world of electronic music; in a way it gives everyone the possibility to make music, but on the other hand it is detrimental to any kind of originality.

I think it's difficult to surprise someone with an attentive attitude to music today, much has already been said through musical language. In this sense, I try to build myself applications mostly so that I can create particular and noisy sounds without the use of pre-fabricated samples.



Teresa De Feo: Would you like to tell us about Noiseplug, the software you created, which is already well-known and appreciated by professionals of the sector?

Guido Smider: Noiseplug is a standalone application for the elaboration of sound in real time and for the creation of glitch and noise

sounds, which are completely randomisable so that they can become semi-generative. It contains four samplers and some DSP plug-ins that elaborate the signal and give the freedom to play around with sound very easily by simply having a little knowledge about digital audio theory.

It was created for real time live performances, it cannot be preset and it behaves as if it were a musical instrument on a computer. I thought it would be more interesting to create live electronics where nothing is pre-fabricated, but everything is created by the musician at that time. I can tell you that the next version will be remote-control activated through the Nintendo Wii remote.



Teresa De Feo: In your work your synchronic and influential excellence between sound and video image impressed me, in my opinion this is the area where your expression is at its highest potential. For a musician

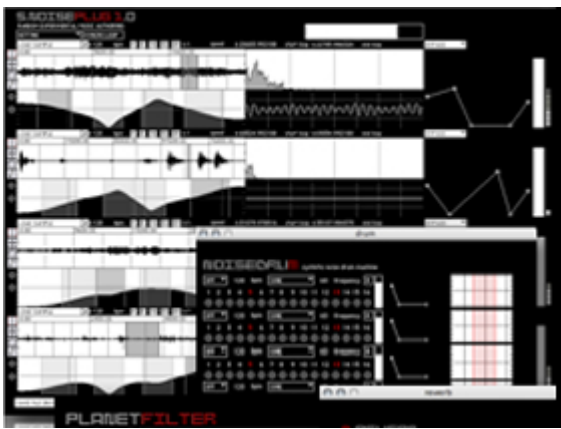
like yourself that comes from analogical music, in what way is the relationship between sound, image and sound environment interpreted and experienced?

Guido Smider: My work leads me to confront myself with the society in which we live in, which unfortunately is a society made up of images and not sound. It is therefore necessary, but also interesting, to work with unconventional images. The relationship between sound, image and video, in my opinion, must be synchronic and perfectly timed: it is important that the sound gives the maximum effect of the atmosphere and temporal evolution of the images in order to create surprise in the spectator.

Teresa De Feo: Sound is not just a temporal expression (as the first aesthetic indicated), but has its own space, a single capacity to create multidimensional and multi-sensorial territories and to establish this cross-over seems to be, in my opinion, the only principle objective of someone dealing with sound design and who works with generative and electronic music. Do you agree? What does this add to analogical music in terms of expressive possibilities open to new media in the music field?

Guido Smider: I certainly agree and I can add that the sounds and many of

the exhibitions that we do today are possible thanks to digital music. The accessibility and programming of objects have given a strong push to the creative technology of the year 2000. If you think of Arduino for example, or the development through languages such as MAX/MSP and Processing there are infinite possibilities of creation that new software put at your disposal.



Teresa De Feo: This music, generated immediately, suggests a relationship with temporisation, through its spontaneity and its chaotic and unpredictable lines, which is not just dynamic but also morphological and exists in living organisms. How do you feel about this?

Guido Smider: In generative music, the composer plants a seed that then develops independently (Techstuff) and this is closely connected to the evolution of living things. I think that chance events in time and in space

are random, in part retraceable to a series of events that are closely related to one another. It was interesting to analyse the complex theory of stochastic processes simplifying it for my own purposes and imagining a close correlation between temporal events that follow one another, so that I could try and create two generative modules that can sound out in unison through a controlled fortuity.

Teresa De Feo: Staying with this subject, the relationship between generated music and living organisms, can you tell us about your most recent project created with Lorenzo Fernandez? I'm talking about Neural, a generative audio-visual installation, where you assimilate the spectral lines of sound through the activity of nervous networks modulated electrically

Guido Smider: The most recent work I created with Lorenzo Fernandez is a generative audio-visual installation based on the current OSC protocol to be able to communicate on two computers in a LAN network through control messages. The generative evolution of the video is connected to forces that attract the "cells" on the borders of the screen whereas the sound generates itself based on the calculation of the probabilities and some temporal counters.

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which interlace through connections that emulate a nervous network. In the video there are light pulsations between these connections that are created through rhythms in impulse trains. The function of the Dirac is at the base of the modulated impulses and is strictly connected to the synthesis of the sound and the electric transmission between the cells of our nervous system.

The unpredictable evolution of the video and the sound generates simple shapes, connected to spectral sounds,

www.smidernoise.com/info.html

Philippe Parreno: No Ghost Just A Shell

Francesco Bertocco



I would like to begin this presentation of the work of a great French video artist and experimental filmmaker, Philippe Parreno, with two specific terms: “acquisition” and “definition”. These are living a new semantic splendour inside the vocabulary of new technologies, mainly connected to the world of images, or the properties of images in function to their relationship as objects, even if virtual objects.

I will not delve into the relationship between digital image and objectivity, a combination that I will leave to a more precise elaboration, but I will consider those terms and their function in relation to images. What is “acquisition”? In every day language, the term acquisition is referred to the absorption of particular data: we acquire in order to obtain something

within our system. But regarding images, “acquisition” is the direct action between the object-oriented world of the physical support of the image and the virtual world of the computer, or rather their elaboration and revelation as pseudo-objects, entities, that live in their own state.

We acquire a digital image, be it in movement or static, to allow it to be shared and developed in the way we see fit: if it should continue to live in the virtual universe, modified or not, or if it should be developed and made into a physical object such as print (for static images).

But what do we mean by, or what is this new vocabulary: the word “definition”?



Aided by a conversation between Hans Ulrich Obrist and Philippe Parreno, we notice how the problem of “definition” enters into a relationship with the state of new images: “From the 80 s onwards, Sony and Thompson have faced the theme of resolution. The point is not to produce images, but to produce images with a good resolution”. Resolution does not become the central problem around the image, but allows us to realise what the formal aspect is. The internal dynamic of resolution is the process of composing the image; its revelation shows the unfolding of elements that make up the image, the pixels, that are the atomic fabric of its surface. But all this is not so simple.

The problem before the digital era, in terms of resolution, or more precisely in terms of definition, was connected materially to the composition of the film. Greater definition was intended by the size of the film grain and incisiveness of the image. In this case the image had a hierarchy that at its height had the total restitution of the “real” and at the lowest point a purely expressive function. The low resolution was a reference to the large consumption and distribution of the image.

In an era of continuous evolution of resolution, the attention towards ultra-fidelity of an image is stronger

and more resistant. An image with a greater definition dominates the research of the common consumer. There is not the simplest acquisition of the image, but there is a search for the image with the highest resolution.



Parreno underlines: “When teaching a workshop in an art school, today, you realise that the resolution is the biggest problem for beginners. A typical question is: “your idea is good, but is it defined?”. There is still a tendency to resolve a problem inside a form”. This formal problem is not irrelevant to the analysis of Parreno’s work. The attention to form and definition of his work, in terms of “defined” or in terms of resolution is a continuous part of a necessity of development. In a work such as “El sueño de una cosa “(2001), Parreno’s work is quite emblematic.

e projects a film onto Robert Rauschenberg’s “White Paintings”, a vision of a North Pole landscape, so

that after 4'33" where Rauschenberg's image remains visible, his image takes its place, like a fake that doesn't leave a trace, it acquires a shape, a historicised resolution, rewriting it in a modelling process of the image, on the one hand leaning toward a kind of "ready-made" aspect in art, on the other a kind of grade zero, where the definitive state is reinvented in a given form inside a specific support, for a continuous recreation of the moving image, that may change infinitely. A shape disappears or rather becomes the support of another shape, art inside art, but with the unique objective of substituting the formal plan of its belonging. There is not a formal problem but there's a problem of surfaces: the path of the image on a shape, its movement, its immobility and unfolding of all its signs.



Philippe Parreno's attention toward the process of an image is well-known, how its content overflows, to use one of his expressions, and this

can be seen in more than one work of the artist. In a film like "Credits" (1999), inspired by Pasolini's theory in "Empirismo Eretico" (1972 - Heretic Empirics), Parreno reconstructs an image through an investigation on the land of Grenoble, more precisely ZUP (areas of primary urban development), and he does this through many points of view. Pasolini talks about the theory of multiplicity, of the points of view necessary for the observation of an event: in other words to register the exact image of a situation, more perspectives of such an image are needed in order to harmonise it all in one great "ensemble" of glances. Only in this way can the spectator see the situation in its entire complexity. In Credits, this concept is applied to the reconstruction of a mental image of a situation, more than its revelation. Interviewing people involved with that particular urban development, Parreno creates an image through many points of view, a materialised image in the mind of the person telling the story.

Parreno's most ambitious project is without a doubt "No Ghost just a Shell", carried out with the collaboration of Pierre Huyghe, a French artist interested in the processes of construction of an image and a structuration of visual texts. Parreno and Huyghe acquired the rights to a manga cartoon character that isn't too famous, Anlee, acquired

from a Japanese agency, “Kworks”. The existence of this character was given to different artists, who made it their own and filled it with their own signs. We are inside a very interesting territory within the development of identity connected to the consumer industry: Anlee keeps a fixed surface in every work, working as a shell (from here the title that hints to another manga production, which was very well-developed and certainly pertinent to the basic idea of Anlee), which each time is filled with signs and developed around different ideas. Anlee is an artificial reality that pushes a character away from death and forces the reinvention of its destinies

beyond the confines of identification and recognition.

Philippe Parreno’s most recent work that I would like to talk about, comes about from a collaboration with another artist, Douglas Gourdan: the title of the film, which is famous and very successful, is “Zidane”. The cinematic experience in Gordon suggests a certain connection to the theoretical and artistic interests of Parreno, mostly concerning the elaboration of an image; his Psycho 24h manages the time of the film as a sculptural implant of interconnected forms with infinite limits of visual surfaces.



The choice of Zinedine Zidane, footballer and captain of the French team that won the World Cup in 1998, for this cinematic portrait, is not by chance. Zidane, who has great value

and media attention, is a symbol for a football universe of French supporters and many others. The portrait by Parreno and Gordon takes place in the territory of the development of this myth, the stadium. Here, we follow the game, without detaching ourselves from the football player. Special filming technologies allow us to follow the footballer everywhere, without interruption, with such insistence that the fruition is evermore direct as we progress into the film.

We are faced with a possible.

Brian Eno: Synthesist

Matteo Milani



On Monday 16 February, **Brian Eno** has inaugurated the **258 th year of the Venice Academy of Fine Arts on the island San Servolo** , where the principal courses of the school 'New technologies for the arts' are transferred.

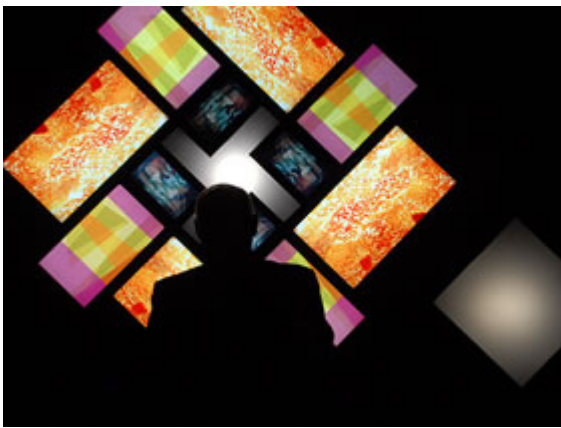
I re-discovered Brian Eno as a future thinker, Brian Eno as composer and visual artist, Brian Eno as experimenter of art with his free-standing vision, the multi-disciplinarity, the meeting and integration between different arts. An example of this is his work in **Long Now Foundation** , a cultural institution born for promoting and diffusing the mentality of "the slower/better" confronting the present mentality of "faster/less expensive" in the arch of next 10.000 years. The foundation, in fact writes the years using five digits

instead of four: 02009 instead of 2009.

I comprehended the success of an artist, which navigates through various disciplines without any subscription to a particular category and without having to judge loyalty to itself. A man who has always observed the world by his installations reproducing it by his meticulous orchestration of lights and sound layers weaved for creating a unique experience, for becoming an integrated part of a place, of a space "Mental places in which, one may immerse". Pioneer in tape-looping and of the other forms of sound manipulation, **Brian Eno has worked with Rober Fripp in the early 1970 s** , watching the traditional "song" there, extending the composition to the act of the construction of sound itself. In **1975 Eno releases "Discreet Music"** , making the vast pop public meet a new musical genre called "ambient". He observed that the ambient music different to the "narrative" with a beginning, a half and an end presents a stationary state . *'It's like watching a river. Music in which one can swim, float, loose him/herself.'*

In the early 1990 s the ambient music

exploded in lists, then evolving into new musical hybrid forms. Eno, has also been the pioneer in his research in sampling and in the use of the found sounds in **"My Life in the Bush of Ghosts"** a collaboration with **David Byrne (1981)**, years before that the world has been ready for all these . *(I used the voice of an anonymous person, found voices were only voices transported in the atmosphere of that moment. (My life in the Bush of Ghosts) Brian Eno)*



Here are some extracts of significant tracks of the "lectio magistralis" proclaimed by Eno

Many years before, in the era of Margheret Thatcher the English version of Silvio Berlusconi the government has reduced the financing for the art schools saying: "The artists are not important, the science, the technology and the defence, these are the important subjects". Everytime a government

makes these choices its message is "We have to give up thinking the future". It's the beginning of the end of a society. This really means that the use of art, its aim and its function are not comprehended. Naturally persons that come from art schools, not only become painters or sculptors but also architects, graphic designers, textile designers, industrial designers. They become teachers, musicians - this happens very often in England.

I've calculated that as the system of education, the art school is probably the most efficient than any other means in creation of the income for a country. Therefore, I believe that, the existence of institutions such as Venice Academy of Fine Arts can be justified in economic terms. For this reason, I think that the real motivation is naturally different and has to do with "imagination". That's what keeps that man different from other creatures of the planet, it is the capacities of imagining a future, which doesn't exist yet, and this is so-called Imagination gift. We can constantly create new realities in our minds, we can experience and live in these realities. When a society loses its respect for this gift, development gets interrupted, progression stops.

The "active" imagination is the thing, which makes us human, and it makes us capable of thinking a better future, of thinking the world in a new,

different way. What's we are asked to do is to try to convince the folk, and the government particularly, that all of this is important. It cannot be easily said that "ok, Venice has always been a marvellous place where the arts were developed". For the future of your imagination a place like the Venice Academy of Fine Arts doesn't only mean 258 years of tradition, but also really means a hope for how it can be thought in future.



I like all the images related with the water, like being on a boat, this shell which we construct, enables us to stay on that magnificent material, which is the water and which enables us to float and to move opposite to it. I like all the places which are penetrated by the water and Venice naturally is a grandioso example of this. ' , Extract from 'Imaginary Landscapes' Brian Eno

I started my life as a painter. Like the

most people in England who studied painting, art and art history, I played in a band (Roxy Music). It's for this reason that the English art schools really exist: sn order to create pop musicians (smiling), but this is a secret that the majority of the persons which work in art schools don't know (!). I've never abandoned the painting experience, which probably always became my greatest inspiration.

At the end of seventies, I've started experimenting with the video and the light using both in a musical way, rather than simply as images. Slowly, I've taken the compositive process closer to the picturestique experience. Today, I've the possibility to say thanks to Gabrielalla Cardazzo, who gave me the possibilty to exhibit in Venice, for the first time.



'I've never made a music in which I was interested only in an intuitive point of view. It has always been related to a certain theoretical

position that I retained in that moment. But I believe that the music doesn't have to show this and when you listen to it you mustn't realize this. The real importance of the theoretical positions is that, they make you take decisions, which you wouldn't take otherwise, which is the nice sense of avoiding to take. I wanted to separate the music from being an abstract collection of sounds and I wanted to keep it as a place where you have already been to, a place that you've known. In that period, I called these places as Imaginary Landscapes'
Brian Eno.

My work today, is supposed to be the half-way between the music and images. I continue to make hybrid experience in these sectors every day. From time to time, I teach in London at The Royal Collage of Art. The department of 'illustration' years before. when the first computers appeared, suddenly it started to get bigger; and then it has been renamed as department of 'communication'. Now it is studied by hundreds of students and it's oldest and the biggest department of the Royal Collage.

This is before whoever decided to do something which is not considered in the category of painting, sculpture, art history, industrial design and others ended up in this department. It continues to grow. One of the things,

which is always worth paying attention, is not to impose rigid borders when we try to make a new course. In fact, 'Communication' is only a word covering all the rest. And all the rest is what I teach now. All the rest is what I do now.



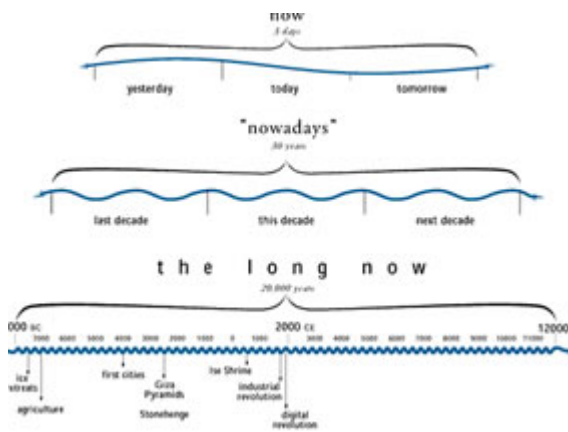
'I create a completely imaginary environment for the music. The film the thing around the music rewriting the music itself. The consciousness which makes a music, a film music stimulates the imagination to think in a picturesque and scenic way, in order to connect the emotions of the film to the music. Giving up listening to the abstract piece and images that the situation belongs to.' Brian Eno.

In one of my lives, I'm a discographic producer. This means being next to some of the best living musicians, persons that also use the traditional instruments like guitar, battery, bass, and so. Furthermore, in the recording

studies I work with some of the most sophisticated computers on the market. I am very conscious of the possibilities of both: the musicians who cannot substitute computers, likewise; the computers, which cannot substitute the musicians. They have different tasks.

One of the interesting things, which I've learnt in 35 years of recording-studio work, is the expanding the possibility with the available technology. Let's imagine a guitar with numberless switches we would pass most of our time exploring the billions of options on the instrument

without playing the guitar. This is what usually happens with the technology, the persons try to learn what's available instead of learning what can be done with it. Options mean the number of available choices. It's very difficult to relate oneself with an unlimited number of potentialities. It would be like having a friend who behaves like a different person every time you meet him/her. With limited instruments, it's possible to develop the relation with them, investing more time in the exploration of emotional possibilities. This is also valid for all traditional instruments of visual art.



'If you put something in a CD player the people will probably think that it's music. If you put something in a frame and hang it in a gallery, the people will think that it's a painting. And they will dedicate a particular attention to it, with respect to that they dedicate for the screens of their computer and for their shoes.' Brian Eno

In music, we've made an enormous step forward in the 20th century with the intervention of the 'recording studio' comparable to the invention of the orchestra in 17th century. A new form of art was born. Maybe we

mustn't call the 'music' by this name any more, we must re-baptize it, we must accept the fact that now different skills are necessary, different ways of listening. In the 'digital' world, now it's like being in a tropical place made by ideas. In tropical places new forms of life come into the light: some of which survive and reproduce itself, others exist for a limited period and then they transform themselves into a different thing. In the same way, in the art there are always new proposals, some of which are destined to an important future, others to small niches. The good intuitions never get lost.

www.accademiavenezia.it

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www.artspace.it

Dick Raaijmakers: A Monography

Lucrezia Cippitelli

DICK RAAIJMAKERS



MONOGRAFIE

Arjen Mulder en Joke Brouwer (red.)

Rotterdam's V2, together with Nai Publishers, recently published a monograph which presents an important in-depth examination on the Dutch composer, conceptual artist and theatre director Dick Raaijmakers to the international public.

The work is called "Dick Raaijmakers, a monograph", and it is edited by Arjen Mulder (editor and author of plenty of books published by V2, such as "Understanding media theory", one of the most precise books about media studies, published in 2004) together with Joke Brouwer. The monograph is a translation into English of a Dutch book already published by V2 in 2007. It is really a great opportunity for those who are interested in the trespassing of art into sound and technology, to enter the Dutch environment and piece together

through the story of of performances and visual art works realized Raaijmakers from 1965 up to now a network of relationships and contacts which can explain, as a background, the artistic Dutch tendencies of the last 25 years, in particular in the area of digital cultures.

Maybe the book is not the first monograph published in the Netherlands about the pioneer of electronic and vanguard music, born in Maastricht and active from the Sixties' in Hague, but it is surely the first important volume which collects all the documents and reconstructs the chronological path of his career, in particular concerning projects in the field of visual arts and theatre, as Mulder and Brouwer themselves underline in the introduction.

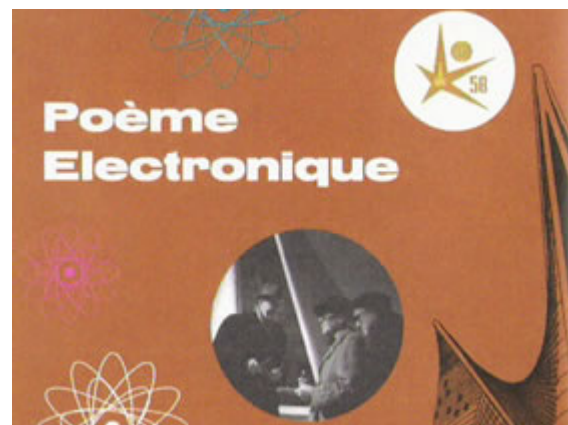


Born in 1930, Dick Raaijmakers is generally acknowledged as the father of electronic music in the Fifties' but also as an ante litteram multimedia artist, specifically for his multimedia installations, which used music, dance and moving images, but also for his compositions and his theatre plays which were halfway between performances and scenic arts. From the second half of the Fifties' up to 1960 Raaijmakers worked as a researcher in Royal Philips Electronics in Eindhoven, historic laboratory that, working for the famous electronics company which was not yet a multinational, accomplished and supported in the Fifties and in the Sixties' all the cross field experiments by technology freaks, artists and musicians, and became the reference point for pioneering projects on the border between visual, musical and environmental installation.

Among them is worth remembering, a bit asynchronously if we consider the celebrations for the fiftieth birthday in 2008, the "Poème Electronique" by Edgar Varese, realized for Bruxelles International Expo in 1958 for Philips Pavillon. Since 1963, Raaijmakers has opened his research study on electronic music, and then he became, till 1995, Electronic and Contemporary Music Professor in Hague Conservatory.

His name is also linked to other events

which are now history and urban legends. He and the Electrosoniks duet, founded as a game together with Tom Dissevelt, produced in 1957 with the name of Kid Baltan the first electro-pop hit in the history of music, "Song of the Second Moon" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSoAzONw-a4&eurl=http://video.google.it/videosearch?q=Song+of+the+Second+Moon&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:it:official&cl>), that was later defined by David Bowie as a "song that oriented my life as a listener". It's also David Bowie who some months ago asked V2 for a copy of the book, glad to have in his hands a monograph which collects the opera omnia of the artist.



The funniest story, anyway, is probably one which dates back to the Sixties and to the making of a science-fiction movie. According to the chronicles, one night in the composer's house -who preferred a

sheltered existence, away from the jet set and all the possible bothers coming from the external world, so as to have a life completely dedicated to his machines and his ideas - the telephone rang. Raaijmakers answers and there he heard his producer's voice, who offered him to take part as a composer in the production of a movie for which they were going to start the set. A science fiction movie of a then still young director. That evening the director's name didn't suggest anything to Raaijmakers, who answered to this unexpected break-in of the external world into the quiet space of his laboratory, and definitely declined the invitation because he did not have enough time and because he was tired of making soundtracks. The director's name was Stanley Kubrick and the movie was "2001: a space Odyssey". This is why, after 40 years, we can remember him as the man who said "no, thanks" to "2001: a space Odyssey", and who at the same time contributed to the creation of the science fiction imagery through his own music.

The book's editors worked for years for the Institute of Instable Media in Rotterdam in Raaijmakers archive, in Hague, collecting old volumes and descriptions of works, photos, correspondence, draft works, documenting the steps of the projects' development and above all drawings and scores, that the artist

used as primary models for his works' development. Pages and pages of geometric signs similar to scores, where the musical language is substituted by successions of signs and sequences of symbols which make the artist incredibly close to other contemporary artists who in the Fifties' worked on signs in the field of Informality.



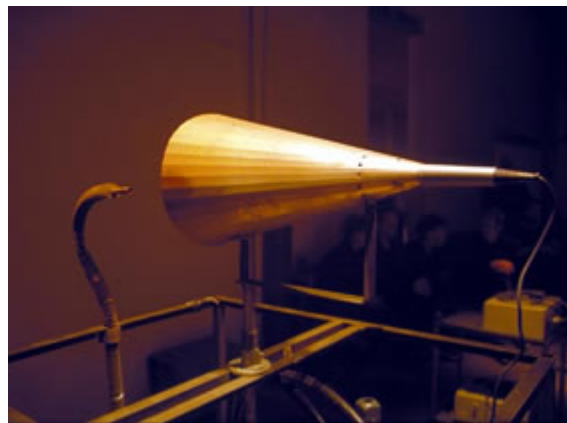
After a short introduction in which Mulder and Brouwer explain why they made such a huge research, in particular relating to the present time, the book rich in graphics, manuscripts and photos- offers in chronological order a set of files on Raaijmakers' main works in the area of what can be called "extended performances": a stage, dancers and actors, machines producing music, animations somewhere between traditional and abstract cinema. Body, sound, movement, light and images are the constitutive elements of the "real artistic work of our times, which

enters the empty space of the world and becomes transparent, in the sense of “not closed” and “open”, as Raaijmakers himself writes in one of his theoretical texts, that is to say “The Great Plane”, published in 1992. “An interested observer can enter this open work without leaving his viewpoint. He shouldn’t move around the work, because the work itself moves in front of the observer’s eyes. Real art unblocks space, it creates space.”

An almost didactic volume, actually offering as its most important and central part the work’s description, sometimes with the help of English translations of critics texts written by Raaijmakers himself. The second part of the book, together with a wide, discussed bibliography and an artist’s biography, ends the volume’s path with a set of critics texts by musicians and historians, which are the only really theoretical contribution to a full-bodied and important volume. Among them there is Frans Evers’ text. Frans Evers is a psychologist, vanguard educator and scholar of the synchronic relationships between sound and image.

The Netherlands, in the last two decades, have been developing a fertile and prolific research in the field of art, technologies, music and media, widely supported by local institutions from an economic point of view and

as for cultural politics, and this is mainly because starting from the Sixties’ and up to nowadays Raaijmakers has been researching, experimenting, producing and writing in his studio in Hague. Evers in person is the one who states this, during a long chat about Raaijmakers I had with him when I was working for this book’s review.



In 1990 Evers established and managed with Raaijmakers The Hague Image and Sound Interfaculty, a department which would have been active till 2007, and which was born from the collaboration of Royal Conservatory and of Royal Art Academy of the Dutch capital, as an innovative educational project intended to train artists who would have worked in the area where visual and musical research melt together. A study centre where music education is joined with visual art education, supported by theoretical studies which focus on the synesthetic

interaction between sound and image, its environmental, spatial, almost architectonic characteristic, which is able to involve the observer's senses.

For almost twenty years the Department, which is now known as Artscience and is directed by the artist and curator Joost Rekveld, has been training generations of artists, composers and producers in Hague, who work in the field of media, in the experimental and creative use of technologies and in the synesthetic union between sound and image, in

the construction of environments in which the intermediate state of the creative process generates a physical and psychological involvement in the observer. It's enough to say some names to connect the context to projects and people, in order to know why the Netherlands are the hard core of experimentation in the field of art and technologies, in a traditional cultural context where industries like Philips and artists like Raaijmakers have actually directed our attention to these themes, the first one by supporting creativity and the last one by training



Telcosystems, Gideon Kiers, Lucas Van Der Velden (also Sonic Acts Festival

Director), Joost Rekveld, Edwin Va der Heide (who is also a Department's Professor), the founder and curator of Transmediale Club Schuurbiers, Boris Debackere and others : an entire generation of artists, curators, promoters from Benelux's area who are now active in the main contexts concerning new media in Europe have been to the Interfaculty founded by Raaijmakers and have learnt to think audio-video, to work in collective and laboratory contexts, to imagine through senses.

Jan Rohlf: Musical(mind)

Donata Marletta



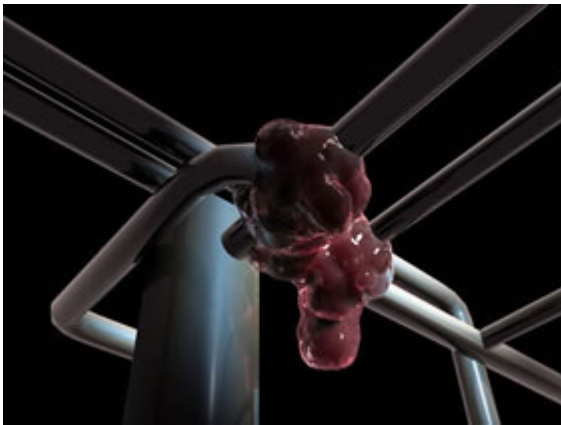
Jan Rohlf is a young artist originally from Tübingen, who from 1994 lives and works in Berlin . Jan is mainly a visual artist, but he is also engaged in various collaborations and cultural projects. Together with Oliver Baurhenn and Remco Schuurbiers, he's co-founder and artistic director of ClubTransmediale - International Festival for Adventurous Music and Related Visual Arts (CTM).

In 2005 he also founded DISK Sound & Image Initiative e.V., an organisation devoted to the promotion of experimental art and music. Another project of international resonance that involves Jan is the creation of the global network I.C.A.S. International Cities of Advanced Sound, an organisation that gathers the artistic

directors of numerous festivals dedicated to digital culture, which aims to create sustainable structures in order to offer a platform for the exchange of ideas and projects, critical reflections, co-productions, and to promote collaboration.

I have met Jan during the latest edition of ClubTransmediale, and before starting the interview he showed me his installation "INDEX I & II" at Kunstraum Kreuzberg Bethanien (KKB), one of the venues of the festival. The installation consists of two illustrations, which represent two Berliner music collectors. Jan meticulously portrays the two subjects through the graphic representation of the respective music collections, one is entirely digital with a laptop and an iPod, the other relatively analog and more variegated, with vinyls, cds, and books, in this way Jan re-constructs the personal histories of the two subjects and offering meantime a view of the city of Berlin .

Furthermore, next to both illustrations there are two booklets that catalogue each collection, offering extra information about the subjects.



Donata Marletta: What is your background? How did you get involved in the scene?

Jan Rohlf: I'm a visual artist in the first place, and in the early 90s I started working in nightclubs, as many others did. For me it was more than earning money, I really liked the social quality and the artistic stuff I was experiencing in these surroundings. I have been interested in music since I was a teenager, I was also visiting the Transmediale festival, which at that time was still named VideoFestBerlin, and I found it quite inspiring. Some friends of mine were working there. During the mid 90s some things came together, in the 70s and 80s we had industrial music and other music styles that were primarily focussing on sound, like Kraut Rock, Ambient etc., and since the late 80s we had techno music then in the mid 90s techno and post-industrial/ambient music merged into what it is called "Sound Culture", as a consequence the

question for listening spaces became quite important. In this moment we were thinking of how to transform what we had experienced in the club into something available to a different public.

Some people opened up factory/loft like spaces that displayed art installations, and where people would be doing live music, sound-scapes; these were small events where approximately twenty people were attending. Myself, I started something similar in my studio, which was quite large, located in an old factory. I made a listening room where I invited electronic musicians, and I was creating scenarios at the interplay of sound and image. Music became committed with media, and it was something new for us. Then there was this moment, at the end of the 90s, when the VideoFestBerlin changed its name to Transmediale, and the organisers publicly said that they wanted to cover the whole range of digital media and electronic culture, and I thought it was a good idea to integrate also electronic music. After that I went to see and talk to the organisers through people I knew, and I proposed that I could do something similar to what I did in my studio, the listening lounge for experimental music crossed with kinetic and video art. This way I could step out from the traditional stuff and propose something more informal. They said it

was a good idea and offered a space, the problem was that I didn't want to do it in that space and they had no money to provide a new space for us, so I asked some of my friends for help, and actually Marc Weiser of Rechenzentrum, who was doing the music booking for Maria am Ostbahnhof (MAO) at that time, was really supportive, and thus we started to do something there. This is how I got involved, and this is also the starting of CTM as a parallel festival, but at the same time independent from Transmediale.



Donata Marletta: Which are the main objectives of CTM?

Jan Rohlf: At CTM we try to do something more than just producing a quality event, this philosophy was clear since the beginning. The aim of the festival is to create a space that it's in the middle, in an indefinite grey area, where everything is possible, and that allows people to sneak in and

take a look at what's going on. We want to create a social space that may allow music producers to have an alternative access, and at the same time to offer this access to the public. Another aim of the festival is to give shape to a certain kind of communication, for me a good festival should provide space and freedom to transgress the traditional cultural models, and should not make restrictions, giving to the public the chance of liberating themselves, escaping from the everyday routine.

An example is what happened in this year's edition during the performance Unicorn Man by the artistic group from Detroit Princess Dragonmom, at some point it appeared a cardboard unicorn, and the public was very curious and started to interact with the object, jumping on it, playing with it. It is important to give toys to the public, also giving the opportunity to interact with the space. For this year's edition, under the theme 'Structures', we have created cardboard stools that people move through the rooms, creating dynamism within the venues' spaces. The selection of space in which the festival takes place reflects this philosophy, the space for me must give the opportunity to be enjoyed, and it should be a bit messy, without strict rules to follow, and in this sense Maria am Ostbahnhof and the Kunstraum Kreuzberg Bethanien reflect this idea.



Donata Marletta: What is the main difficulty that you encounter during the process of setting up the festival's programme?

Jan Rohlf: For the selection of artists we try to create a balance between the quality of performances, and giving the chance to the public to have fun and dance, in particular during the week-end. When we select the artists obviously each of us curators want give his contribute, according to personal artistic taste; also we want to present recent productions in order to reflect what is going on at the moment in the musical and artistic scene. I particularly like to create a thread with the past, with the avant-gardes; this is why we often present the works of those who are considered the pioneers of electronic music. For instance during the edition of 2008, under the theme 'Unpredictable', we invited Pierre Henry, one of the most renowned exponent and founder of

Musique Concrète. This thread with the past aims to offer to the new generations something more than the traditional club night.

Finally we launch a call for entries, which offers a view on the young artists, giving them the chance to present their projects. Then we arrive to the final line-up through a complex process of negotiation; in general we try to avoid what many festival do, especially the outdoor summer events, that is, putting together a certain number of successful artists, without any proposal, without any conceptual idea.



Donata Marletta: Every year CTM proposes a theme, I was wondering if the series of these themes creates, year after year, a kind of narrative

Jan Rohlf: To be honest the themes are not strictly connected one to the other, and thus there is no clear narration, for example, during the edition in 2006 the theme was 'Being

Bold', theme to which I particularly care, and was about the individualistic positions of many artists, being bold means also being brave, so "do whatever you want no matter which consequences it entails". In 2007 we had the theme 'Building Space' that was concerned with the idea of space that allows experimentations, and offers new ways to communicate. The theme 'Unpredictable' in 2008 was about losing control, about the unexpected, which alter the dynamics of creative processes and conduct to the discover of new aesthetic forms. The themes reflect the different perspectives of who

produces music, thus maybe it is a form of narration through the editions that tells the history of ten years of CTM .

www.janrohlf.net

www.clubtransmediale.de

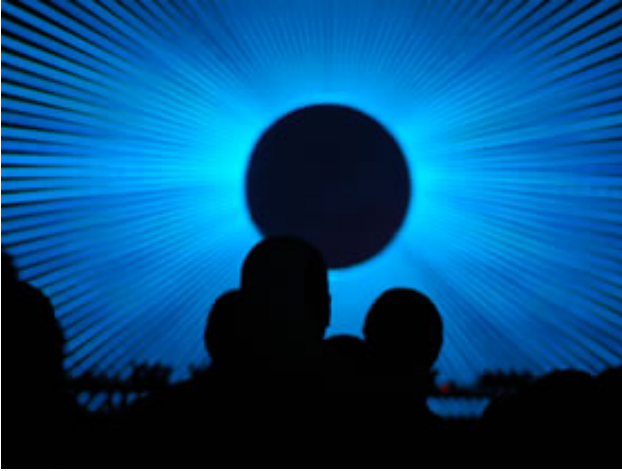
www.icas.us

www.kunstraumkreuzberg.de

www.clubmaria.de

Elektra 2009: 10 Pioneering Years

Marco Mancuso

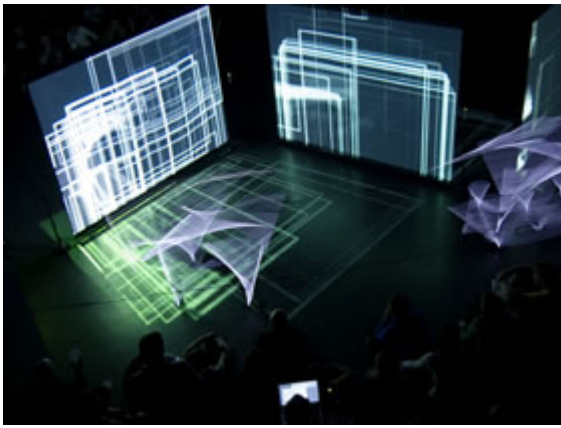


We are almost there. Next May it will be held in Montreal, French Canada, the tenth edition of the Elektra festival, not only one among the longest-lasting but also most interesting and impervious to time within the audiovisual art and live media festivals.

Those who follow and are interested to the festivals scene, especially those crossing various disciplines - experimental cinema, video, music, live media and digital audiovisual art, know well what I mean: although festivals remain in fact the most “comfortable” platforms where to attend concerts, experimentations and installations which investigate the artistic relationship between sounds and images - as well as to meet and

confront with other artists, critics and curators - it is also true that this formula seems to have entered a crisis a few years ago, excessively contaminating itself with mainstream-event and popular exposition ambitions, and often inserting the artists in a perverse circuit made of tours and presentations of new projects, too dangerously similar after all to that of pop and club music.

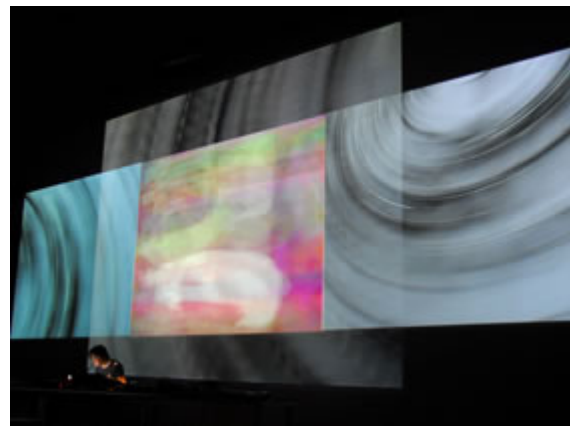
While not sharing, in the meantime, the connotation that the appointments of contemporary art give to the “use” of the audiovisual experimentation, mainly for its spectacular and performative component, almost like an opening or like a “happening”, some festivals in the world are the exception because they have been pursuing for years an accurate journey of research, never trivial, crossing between storicization of an artistic movement of research about sound and visual, and analysis of the ultra-contemporary. They are not many, but they exist: from Sonic Acts to the Av Festival, to Futuresonic to Netmage in Italy to Elektra in fact.



I have always been bound to this festival - if we can still call it so, from their invitation in 2006 to the first International Digital Art Market (other extremely interesting and innovative initiative where critics and curators coming from the whole world, would meet for a few days in Montreal making contact with the centers of research in the city and comparing the respective projects and paths, thus creating possible collaborations), passing through last year's partnership up to this important 10th edition of the festival.

10 intense days therefore, from May 1 to 10, for an articulated event through the 2 historical locations of the festival (the beautiful ex-factory UsineC, center of one of the most beautiful and well equipped black boxes that I have ever seen in my life, and the Cinémathèque québécoise) and 5 new galleries (articule, La Centrale , Skol, Pierre-François Ouellette and Lilian Rodriguez) and with the presence of

over 30 artists that will be announced briefly. In such a complex and articulated context, I will write in the name of me Digicult a critical revision of the event, through video recordings, interviews on the spot to organizers, artists and invited critics, as well as to illustrate the research and study activities of some productive realities of the city of Montreal as SAT (Société for the Art Technologique) Hexagram, Oboro and others.



It will be finally interesting to activate a direct channel with Gregory Chatonosky, critic and Canadian artist, on the critical texts collected in the essay *Angles_Arts numériques*, which historically represents the first publication of Elektra on the thematic of digital art and of the audiovisual.

Multimediality therefore, but not only, electronic music, sound art, graphic design and video, audiovisual, installations and immersivity: all

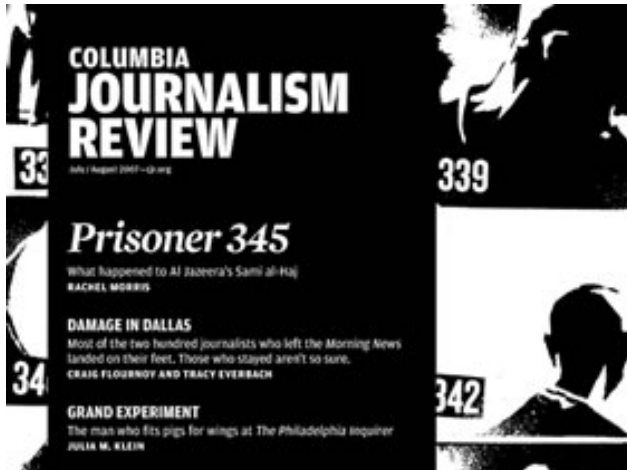
themes that have characterized Elektra since the beginning, and that from May 1 to 10 will be concretized as always through an out of the ordinary and brave program, that is inserted in a cultural and artistic tradition that makes of the Canadian city a neuralgic centre worldwide for the

research on the new media and the expressive forms of audiovisual and multimedia works.

www.elektramontreal.ca/

The Future Of Scientific News

Gigi Ghezzi



The starting point for the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington was the existing crisis situation of science journalism, that is a journalism dealing with scientific topics. As expected, the congress halved into pessimists, excellently represented by some broadcasting stars, and optimist web content writers, as for example the executive director of J-Lab (<http://www.j-lab.org>) Jan Schaffer, successor of Pew Center for Civic Journalism.

“Science Journalism’s Hope and Despair” is the fruit of a year and a half monitoring of the media and came to existence in a particularly important period for science journalism. In fact, it appeared during the conferences that were organised

(www.cjr.org/the_observatory/science_journalisms_hope_and_d.php) at short distance in February.



The first conference was organised by Woodrow Wilson Center about the theme of niche issues that are increasing online and seem to undermine the traditional newsrooms; the second one was organised by the American Museum of Natural History and was about the standard journalism rules for the climate change.

On the one hand was the nostalgic declining set of mainstream media (newspapers, magazines, and broadcasts) and on the other hand was the thriving and multiform proliferation of science issue niche, mainly on the net. It is frequent in

large debates that the most profitable stimuli came from the liminal professionals who lived both experiences and specially went through the transition from specialised broadcasting journalism to online journalism. Let's talk about Peter Dykstra, Formerly Executive Producer of CNN's Science: after his staff was fired in December, he announced his resignation and he is now Current Contributor to Mother Nature Network (<http://www.mnn.com/>) a magazine dealing with environmental news that increases day by day the number of its readers.

Dykstra himself suggested an interpretation of the change of science journalism. First of all the mainstream media would suffer from factionalism, or that sort of sensationalism that pushes the greatest newspapers to deal with as complex themes as global warming or evolutionism in stereotyped and polarized terms. According to Dykstra, another component is that the new media provide a better measured and detailed newsworthiness than media coverage on scientific themes using inaccurate and expensive survey audience tools, although they extremely personify contents.



However a never solved controversy dealing with the media customizing is the one related to the attractiveness of web sites or niche online newspapers. That is: what how much heterogeneity must the online information produce to attract an online audience not particularly interested in it? This dynamics mustn't be undervalued or unclassified as merely economical, as we're dealing with scientific topics that involve a huge amount of people in the world, who don't often realize they are directly concerned. Perhaps we will always risk a futile comparison between old and new media, if we don't analyse the newly successful online newspapers. J-Lab is an example of this category; this headline represents a fresh form of open-source science journalism, where the new digital communication technologies are used to review science issues. According to Jan Schaffer, not only the out-of-date information mode must be moved

into the new one, but an information gap must be overcompensated, new forms of dialogue through random acts of journalism, such as photos, videos and civic network evidence.

Another successful experience (even from the economic point of view) is the one lived by John Fialka, editor of ClimateWire

(<http://www.eenews.net/cw>), that is one of E&E (Environment & Energy Publishing) most recent journals. Fialka is an experienced journalist of the old news world he worked for The Wall Street Journal and thanks to the web he's making the most of success with 40.000 subscribers. A considerable success for a niche magazine. During a congress at the Woodrow Wilson Centre, Fialka encouraged the debate, emphasizing some criticism on his journal, which manages to entertain an audience with a high educational background and interested in science issues, although with a discrete success and hardly reaching a larger audience familiar with traditional news broadcasting.



The New York conference at the American Museum of Natural History was based on as simple as deep idea: “If we leave out for a moment the political and energy implications, what did we learn about science journalism coverage? How did this journalism contribute to find a solution to climate problems? On this occasion the American Museum of Natural History registered its first official blog (<http://www.amnhblogs.org/>) as a means of communication by the side of a current exhibition about climate change (www.amnh.org/exhibitions/climatechange/) which will last until August 16th. Matthew Nisbet’s speech was particularly interesting. The American University Professor and creator of Framing Science, an academic blog (<http://scienceblogs.com/framing-science/>) affirmed that, apart from a logical confrontation between newmakers, journalists, bloggers and the academic world can elaborate new narration styles and personal frames for climate science. This problem according to Nisbet must be a moral obligation to diffuse among all the education levels and in all the geographic areas, even the micro-

local ones.

This is neither the time nor the place to discuss possible solutions to the present journalism problems and let’s think now about science topics coverage ... Up against such enthusiasm towards what Schaffer called scientific labors of love, we must consider that the problem of professionalism fund always lies in ambush. CJR dossier cites the closure of one of the most prestigious scientific section of Grand Unified Weekly di Slate V (<http://www.slatev.com>) dealing with technology and using very innovative contents and language. It was born as an experiment on November 2008 but it didn’t win the right funds to afford the more and more expensive contents, though it obtained a huge success among the audience. Dean Baquet, Washington board director for the New York (?), isn’t very confident towards the newspapers’ closure trend and he is seriously worried about democracy, because the death of independent headlines “It concentrates knowledge in the hands of those who want to influence votes. It means the lobbyist knows more about Senator [Richard] Shelby than the people of Alabama”. Perhaps we may support the same idea by using Italian subjects.



We will generalise too much if we involve democracy, but we can't deny the science information changes we are living. It's a space change we are

expanding the discussion but it is also a mental and aptitude change: from the models of accuracy, independence, objectivity and specific journalism, we get to the direct evidence of Media Makers and amateurs. Moreover, as the transformation is evident through the new media and is pushed by collective consciousness towards scientific themes, the result is that science and technology have become an extraordinary change political lever that cannot leave public opinion without a reaction.

Expanded Art, Expanded Box

Marco Mancuso



From February 11 to 16, 2009, took place in Madrid the 28th edition of Arco, one of the most important international fairs dedicated to contemporary art, if not perhaps the most important, that also this year has seen the presence of the section Expanded Box, an island devoted to art expressed through new technologies.

Curators of Expanded Box 2009 were the Italian Domenico Quaranta - whom Digimag's readers know well (for the stads section) and Carolina Grau (for the cinema section). Surely fascinating, especially the section cared for from Quaranta, both for the heterogeneity of the artists and the proposed works, as well as for the level of the forum organized on February 15 with the presence of critics and curators such as Jon

Ippolito & Joline Blais, Roberta Bosco, Geert Lovink, Inke Arns, Régine Debatty, Zhang Ga , Joasia Krysa. A rich ensemble of critical voices coming from both the world of the contemporary art and the youngest new media art, testifying a growingly fleeting border between these two worlds.

Exactly of these subjects, and of the general philosophy that has driven the project of Expanded Box we spoke with Domenico Quaranta: Arc Projects of Sofia with THOMSON & CRAIGHEAD, Ernst Hilger of Vienna with John GERRARD; Fabio Paris Art Gallery of Brescia with UBERMORGEN.COM, Fortlaan 17 of Gent with LAWRENCE MALSTAF, MS Galeria of Madrid with ESTHER MANAS & ARASH MOORI, One and J Gallery of Seoul with Kim JONGKU, Project Gentili of Prato with JOAN LEANDRE and Vadehra Art Gallery of New Delhi with PORS AND RAO, are the galleries and the artists presented.

With the duo of artists Ubermorgen.com, represented in their own stand at the Madrid fair Arco, the Brescia gallery Fabio Paris has been awarded the Arco Madrid / Beep Art Award. The gallery was at

the fair with the monographic project The Ekmrz - Trilogy (introduced for the first time in a single installation projected for the fair, the “trilogy of the e-commerce”) that explores the artistic use of the new technologies and their impact on arts.



Marco Mancuso: Let’s start from a wide perspective: how was the experience of Expanded Box, in terms of understanding by the organizers of Arco, the public, of the research of the works and the galleries, of the arts market in general? What are the positive and negative feedbacks of this experience?

Domenico Quaranta: In general, very well. But let’s start from the negative aspects, so I get them off my chest . The present Expanded Box is the arriving point of a process that lasted ten years, where the extraordinary will - of the fair, of a sponsor (Beep Datalogic) and of an exceptional mediator (LaAgenzia of Vicente

Matallana) - to sustain the most (technologically) advanced and experimental art, is accompanied by an inevitable marginalization due to the concept itself of the Expanded Box and of its predecessors: creating, inside the complex organism that is a contemporary art fair, a “dedicated” section. This decennial work gave some remarkable products, first of all the constitution of an exceptional collection (the Beep, tied up to the Arco Beep Award); an increasing awareness of the public; and, consequently, an increasing presence of “new media” works in the whole fair, not only in the Expanded Box.

At this stage of the process, nevertheless, and exactly because of what has been done till now, some aspects of this project would deserve to be revised. This year, I have worked a lot in order to have the galleries perceive the Expanded Box not only as a place of cultural in-depth examination, but also as a market place. A place where to arrive not only with a strong project, but also with a project that can be sold. Some understood this, and this has brought its results. We still have to work on the architecture of the Expanded Box, that traditionally is a more intimate and enclosed section if compared to others: all stands are open on a single side, on a narrow corridor.

But these are in fact details, if

compared to everything else. Arco has shown an exceptional sensibility and helpfulness to face the specific problems created by the single projects; the galleries have responded with enthusiasm, even if the economic crisis has forced some of them to decline my invitation; the public came numerous, and in the days reserved to VIPs and professionals the projects of the Expanded Box have called the attention of numerous curators, critics, institutions and collectors. If you sum to this the opportunity to operate in one of the most important fairs worldwide, plus the presence – at the fair and in the city – of many other interesting initiatives, i.e. Oscar Abril Ascaso's project for the region of Murcia presented at the fair, or the Vida prize, or the activities of the Medialab Madrid; the result has been an extraordinary chance of networking, and a much better mood than the past editions of the great festivals.



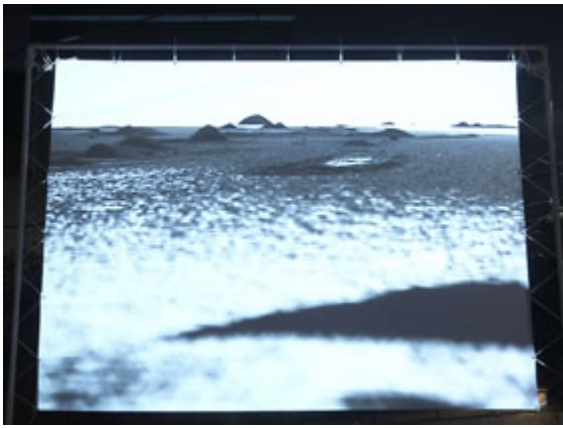
Marco Mancuso: The choice of the works and the artists, although limited to 8 galleries and 8 artists, represents in my opinion a good cross-section of the contemporary production in various disciplines, from the sound art to the interaction design, from the 3d graphic design to the video, from the software art to the new media critics. Did this judgment influence your choice of the works or, also for practical reasons, you've had to focus more on the galleries able to understand an economic investment in a growing market context? I'm wondering, because based on my experience, the galleries in the world who believe in this type of investment are not many...

Domenico Quaranta: Before talking about the single projects, it is necessary that we analyse a little the selection process. Same as for all the projects of Arco, one can access the Expanded Box through an application or through direct invitation from the curator. Despite the numerous applications, I have tried to keep some liberty so that I could insert projects that corresponded more to my vision, or that completed the perspective proposed by the other works. Overall, as you say, I have tried to offer a cross-section of the present research, not so much in the media used for the works, but rather in the attitude shown towards the media. There are works that use the most

advanced technologies, others that use obsolete technologies, even others in which technology as a medium disappears, only to be proposed as content, theme, cultural reference; in some cases, technologies are exhibited, in others they disappear in the backstage; for some they are the main element of the project, for others they just another medium to produce an experience.

Talking about the galleries, I started from a vast range of opportunities, that comprised of both galleries specialized in digital media, and many others that opened to the experimental research but also kept on working on a more traditional and

agreed on research. On my side I had of course the appeal of Arco, one of the most important fairs in Europe and the more visited in the world. Despite this, the process of selection has been tiring, but I wouldn't attribute these difficulties to some kind of slow response by the galleries. The crisis we are going through is indeed serious, and especially in the United States and in the UK it struck extremely hard. Investing thousands Euro on a monographic project, where an economic gain is not guaranteed, it is not very easy today. The galleries that have taken part to the Expanded box, but also those that have been forced to retire, they all have my gratitude and respect .



Marco Mancuso: During the last two years, you carved out a space for yourself a specific role at European level, especially through Holy Fire at iMAL and Expanded Box, as a curator / critic able to help the transition of the universe of the digital art inside the mechanisms and the borders of contemporary art, even through all difficulties and risks. So, a circle of artists, whose multimedia works is exhibited and represented by a circle of galleries looking for space and market through the fairs or the events around these: how do you consider your personal journey? And how does it fit in with the growing process, without wanting to judge or criticize?

Domenico Quaranta: This definition of “Charon of the digital art towards the heavens of contemporary art” makes me smile, and it is also a little excessive (there was a series of curators, from Christiane Paul to Claudia Giannetti, for the previous editions of the Expanded Box); but

after all I’ve deserved it, at least because of Holy Fire. Actually, I would gladly avoid to speak of market, but it seems that for many people it is not such an assumed subject. Personally I feel I am a curator of contemporary art who discovered in the digital cultures a renewing force, and who’s trying to support in any way and in every context the things in which he believes. In the panel I have organized for Arco, Joline Blais and Jon Ippolito wondered if it is worth to take things from a ghetto to bring them in another one, just bigger, when by now a context exists (the net) where the most radical researches can live and reach a public unreachable for a museum. In my opinion, it is worth to try the three ways together. The net guarantees the direct contact with the public, the community of the New Media Art allows an even comparison and a first, very specialized context analysis. But market and the world of the contemporary art have an irreplaceable role of selecting, giving access to a wider and varied communication system, and of accessing the “history”, the dimension of the duration that it’s opposing the ephemeral nature of the event (the festival, the exposition) and the absence of memory of the media.

I think this approach shows very well in my personal curator path. After “Holy Fire”, a show hosted by a small “new media centre”, but included in

the program of a big fair, I have taken care of the 2008 edition of the Pixelpoint (a small but brave provincial festival); then “RE:akt! | Reconstruction, Re-enactment, Re-reporting”, an exposition that is bringing the works of a small Slovenian institution (Aksioma) in various museums and institutions (from the MNAC of Bucharest to the KUC gallery, Ljubljana to the MMSU of Fiume); the “Expanded Box” in Arco 2009 and, in a couple of months, a small section inside the “Biennial of Prague”, a classical event of contemporary art.



Marco Mancuso: There is a very interesting point of your curatorial statement in which you state: “According to this model, art no longer consists in the masterful implementation of to technique (painting, sculpture, music or writing) to world (the know-called “real” world, the unconscious world of the Surrealists, etc.) present. Anything

Khan be art, if given to specific discourse and to specific conception, and if conveyed by means of to specific context. The aura of to work of art, which may be lost and found time and again, is now attributed by means of to precise process of consecration, which takes place on the market and in the museums.” You know very well that this statement is rather strong and opens potential discussions. The obligated question is: don’t you think that someone could answer that even if art would need some consecration, that should arrive from either the public or the critics, but certainly not from the market or from museum collecting? In other words, don’t you think the aura of a work, as you say, can be found when it is free from these bonds and gets lost instead when the strings begin to tighten ?

Domenico Quaranta: In fact, my text maintains that the most radical research opens small possibilities which allow to overcome the so-called “contextual definition” of art, according to which “it is the context that makes the work” and on which the artistic production of the last 50 years was founded. I don’t agree with the position that I’m describing, though I understand it. But let’s be careful: to question the contextual definition doesn’t mean to question the role of collecting and of museums in favour of the populist position

according to which the public decides. If we are here speaking right now, it is because a couple of wealthy collectors has financially supported Duchamp for fifty years, and because the director of a museum has bought Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol without considering too much Greenberg's opinion. Public is now consecrating the impressionists - but if they had been able to decide at the time, Bouguereau would still be the very best of art. What I criticize is rather the intellectual clumsiness of those who accept only a work of art because it is there, in the white hall of a museum, without questioning if it correspond to their own idea of art.



Marco Mancuso: In this sense you are well aware of the controversies that rose around the new media art - contemporary art debate. Although it is already less and less debated in the festivals, it still is a pivotal theme. Lately I was pondering, also publicly on the AHA list, on how curious the

shifting of this polemic is: before, the debate was between the world of digital art and that of contemporary art, with all the problems of identification and mutual acceptance that followed, but now it seems that the pivotal conflict sits between the world of the digital art and what is considered and recognized as the world of the technological experimentation, of the artistic hacking, of the digital avant-garde. Furthermore the weakening of the polemic around the digital art - contemporary art debate, seems to suggest a sort of satisfaction in spite of the avant-garde originating from autonomous and self-managed spaces: that is "we have arrived here, whatever road is still ahead, we don't care about all the others".

Domenico Quaranta: What are you saying? That Rifondazione Comunista split? That minuscule party that didn't reach the 3% has divided in two parts? Heck, I will have to choose what side to be, and in both cases I won't matter a damn thing... Sorry for this vulgar and pseudo-politic detour, but these polemics always seemed futile to me, and usually harmful for the weakest part. What I know is that digital art, if ever has existed, doesn't exist anymore. Holy Fire was already clear enough on this: what Casey Reas and Ubermorgen.com have in common, from a results point of view, is zero. They continue to have in common a

reference community, I agree, and this is something too precious to be abandoned. A place where one can nurture his own researches with total freedom, and where these can be submitted to a public of equals. But this doesn't prevent these researches to remain stuck in there, even if they would be ready to face a wider public. That's exactly what happened to Reas and Ubermorgen.com, and it will happen again.



Marco Mancuso: A similar argument can perhaps be applied in the artistic sphere: there are some “contemporary” artists who begin to turn their attention towards the digital tools and aesthetics, while others that have begun with the digital avant-gardes seem to be interested above all to enter in the arts market – which is always a market and can influence choices and artistic initiatives. What do you think about it?

Domenico Quaranta: I think that I've

always liked the theory of the communicating vessels, like hybridizations and migrations. I think that I'm tired of walls, and of hearing that an artist sold himself to the market just because he's earning his living with his job. I think that, if I like something, if I really believe in a work, I can't just speak about it on Digimag and present it in a small provincial festival, but instead I must write about it on Artforum and bring it to Arco, to the Biennale in Venice, to the MoMA and to any other available platform. And I believe that if I don't do this, and to the best of my possibilities, I am not doing my job of critic and curator well enough. After all, I'm absolutely confident that if the so-called “New Media Art”, despite its huge potentialities, has never succeeded in earning the place it deserves in today's artistic scene, that's mainly our fault – that is, of a team of critics and curators who don't do their job: to aim at the mainstream channels instead of continuing to survive in the “alternative” channels, to introduce “their” artists to the galleries, to bring them in the museums, etc. And to abandon the critical horizon that divides “contemporary artists” and “digital artists”....

Marco Mancuso: However, I wasn't talking about selling oneself to the market. I was asking what you do think more contemporary artists who

begin to explore technologies new to them, and of artists born with the digital who on the other hand return to use hybrid tools and means, with different languages, and analogical, mechanical and material technologies, integrated into the digital ones. I think that it's a very interesting mixture, that doesn't exclude any choice, this is what I meant. Your words speak of a dangerously radical thought: basically I don't like to take a side and I love to confront myself with very different cultural spheres (starting from galleries to festivals to social spaces), but I think that the choice of many "activist" curators and critics has to be respected, for their ideological credo, for their interest for experimentation, for refusal of the market, for the search of expression channels alternative and external to the main productive circuits. I don't think this makes them worse professionals nor that, for their expertise to be recognized, it's necessary for them to be mainstream and institutional.

Domenico Quaranta: As for the first point, I really believe that the distinction that you mentioned - among "digital" artists and "contemporary" artists - doesn't have sense anymore, even if historically it had one. From this point of view, the process you describe is interesting, but also entirely natural. With Inke Arns, I'm absolutely convinced that

the new media art, or whatever we want to call it, doesn't have to appeal to its mediatic specificity, but instead on its cultural specificity: it is exactly this awareness of the political, social and cultural role of the new media that makes it strong, competitive and absolutely contemporary. This, obviously makes the same term I just used obsolete, too characteristic in a mediatic sense. What we once called the new media art or digital art, can very well use non-new and non-digital media, because its strength is elsewhere: precisely in the cultural discourse it brings on. The victory of UBERMORGEN.COM of the ARCO BEEP prize is an example of this. In the meantime, a "contemporary" artist not interested to new technologies, can anyway adopt them as tools, and develop an interesting discourse: the job of the koreano Kim Jongku presented at the Expanded Box exactly represented this point of view.

As for the second point, the matter is more complex. I have a total respect towards the work of the artists and curators opposing the art system and trying to operate out of it, pursuing and developing alternative channels. In the meantime, nevertheless, I refuse to stick to the double equation art system = market and world of the new media art = alternative scene that seems implicit in your objection. In reality, independent platforms are distributed in both worlds, and both

worlds run the same risk of stiffening and paralysis. I have already presented the beautiful project introduced by Oscar Abril Ascaso at the fair, in the Murcia region pavilion. It was indeed an experimental, radical, outside-of-the-market-logics project, picking up urban performances that used technologies to stimulate social dynamics. Nevertheless, it was presented to a fair. This way, he gave the chance to the artists involved to show up on an open, variegated and powerful platform, more than it would be offered by a festival of new technologies. Ascaso works for Sonar, but he didn't refuse to face the new stage offered by a fair. When I accuse the critics and curators of new media art, I don't accuse them for what they do, but for what they don't do: for their incapability to move on different platforms, to compare themselves with other contexts, other demands, other discursive systems, and "to hedge their bets": an incapability that favoured the "marginalization" process. And for what I know, artists don't like the ghetto, except obviously those who could only get visible in the ghetto .



Marco Mancuso: Referring back to an interesting part of your text, that follows a quotation of William Gibson: "The historic function of Expanded Box, the last embodiment of an enduring attention Arco devoted to new media and languages, is precisely that of cultivating and redistributing the future, and supporting an "expanded" definition of art." Do you want to tell us in which ways and dynamics, can the fairs of contemporary / digital art help a real redistribution of the future? I have always thought that that quotation of Gibson carried with it polemics about redistribution of technologies, wealth, investments, infrastructures and therefore art, culture, production ...

Domenico Quaranta: Certainly. It's called appropriation. I took that sentence and used it to say that the signs of the arts future are still little considered in some works, but that thanks to specific systems of distribution, they will have an increasing impact, and they will change, sooner or later, the future of the art. The market is one of these systems of distribution, of course not the only one, but one of them, and historically one of the most important. Do you know why painters have stopped making bad abstract works? Because a gentleman named Leo

Castelli believed in two strangers called Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, and he was able to convince some people that he was right.

I repeat: market is not the only medium to give mutant geniuses and changes their visibility. Not even the biennial exhibitions, the big expositions, the museums, the magazines, the books are enough. You just have to take the catalogue of an old biennial exhibition or a number of Artforum from the 1970s, to understand that 90% of what was then considered “successful”, has disappeared today. The stores of the museums are full of works of art defeated by history. But thanks to an incomprehensible combination of these elements, something came through, and today characters like Jeff Koons or Cindy Sherman are considered part of the history of art. Now, let’s take their more famous contemporaries from the “new media” and let’s look for them in one of the many books of arts history that have greeted the change of millennium: needless to say that we won’t find them. This means many things, but I’ll try to point out at least two of them: that the model of the festivals has not worked, and that the scene of the “new media” did not succeed in creating a single critic able to communicate his vision on an wider and open platform. It’s time to

change. Something actually is already changing: I think, for instance, of the growing reputation of Rhizome at the New Museum in New York ; I think about Raphael Lozano-Hemmer, that works with the Tate and with a famous gallery like Haunch of Venison. In my own small way, I would really like to contribute to this change.



Marco Mancuso: I imagine you have discussed about this during the conference organized at Expanded Box: how was the debate in this sense? In a way I already told you this at the lecture at iMAL, don’t you think that it could be interesting and stimulating for the debate, to hear in these spheres also more polemic voices – or at least some not agreeing in the judgment and in the opinions?

Domenico Quaranta: I assure you, my chairmen did anything but agree. Blais and Ippolito have given a beautiful speech lingering on a series of projects whose strength comes

exactly from the fact that they happened out of any artistic frame. Roberta Bosco has talked about the entrance of the net art in the physical space, claiming that the public is by now ready to face technologically complex hypothesis and picking on those who, in this process, seems to bend too much towards the market. Geert Lovink, following what he wrote in Zero Comments, has made a clear and harsh diagnosis of the actual state of the New Media Art, theorizing some ways out: he calls entering the world of the contemporary art “strategy of disappearance”. Inke Arns has illustrated her own curatorial work at the Hartware MedienKunst Verein of Dortmund, that places the media art in a wider context, and at the same time forces it to compare itself with the expositional space, not necessarily adopting “technology based” layouts; Régine Debatty has shown the absurdity of a critical perspective that insists on the difference between contemporary art and new media art, while Zhang Ga has tried to explore

the reasons that make the new media art so tremendously actual: all three interventions, with very different approaches, worked on the “specific form of contemporary” of the new media art. Joasia Krysa, lastly, concentrated on a particular platform of artistic production - the RMB City founded by Cao Fei in the virtual world of Second Life, and tried to understand its success and peculiar economic model .

www.ifema.es/web/ferias/arco/in.html

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www.imal.org/HolyFire/

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<http://www.iterature.com/dadameter/>

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