Inclusiva-net #1

New Art Dynamics in Web 2 Mode

¡MADRID! | MEDIALAB PRADO

ÍNDICE

PREFACE

The collection of texts included in this book comprise a complete approximation to the creative and research lines centred on the exploration of the emerging new social dynamics in the transition to a "Web 2.0" model.

The infinity of points of view and types of work represented here reveal many of the profound transformations taking place today in artistic thought and critical consciousness as a whole.

In this new phase in the "connected society", words like participation, contribution, cooperation, or social network are omnipresent, and discovering what is genuinely emancipating about it all is a challenge common to most of the works presented here. The various dissections in this book operating within this second phase of the Web demonstrate its enormous potential and the new opportunities it offers at all levels, promises that critical imagination and creative thought will certainly help to fulfil.

We the coordinating team of the 1st Inclusiva-net International Conference would like to thank the contributors to this book as well as all the conference participants, for making it possible to establish a tremendously active space for dialogue, a collective presence that echoes throughout the pages of this book.

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"WEB 2.0" AS A NEW CONTEXT FOR ARTISTIC PRACTICES

Juan Martín Prada

THE INCLUSIVE LOGIC OF "WEB 2.0"

The economic model for what is called "Web 2.0" is based on promoting the desire to share and exchange things, an attempt to make profits from the voluntary collaboration of its users and its potential for compiling data and making them available to the public. The new companies operating on the Internet base their role on promoting cooperative communities and managing access to the data and files contributed. This business model increasingly tends not to sell any product at all to the consumer, but rather sells the consumer to the product, integrating the user and the files he or she contributes into the actual service being offered.

The user and his or her contributions are the main content being distributed by networks. They channel and use as an economic force the desire felt by a multitude of users to be part of social networks, to share and make public their interests, to dialogue, to communicate with others, to express themselves publicly, to feel useful, and to cooperate. That is, what is exploited (if we can understand something like that happening today in the field of networks) is users' capacity to produce sociability and their desire to do so. Now the actual user (instead of only his or her needs) is the true origin and destination of new technological developments.

The inclusive logic of Web 2.0 is based on an elementary principal: the more users there are, the better a given application or social network will be. That is, there is a value to volume. The quantitative becomes qualitative in this second stage of the Web. And since the quantitative is one of the key elements of today's production, it is understandable that the new companies on Web 2.0 are striving to generate a need for belonging and participation, to stimulate our need to feel tied to a group, a digital community, to collaborate and contribute things to share them on the new social networks (be they videos, photographs, comments, etc.). One thing we must keep in mind is that even those people who do not want to contribute to the conformation of these gigantic collective databases will do so collaterally by using them, involuntarily increasing the value of those applications because the routes they use will be offered as orientative data for other users. For example, on many Web sites, once a user has purchased something, he or she is offered information about what products other people bought, what they were interested in, and so on. The way Web 2.0

works is based on managing to add the user to the available information. That is why it has been so often said that today, we are all turning into software components or "bionic software", and that Web applications "have people inside them". A recurring simile is comparing Web 2.0 to the 18th century automaton that played chess because a person was hidden inside it[1].

The "input" for the new Web is the users themselves; however, that does not mean that there is open possession of the databases they generate. Although the majority can be used freely, they are the property of the company that manages them, which also holds the rights to how they will be used in future. This has led to intense criticism, leading to the inevitable development of an intense parallel movement to the one for "free software": the movement for "free data".

The fact that the central axis of Web 2.0 today is the production and management of social networks proves that it brings together social and economic production. Companies on the new Web try to produce social life, human relations, in an extremely profitable strategy that does not distinguish among the economic, emotional, political and cultural. The design of forms of human relations comprises the instrumental base of production. The new businesses of today are the new economy of the immaterial.

The promotion of collective experiences of users, the enhancement of emotional interactions among participants, and making the aggregation of information originating in those networks based on affinity groups possible has required the development of huge efforts to advance in "*social software*". That refers to software used to manage the needs and potentials of aggregating data, exchanges and communicative interactions among users in the on-line social networks.

In this respect, identifying art works as "social software", which would seem to fit with what we may understand by the term "net.art 2.0", would influence the idea that the most committed art practice would aim to reconfigure the ways in which personal and social interactions take place on today's Internet Web. Of course, many of the principles of what was called more or less improperly "Relational aesthetics" are found, in fact, in the area of the new networks, one of its best possible fields for future development.

POWER 2.0

With the process of involvement and inclusion of individuals in economic production and subjective systems which are part of the Web, the new forms of power today are trying to organize our entire lives. In the current network society, power blends into life, becoming abstract. It is no longer exercised over individuals; instead, it circulates through them (we all more or less consciously make it circulate) with the result that it seems logical that the most effective devices for the exercise of power are based on participatory logic, on flows of social activity.

In contrast to efforts at homogenization, of treating everyone in the same way, the economic logic of Web 2.0 is based on differentiating and singling out each procedure or allowing each person to use it their own way. The goal is for there to be nothing we can be against, by offering a super-abundance of free choices and freely taken decisions. There is a proliferation of constant strategic games of personal initiatives and freedom. The system aims to correspond to the multiplicity of singularities forming the connected multitude by forcing the multitude into submission through its involuntary conversion into a transmitter of the new forms of power.

However, in this second stage of the Web, we should speak not of power but of the relations of power, given that dominion is not a unilateral relation here, but rather it operates through power plays that are mobile, unstable, based on diffuse circulation strategies and the transmission of individual initiatives and freedom.

We could even say that in the context of the new culture of digital participation, politics can only be conceived properly as the organization of social interactions. Ideally, the most appropriate political model would be that inherent to the connected multitude itself, self-organizing its interactions in the full exercise of its decision and participation possibilities. The autonomy of politics, as a notion that implies separation or representativity, would thus no longer have any meaning. This political and social model would begin to take form today in those forms of organization distributed in networks, in the multiplicity of all the connected singularities, characterized by that Spinozan thought, where beings are constituted through desire, through the pleasure of being alive.

"AMATEUR" CREATIVITY

If we look back in time to the beginning of the Internet network, the contents it offered were generated by professional suppliers who incorporated a variety of information on their Web sites, and users were essentially consumers of that information.
On Web 2.0, in contrast, many service platforms such as Myspace, Youtube or Flickr, allow their users to participate in community, collaborating and sharing files, photographs, videos, etc. They even transform and re-edit them (e.g., Jumpcut) in such a way that users are no longer mere consumers of information but also suppliers of contents. Therefore, ideally, Web 2.0 would be a Web "for" users and also generated "by" users, on the basis that any of its services improves if more people use it. Essential catalysts of this process are the large blogs for uploading photographs and videos, as well as the huge development of "do it yourself" platforms proliferating on the Web.

The fact that anyone can be a producer and distributor of visual and audiovisual materials of all kinds has led to an unstoppable, intense "amateurization" process of the creative practices that statistically comprise a significant part of the contents available on-line. This "amateurization" is clearly a contrast to the professionalism that characterized the 20th century on all levels. In today's world, that former concept of a given individual as the exclusive location of "artistic talent" and the accompanying suppression of that talent among the "great masses" no longer has any meaning. It increasingly belongs to the past, following the extreme attenuation of all divisions of work (which Marx saw as the main cause of that suppression).

Undeniably, many hopes have always been focused on the conversion of consumers into producers of means. For Guy Debord, to cite one example, there was no possibility of freedom in the use of time unless one possessed modern instruments for constructing everyday life. Only through their use, he said, could one progress "from a utopian revolutionary art to an experiential revolutionary art"[2]. Hardt and Negri proposed the conversion of the multitude into an autonomous agent of production and that could be channelled through trying to achieve free access to and control over the primary means of biopolitical production, which would also involve the production of subjective means. Those are knowledge, information, communication, and emotions which certainly constitute the primary elements of the production fabric of our time.

An increasingly minor part of aesthetic innovations occur nowadays in a professional or industrial environment. Many of those aesthetic innovations occur in the "social fabric" formed by users; that is, after industrial production[3]. That is why there has been talk of an emerging process of "democratization of innovation"[4], or of "open innovation"[5], related to the "customer-made" formula. It implies an active connection between companies and users in the production of goods and services. What is happening is that this way, consumers are becoming producers of certain products, which means they are both consumer and producer, giving rise to the newly coined term "prosumers".

The contradiction between producers and consumers is certainly not inherent to current digital means. And while that is true for creative fields, it is even more so in information technology environments. The "blog phenomenon" is clearly the best example of the emergence of massive "amateurization" of the production of information and opinion. Almost all of the large information media include a section for blogs or even what some call "citizen journalism" or "participatory journalism". Spaces like Wikinews[6] have proliferated, where information and articles are written by readers, and they can decide what news they want covered.

However, many people see this growing hegemony of the amateur as a danger, considering the cultural model of Web 2.0 to be an "oclocracy"; that is, mob rule, one of the specific ways democracy can degenerate[7]. These standpoints rest on the suspicion that society, though it has all the media at its disposal, has nothing to say, or worse, is "unable to make the necessary social use of them"[8]. Faced with these issues, it seems only sensible to view the field of participation that was opened by the evolution of networks as a horizon full of possibilities for achieving many of the social and political objectives that Debord and Enzensberger, among many others, set forth decades ago. Moreover, we can say that the Web today may have reached a first stage of true fulfilment of its communicative and social possibilities, offering us a glimpse of what may someday become actual proof of Dan Gillmor's statement that identified "us" with "the media" ("*We, the media*")[9].

At the political level, the new collaborative paradigm of the second stage of the Web protagonized by that connected multitude that expresses itself and shares on networks is one of the clearest steps toward the effective existence of a social model that considers a "democracy of the multitude" (in keeping with the thought of Occam, Marsilius of Padua, or Spinoza, among others) as the absolute form of

politics. Accepting this standpoint, the connected multitude, an infinite multiplicity of active singularities, could be considered in its most emancipatory and creative potentials, as the origin of a politics not over life but of life, that is, a clear example of the introduction of "the power of life"[10] into politics.

The connected multitude poses no threat to individualism, given that homogenization is not a part of its constitution. It is a multitude that has nothing to do with the concept of "the masses" which played a major part in political thought in the past. To the contrary, we should consider its presence as our most efficient, promising possibility for resistance in the face of attempts at an undifferentiated unification, attempts at the destruction of individual singularity that has always been the goal of the traditional mass communication media.

However, one inevitably must admit that "amateur" creative production is plagued with repetition and imitation, as examples of singularity in that milieu are statistically extremely scarce in relation to the number of participants. However, behind the repetition and what is of no interest we should also be able to see the vitality underlying that show of free creation and public sharing, as well as imagining with Blochian hope all that it promises. For there is nothing sterile about this intensification of creativity on everyone's part; nor about the independence of their productions from any professional context of receivers and any compensation other than that of making those creations available to the public, free of charge.

On the Web, a whole new field of social opportunities is arising from the creative and communicative potentials that are taking form in the infinite number of social networks and cooperatives that make up Web 2.0. This progressive indifferentiation between information transmitters and receivers means, above all, that the production of representation and the ordering and organization of contents is no longer a monopoly of professionalized sectors.

Anthropologically speaking, the most important characteristic of the majority of the images and videos we see on photoblogs and videoblogs is that they do not depict other, possible worlds or even variations and extensions of this one. Instead, the images portray the world we inhabit. They are images of our life in this world, life that aims to intensify itself through permanent self-representations and visual records of events and pleasure. Millions of photographs and videos of all kinds of things and moments have escaped from their former privacy in private albums and are now

available to millions of people. A community is thus created of people taking part in a representation that fundamentally is also a reflection of themselves.

Each photograph, each video that is uploaded onto the Web is a small sample of its authors' lives. In sharing it, they are trying to pass along their enthusiasm to others. Their aim, beyond publicly communicating any particular experience, may be to feel a certain kind of "communion" with many others in the experience they share through that file. For all expressions of life, especially all images of pleasure, always seek the confirmation of their experience through the figure of the collective, and at this time that is completely possible.

In this new context, the most effective criticism can only now be conceived in terms of creating something new, as a production of alternative imagined realms. Maybe we should even accept that we can now only interpret the world by transforming it, recreating it. The clearest foundations for the proposal are to be found, without a doubt, in Foucault, for whom political resistance, conceptualized only in terms of negation, would represent only a minimally effective form. Thus, resistance should be understood as the creation of new forms of life, of a new culture, where minorities should affirm themselves "not only as far as their identity but also as a creative force"[11]. They also propose the development of an alternative ontological base, centred and sustained by the multitude's creative and productive practices, for its constituting force would be the product of its creative imagination, which would configure its own constitution[12].

The development of the participatory possibilities of the Web today has certainly facilitated the construction of new circuits of value and meaning charged with great creative autonomy and a notable subversive capacity. The creative potentials of the diversity of the connected multitude hold great potential which is already being activated. And that given the fact that almost all offers for participation in the current Web are formed by a studied system of economic management. The development of that huge power to create and share is incomparably more important in the new stage of the Web than anything that business parasites can obtain from it. The possibilities of production of differentiation and singularity that appear on the networks are much more powerful than the patterns of repetition and imitation of stereotypical commercial and professional models which, statistically, comprise the majority of contents on those networks.

However, many detractors of Web 2.0 see that interest in other people's images, videos, experiences, opinions and private lives as similar to what already happened with the "Big Brother" television phenomenon. A certain fascination for what is not worth reading, seeing, or hearing, which means the Web is being filled with records of completely irrelevant events, following the overbearing logic of "you are the information".

What is definitely happening is an abandonment of privacy at all levels, perhaps because we are increasingly less able to understand it and value it, given that it practically does not exist in our lives. Today the multitude of users on the large participatory Web platforms upload videos and photographs of their most personal experiences, making them public, showing no hesitation but rather enjoyment in giving access to images of their private life to anyone who comes across them or looks for them. Perhaps an explanation lies in a certain effect of a new stage in the process of exteriorization. In the 1960s, McLuhan pointed out that people were beginning to wear their brains outside their skulls and their nerves outside their skin[13], and subsequently there was an enormous exteriorization of memory through the development of personal digital storage systems. Today that exteriorization has taken another step, where users store things in memory systems they do not even own. That is, the collective memories of the large Web 2.0 platforms that have become gigantic files, eliminating any relation of necessity or dependence linking privacy and a space that is private or with limited access.

A new challenge of the utmost importance in the field of "non-amateur" creation is posed by the fact that much of the visual production that is enjoyed and shared on the networks is not made by professionals in image-making fields. We might say that today one gets a glimpse of what Rousseau proposed in his *Carta a d'Alembert* (1758), where he suggested that public festivities replace theatrical performances. "Place a post crowned with flowers in the centre of a town square, gather the townspeople, and you will have a party. Do something even better: offer the audience as the performance; turn them into the actors"[14].

ART 2.0?
Admitting that Rousseau's idea fits the present does not mean that the role of the artist has dissolved in the infinite stream of unintentionally artistic, or purely amateur, images and visual productions. At this point, in the field of the networks, the possible differences between "art" and "not art" are a matter of nuance in terms of the

intensity with which each creation reveals and expands upon the essential aspects and potentials of living and of the critical consciousness possible in that connected multitude.

The most effective artistic thought would not be limited merely to forming part of the expression of the vitality of the productive multitude. It would also generate the most intense evocations of the infinite wealth of differences that form the connected multitude, while also revealing the multitude lying beneath each single subject. In this sense, if the on-line multitude is formed by infinite subjects that, like atoms, move and find each other according to "clinamens that are always untimely and exceptional"[15], then perhaps it is an essential mission of artistic practices to show the emancipatory potentials that, still dormant, lie beneath the exceptional and single nature of those clinamens.

What we could call "art" in the context of Web 2.0 is certainly what most reinforces our belief in the potentials of the connected multitude, in its possibilities for the free production of critical thought and new life. That all means that art, the optimal form of resistance in the context of the new networks, would be an extreme herald of the constituting power of the multitude. That is, the world that the multitude can build is foreshadowed in the best artistic proposals, always manifested from the demands of interpretive thought, of critical and meaningful communication. Through the most interesting artistic proposals an attempt, at least, would be made at a poetic reconfiguration of the social interactions of the connected collectives.

Given the above, an essential aspect in assessing the relative interest of 2.0 creative productions would be the degree of intensity with which the creations express and foreshadow a form of "liberated freedom" as opposed to freedom as merely a business strategy, which is what the majority of "amateur" creative production is subject to. Thus, the success of any given artistic proposal in the Web 2.0 context would depend on its capacity to evoke in the interior of the singularity of that specific creation not only abstract aspects of the life of a global space but above all the tensions of renewal and transformation, of critical thought, pleasure, more freedom and more singularity that are inherent to the connected multitude.

That means in no case can we conceive of the idea of art on the networks as an element transcending life. To the contrary, it must be seen as an element able to penetrate life, affirm existence and the power of difference, of the exceptional in

each of the infinite elements forming the infinity of connected lives. At the same time, we must view it as what proves the common underlying that whole world of singularities: a need to live more fully, with more shared expressions of solidarity, of a life accommodated to others not through homogenization but rather through an enjoyment of differences. Accumulating evidence of that "common" through the celebration and identification of the infinite singularities is, in a way, advancing in a form of resistance that foreshadows what is affirmed in the slogan "Another world is possible" and which, as Negri said, implies "an exodus toward ourselves"[16].

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND AFFECTIVITY

In this second stage of the Web, we see how vital interrelations are fully productive economically. A new theory of value must be put into place given that the new informational economy, the production of social networks, is based on increasingly immaterial work, almost completely based on emotional production: on the manipulation and management of emotions and sociality. Given that, we can affirm that the nature of production mechanisms of collective subjectivity are already intrinsically affective today. That is why, in the emotional application of social relations, the new cultural and entertainment industries are expected to possess a greater transformative capacity of the social as their major lucrative potential. That is why, to a large extent, the artistic projects that explore the world of the social networks, the places and the ways that encounters occur, dialogues and exchanges on the Internet are fundamentally approximations to the problems that arise in relation to the affective nature of biopolitical production.

It seems almost impossible to question that, in the context of the connected society, the possibility of efficient political resistance should be approached from the appropriation and recognition of the emancipatory potential of the principles that form an essential part of productive biopolitical dynamics such as affection, cooperation, and friendship. The mission of the new resistance is to rescue them from their domestication by companies. That resistance should make the potential they contain for the production of a new community clear, to generate an active set-up of the principle of the common. And perhaps artistic creation (let's remember that traditionally, aesthetic experience has been considered "pure affectivity") is one of the best means for carrying out this rescue.

FILTERING AND "TAGGING"

Participation and synergy in real time is what this new stage in the Web should ideally offer; that is, broadening potentials for acquiring knowledge. No one knows everything but everyone, jointly, can know everything. An extremely important step forward in collectivized, mutualised knowledge. It is the arrival of a stage of broadened "co-intelligence", of the reciprocal production of knowledge among infinite persons, of a multitudinous cooperative development and of the increasingly open possession of knowledge, all channelled through inclusive systems, and not designed to prevent anyone from the possibility of contributing. Undoubtedly, the potential illuminators of "general intellect"[17] are none other than teleology of the commons on linguistic interchange and cooperation.

This all leads to constant attempts to apply the free software model to any field of creation and knowledge[18] and explorations in relation to "Commons-based peer production"[19], are not few in number either. That is, the study of modes of production based on the cooperation of autonomous agents in coordinating the creative energy of a huge number of persons, in which the efforts and pleasure of a multitude of singularities are joined, and in which each of its members has different abilities, very different knowledge, properties that are added up and creatively complement those of others.

More so than in the field of collective creation, the requirements for applying these models when the amount of available data of all kinds circulating on the Web is so huge make the tasks of tagging, filtering, and prioritization of the available information much more crucial. In fact, applying the cooperation potential inherent to the system of the connected multitude in this direction and specific applications are one of the primary operating fundamentals on Web 2.0. We mustn't forget that what can be understood as this second stage of the Web consists of "content generated by the user" as much as "content filtered by the user"[20]. That is, its primary action axis would be the implementation of strategies allowing "collective intelligence" to act as a filter and engine for the efficient organization of the available information, and that ordering can be useful not only for the main flows on the Web but also for more specific, particular ones. Going from the task of offering "data" to providing "metadata" is a step forward that would also explain the complementarity of the concepts of Web 2.0 and semantic Webs, based on the incorporation of all kinds of metadata (descriptors, identifiers, etc.)

The essential character on Web 2.0 of activities such as classifying, tagging, selecting, voting, scoring, etc. makes data organization methods for the culture of the networks one of the areas of greatest interest in on-line artistic creation. And of all the paths initiated in the artistic themes of data filtering, identification and assessment, those focused on "tagging" have generated the greatest interest. Examples of this path are some of the initiatives of Les Liens Invisibles and Jonathan Harris, among many other authors[21].

Undoubtedly, the relation between images and identifying terms, or "tags", is linked in the field of the theory of contemporary art to an old relation between image and word, and between art work and title. The problematic nature of the relations established between text and image, that were essential in conceptual art, have once again been activated by the new dynamic of "tagging" as a practice of social organization of the visual elements of the culture in which a huge field has opened up for artistic reflection.

BLOG ART?
A key element of many blogs is that personal life, information and opinions are not separate. One of its most interesting potentials is its capacity to create collectivity through resources and positions that in many cases are merely autobiographical; that is, through subjectivity expressed, shared, and commented on. The blog phenomenon is surely the clearest return to the "self" and to subjectivity itself in the field of media, the activation of a certain "egology". It is about reclaiming a democratization of the possibilities of the expressive "self", of subjectivity made public, that is shown and exhibited, as a catalyst of many other internal voices that will be encouraged to follow the exercise of a "self", giving public voice to personal consciousness that is expressed and investigated, practiced in writing, in the collection and interrelation of things and aspects that it finds of interest.

Obviously, many of the propositional, creative and expressive aspects of the blog phenomenon make many of their authors define their blogs as art works in their own right. Of course, many blogs show extremely creative and poetic qualities that make them much more than alternative systems for personal and interpersonal expression and communication. Actually, the most interesting cases are true examples of the possibilities of artistic thought to act in the reconfiguration of models for communicative practices and of cultural and social criticism of networks. In many of them, we see the huge capacity that poetic activities have, through the

interpretive demands of art works, to effect an intense, efficient criticism of current processes for the inclusion of the subject in the society of interconnected media. Of course, the perverse irony that characterizes the majority of "blog art" proposals actively collaborates in the suspension (and even subversion) of the most deeply rooted expectations about the communicative interactions that we consider to be informative, normal, or useful in the present field of networks. The proposals of blog art also constitute intense questioning of whether the world is, as many blogs seems to show in their extreme intensification of the presence of an ego, a correlate of what "I perceive", "I feel", and "I believe".

Some of the most interesting results so far of "blog art" have emerged from projects centred on studying the recording of time innate to blogs. Only from the field of artistic propositions could we understand, for example, the extreme degree to which life is subject to recorded time in projects such as "Obsessive Consumption"[22] by Kate Bingaman (2007) or the work titled "Eat 22"[23] by E. Harrinson (2007). These two examples evoke the huge set of proposals of blogs taken to the limit which are only comprehensible from the perspective of conceptual art. They refer to the complexity inherent to the time relationship established among the blog, the subject who "posts" something, and the readers, which is none other than that relationship of life itself in the shared recording of its passage through time. These projects emphasize the fact that we are fundamentally shared time (which is exhibited and recorded on media in today's world). Due to the above, "blog art" can be said to be an experiment not with a new media but rather of the artist in it (while being watched by many others).

ARTISTIC PRACTICES IN THE RECONFIGURATION OF COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTIONS

Of special value is creativity oriented to the production of cooperative devices for activating and developing communities, of means for free communication of the parasitic behaviour of companies dominating the Web today. In fact, many of the most interesting projects we can identify within the broad group of artistic practices are centred on promoting the public domain, on how to facilitate the voluntary provision of public goods that are communicatively and experientially meaningful.

One of the traditional definitions of artistic creation has been a critical experimentation in language or the invention of new languages. Perhaps in this sense, many of its still to be revealed capacities will reconfigure communicative

interactions in the new era of digital political activism. That is, provided that it is based on the belief that it is possible to solve many of the new social and political problems of new societies through developing a different kind of public communication. It is reasonable to think that it possesses a hugely valuable capacity to diminish the effects of the colonization of communication by economic interests.

And perhaps we can affirm that the role of creation most committed to social and political reflection in the new networks resides in its capacity to overcome a certain incommunicable character of the battles in the network society. There, everything seems to be legitimated on the basis of principles such as progress, communication, participation, etc., which seem to strangle all types of effective dissention. Perhaps the critical thought innate to artistic practices can help us immensely in gaining a better understanding of what we can consider as truly social with respect to some new technologies and applications that, as in the context of Web 2.0, are always presented to us as completely social media.

It is clear in the most interesting proposals of the new "on-line" artistic behaviours that art can make part of the information and data circulating on the networks not only consumed but also properly situated in relation to their existential elements. That is, one of the major commitments of the best artistic creations in the context of Web 2.0 would be to design new paths for taking the interpretive experience model inherent to artistic practices to the field of social and communicative interaction. It behoves us to give intensive thought to the possibilities of artistic practices in the face of an ecological recomposition of communication.[24] This would be a new attempt to overcome the imprisonment in the constant but banal communication process inherent in mass media, and also to define that refusal to communicate that Theodor Adorno considered as a measure of the truth of art works in a cultural system where communication is organized via manipulation in order to produce a given effect, where the former would only have an alienated existence[25].

Due to the above, it is logical that nowadays there are quite a few artistic proposals centred on the ways the new digital social networks function. Their intention is to bring to the forefront of public attention the ways language and communicative interactions in general can be toyed with. That is, showing how the economic appropriation of free communication and the desire to cooperate is carried out, offering a poetic rendition of how the ideal of interactivity is truncated. We can only imagine that ideal as giving oneself linguistically to another, as an exchange

of what one does not have, that is, what one is. The great challenge of artistic creation then is, in the boundary-crossing dynamics of human presences in network environments, to build flows of value and meaning independent of the logic of markets and corporate interests.

The fact that the most recent artistic proposals on the networks are so ironic and critical instead of optimistic is because Web 2.0 has been presented to us corporatively as an idyllic field of happiness, joy, friendship, sharing, and communication, all increasing endlessly. With networks today defined through these principles, there is an assumption of a blanket neutral ideology. The most critical of these art works and actions oppose the acceptance of that assumption, and will do so repeatedly. The subjects of those art works and actions coincide with specific ways the Web 2.0 works. Interpreting them demands an interpretive, critical and political reflection of the ways the Web works as well as the mediation mechanisms and socialization control predisposed by the Web.

It is quite likely that the interpretive values of the new "on-line" artistic practices are based on the important possibility of opposing the disappearance o fan awareness of reality as a pace full of oppositions and frictions. That awareness is becoming increasingly difficult given that everything is veiled behind continuous telematics, set out through principles and promises always linked to communication that already impedes a perception of any contradiction whatsoever.

This attempt would explain that a recurring purpose of artistic practices is to reveal what interests are behind those business mediators and how they manage to regulate communicative interactions on the networks, in addition to merely making them possible.

NOTES

1 I refer to the false automaton known as "The Turk", built in 1770 by Wolfgang von Kempelen (1734–1804).

2 Guy Debord, "Tesis sobre la revolución cultural", in Textos situacionistas sobre arte and urbanismo, La Piqueta, Madrid, 1977, p. 122.

3 See Johan Söderberg, "Reluctant revolutionaries – the false modesty of reformist critics of copyright", [Internet]. Journal of Hyper(+)drome. Manifestation. <http://journal.hyperdrome.net/issues/issue1/soderberg.html#_ftn16>. [Accessed 20 July 2007].

4 See Erik von Hippel, Democratizing Innovation, MIT Press, 2005.

5 See Henry William Chesbrough, Open Innovation: The New Imperative for Creating and Profiting from Technology, Harvard Business School Press, 2003.

6 <http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Main_Page>. [Accessed 20 July 2007].

7 See, in relation to these aspects, the book by Andrew Keen The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Killing Our Culture, Doubleday/Currency, New York, 2007.

8 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of the Media", in John Thornton Caldwell, Theories of the New Media, The Athlone Press, London, 2000. p. 68.

9 See Dan Gillmor, We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People, O'Reilly Media, 2004.

10 According to Roberto Esposito "if, as Deleuze believes, philosophy is the practice of creating concepts appropriate to the event affecting and transforming us, this is the time to rethink the relationship between politics and life in a way that, instead of subjecting life to political leadership (which occurred over the last century quite clearly), introduces into the power of life into politics". Esposito, Roberto, Biopolítica and filosofía, Grama ediciones, Buenos Aires, 2006, p. 17.

11 See Michel Foucault, Dits et Écrits, iv, Gallimard, Paris, 1994, p. 741.

12 Michael Hardt - Antonio Negri, Imperio, Ediciones Paidós Ibérica, Barcelona, 2002, p. 43.

13 Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1964.

14 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Carta a d'Alembert, Editorial Tecnos, Madrid, 1994.

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16 Ibid.

17 See, referring to this concept, the work of Pierre Levy, Aux Origines de L'Intelligence Collective. Pour une anthropologie du cyberspace, La Decouverte, Paris 1994; of James Surowiecki Cien mejor que uno: La sabiduría de la multitud o por qué la mayoría es más inteligente que la minoría, Ediciones Urano, Barcelona, 2005; and of J. Heron, Cooperative Inquiry: Research into the Human Condition, Sage, Londres, 1996.

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19 See Yochai Benkler, The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom, Yale University Press, 2006.

20 Ross Dawson, Web 2.0 and user filtered content, [Internet], 9 September 2006. <http://www.rossdawsonblog.com/Weblog/archives/2006/09/post_2.html>. [Accessed 20 July 2007].

21 Of the many existing proposals, the artwork titled "Subvert" <http://www.subvertr.com/de> Les Liens Invisibles may be one of the most clearly oriented to politically subvert the relations between image and word. The application "10x10™" www.tenbyten.org, designed and developed by Jonathan Harris, attempts to represent visually each hour as well as, through 100 images and words,   the collective imagination of news at a global scale. It would influence more than any other project the possibilities of artistic practice as a visualization system of the relations of images to news events in the era of globalized communication, of the forms of its repetition and dissemination at a global level.

22 <http://obsessiveconsumption.com/>. [Accessed 20 July 2007].

23 <http://www.eat22.com/>. [Accessed 20 July 2007].

24 See, in relation to this idea of an ecological recomposition of communication, the interview by Futur Antérieur of Félix Guattari titled "Hacia una autopoiética de la comunicación".
<http://biblioWeb.sindominio.net/telematica/guattari.html>. [Accessed 20 July 2007].

25 See Theodor W. Adorno, Teoría Estética, Taurus, Madrid, 1992.

ISUBMIT, YOUPROFILE, WERANK
Deconstructing the Web 2.0 Hype

Geert Lovink

By 2005, the Net had recovered from the dotcom crash, and, in line with the global economic figures, reincarnated as Web 2.0. While the inhabitants of cyberspace passed the one billion mark, blogs, wikis and 'social networks' such as Friendster, Orkut and Flickr were presented as the next wave of voluntary work. Virtual communities had become a discredited term, "associated with discredited ideas about cyberspace as an independent polity, and failed dotcom ideas about assembling community in the shadow of a mass-market brand such as forums on the Coca Cola site."[1] Instead, there was talk of swarms, mobs and crowds. Media had turned social.

From collaborative content production such as Wikipedia, to social bookmarking on Digg, there was no doubt a new élan. If blogging was "so 2004," the BBC designated 2005 as the "year of the digital citizen." The Boxing Day tsunami of 2004 starkly showed the potential of these tools. Later that same year, the July 7th London bombings and the hurricanes in the U.S. forced home the fact that citizens had a much larger role in the production of news than ever before. The BBC received 6,500 e-mailed mobile images and video clips showing the fires at the Buncefield oil depot, thousands more than the number received after the London bombings. Media started to look more participatory and inclusive, concluded the BBC report.

The necessary next step on the hype ladder was the choice of 'YOU' as the 2006 Person of the Year by Time Magazine, reflecting the phenomenal rise of user numbers for social network sites such as MySpace (read: News Corporation) and YouTube (read: Google). Will 2007 be the year of "net criticism"? More and more people are starting to question the business model behind Web 2.0. Why should users continue to submit so much of their private data while a hand full of companies make billions of dollars in profits from these data? Why should users submit their content for free while a hand full of Web 2.0 entrepreneurs are making millions? What price are we willing to pay for the 'free'? Why don't we use our 'collective imagination' and think up sustainable models for a public cyber- infrastructure? The time has come to break the libertarian consensus. The step from social to socialist is a small one. It is time to become utopian again and start building a public sphere

outside of corporate short-term interest and government's Will to Regulate. It is time to invest in education, rebuild trust and disengage with the (post 9/11) security rhetoric.

If we want to analyze Web 2.0 we should not get lost in the perception management side of the story. The Web has tremendous opportunities that go way beyond the wet dreams of entrepreneurs whose only dream it is to sell out as soon as possible. The challenge is to come up with 'harsh meditations' that reflect on Internet discourses in real time, based on informed engagement. Despite a new generation of applications and the spectacular rise of the Internet population, and increased user involvement, most of the topics facing the Internet remained much the same: corporate control, surveillance and censorship, 'intellectual property rights', filtering, economic sustainability, and 'governance'. In this essay I will focus on two aspects in particular, the temptation to participate in the 'free' economy and the surveillance issues within social network sites and why young people think they have good reasons to ignore it.

Net critic Nicholas Carr asks if there is a counter-argument to be made to the Web 2.0 hype. "All the things Web 2.0 represents—participation, collectivism, virtual communities, amateurism—become unarguably good things, things to be nurtured and applauded, emblems of progress toward a more enlightened state. But is it really so?"[2] Web 2.0 promoters, says Carr, "venerate the amateur and distrust the professional." We see it in their praise of Wikipedia, and we see it in their worship of open-source software and their promotion of blogging as an alternative to 'mainstream media'." My answer to this differs from Carr, who is reluctant to undermine the good parts of the traditional professional model. The libertarian praise of the amateur grows out of a distrust of and resentment towards large organizations that are wary of the anarcho-capitalist recipes on how to innovate. But we've past the point of criticizing institutional dinosaur behavior. Utilizing open networks threatens the closed IP-focused knowledge management systems. In the libertarian approach the professional becomes an obstacle because of this trade-union-like behavior. The result of a lacking diversity of models is an unarticulated reluctance to think up economic models for (emerging) professionals that leave behind the copyright structure, yet are desperate to earn a living from their work.

The question I pose here is how the uncontested praise of the amateur can be undermined, as Andrew Keen has done in his recent book *The Cult of the Amateur*, not from the perspective of the endangered establishment but from that of the

creative (under)class, the virtual intelligentsia, the 'precariat', the multitude that seeks to professionalize its social position as new media workers. What is needed are economic models that assist ambitious amateurs to make a living from their work. It is our obligation to turn amateurs into professionals, to get rid of precarious jobs and establish new media as fertile ground for economic prosperity, not as a nighttime affair: "Everyone is a Professional." Related to this is the still outstanding debate of professional standards, certifications and codexes: what is web design, who can do it, and how much does it cost? If everyone can do it, does that also mean that everyone has the same aesthetic sensitivity? How do new tasks, related to computer networks, fit into existing institutions such as hospitals, trade unions, metal construction firms and museums? We cannot answer before we have codified the work practices, much in the same way guilds have done this in the past and professional organizations are doing right now. Is it the aim of professionalization of new media work to create new, separate sectors in society, or should we rather dissolve these tasks within existing professions.

CRUSADERS OF THE FREE

Unreconstructed fragments of 1990s Internet ideology are still floating around. These are mostly 'facilitating' concepts that appeal to freedom-loving, young users. Take blogger Ian Davis, for whom Web 2.0 "is an attitude not a technology. It is about enabling and encouraging participation through open applications and services. By open I mean technically open but also, more importantly, socially open, with rights granted to use the content in new and exciting contexts. Of course the Web has always been about participation, and would be nothing without it. Its single greatest achievement, the networked hyperlink, encouraged participation from the start."[3] Read the catchy self-definition of Digg: "Digg is all about user powered content. Every article on Digg is submitted and voted on by the Digg community. Share, discover, bookmark, and promote the news that's important to you!" It is not enough to deconstruct the lure of such techno-libertarianism in an academic journal or on a mailinglist. The rebel-business talk of 'change' has nowhere near been taken apart. No dissidents have yet stood up to object to the hypocritical agenda behind 'free' and 'open' in broader public arenas. What in fact should be done is to demand from the Free gurus to come up with an innovative economic model every time they 'free up' the next cultural or social activity.

On a more visionary scale Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales listed Ten Things That Will Be Free. The list was inspired by David Hilbert's address to the International

Congress of Mathematicians in Paris in 1900 where he proposed 23 critical unsolved problems in mathematics. Apart from the obvious Free Encyclopedia and Free Dictionary, there are standard curriculum schoolbooks, maps, communities, academic publishing, music and art, but also TV listings, product identifiers, search engines and file formats.[4] The confusion that Richard Stallman never managed to make history, namely that free, in his view, doesn't mean free-of-cost but instead expresses the possibility to change computer code, should not be reproduced yet again. For me there is no immediate connection between free and freedom. The ideology of the free (as in beer) lures, facilitates, and ultimately satisfies the millions in order to mystify and obfuscate the fact that the promoters, and the virtual class in general, cash-in elsewhere in the chain. What the ideology of the free is doing, despite all its good intentions, is to deliberately run away from the question of the economics of the so-called 'knowledge society'. The Crusaders of the Free systematically shy away to discuss their own economic models and instead talk about the Other: the User, the Programmer, the Citizen, the Blogger etc. who has to be liberated.

The emphasis of Lessig, O'Reilly, Kelly, Ito and many others on the right to remix mainstream content is an important issue but not crucial as most aspiring artists produce their own work. It is a bad postmodern cliché to state that today's cultural production merely consists of quotations. The exclusive focus on young and innocent amateurs that just want to have fun, and the resentment against professionals is not accidental. Amateurs are less likely to stand up and claim a part of the fast increasing surplus value (both symbolical and in real money terms) that the Internet is creating. Professionals who have been around for a while would understand what the implications will be for content producers if one giant such as Google instead of book publishers end up controlling money flows. What is important here is to envision sustainable income sources beyond the current copyright regimes.

The vices of Internet architecture must be known (and not left unquestioned) so that its virtues may prevail. The ideology of the free as one of it key components is part of the lubricious business language. In his essay *The Destruction of the Public Sphere* Ross McKibben states that the most powerful weapon of market-managerialism has been its vocabulary. "We are familiar with the way this language has carried all before it. We must sit on the cusp, hope to be in a centre of excellence, dislike producer-dominated industries, wish for a multiplicity of providers, grovel to our line managers, even more to the senior management team, deliver

outcomes downstream, provide choice. Our students are now clients, our patients and passengers customers."[5] According to McKibben it is a language that was first devised in business schools, then broke into government, and now infests all institutions. "It has no real historical predecessor and is peculiarly seductive. It purports to be neutral: thus all procedures must be 'transparent' and 'robust', everyone 'accountable'. It is hard-nosed but successful because the private sector on which it is based is hard-nosed and successful. It is efficient; it abhors waste; it provides all the answers. It drove Thatcher's enterprise culture. It is more powerful than the kind of language Flaubert satirized in the *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* since, however ridiculous it might be, it determines the way our political (and economic) elites think of the world."

"You shall give everything away free (free access, no copyright); just charge for the additional services, which will make you rich." This is the first of the "Ten Liberal Communist Commandments" that Olivier Malnuit published in the French magazine *Technikart*. The person who embodies these values like no one else is the Japanese venture capitalist, hacker and activist Joi Ito. Slavoj Žižek quoted Malnuit's commandments and lists Bill Gates and George Soros as liberal communists. Žižek: "The signifier of liberal communist Newspeak is 'smart'. Being smart means being dynamic and nomadic, and against centralized bureaucracy; believing in dialogue and co-operation as against central authority; in flexibility as against routine; culture and knowledge as against industrial production; in spontaneous interaction and autopoiesis as against fixed hierarchy. Their dogma is a new, postmodern version of Adam Smith's invisible hand: the market and social responsibility are not opposites, but can be reunited for mutual benefit."[6] Žižek goes on to say that liberal communists are pragmatic; they hate a doctrinaire approach. "There is no exploited working class today, only concrete problems to be solved: starvation in Africa, the plight of Muslim women, religious fundamentalist violence." Žižek's conclusion comes as no surprise: "We should have no illusions: liberal communists are the enemy of every true progressive struggle today." Liberal communists give away with one hand what they grabbed with the other. This goes to the core of the Internet ideology that makes us blind to what we actually pay, while overly happy to join the gift economy of the free.

Žižek mentions the necessity, in instances such as racism, sexism and anti-Semitism, to build coalitions with the liberal communists. But how about the case of the Internet? Isn't it time to bail out from the shared agendas with the libertarians, call for the exodus and confront the libertarians with their double agendas? Felix

Stalder and Konrad Becker from Vienna summarize the fight for media freedom in a neat way. "The goal is to devise new ways in which information can flow freely from one place to another, from people to people. Instead of deepening fragmentation, information and cultures are held to be a resource produced and used collaboratively, rather than being controlled by particular owners. People should be free to appropriate information as they see fit, based on their own historical and personal needs and desire, rather than having to consume the standardized products of McWorld."[7] My take here is that we can only continue to spread such calls for liberty if they also contain antagonistic statements about the 'state of the free'. We cannot continue to uncritically support Creative Commons, open source and knowledge for all platforms such as Wikipedia if their ideological premises cannot be discussed.

"Please, God, just one more bubble!" (a bumper sticker). It keeps important to analyze the 2007 Web 2.0 hype and see how it differs from the late nineties dotcom days. The days of empty portals have long gone by. Instead, bands and brands are running after the roaming hordes of users in an attempt to boost their popularity. What we gained compared to 1999 is the realization that people do not flock to the Web for e-commerce reasons but to have conversations.[8] Instead of the Web 2.0 term that Tim O'Reilly plugged, Trebor Scholz prefers to talk about "sociable web media." Trebor, posting on his iDC list: "The term Web 2.0 is yet another fraudulent bubble designed to trick investors with pretended newness. It's just like McDonald's re-stacking their greasy beef layers to sell an entirely new product every 6 months."[9] Nonetheless, the cluster of applications referred to as Web 2.0 are relatively new, as are the tens of millions of users that make use of social networks such as Digg and Facebook and sites like Wikipedia. And let's not forget the economic exchanges through eBay, Second Life and in particular Craigslist.

Writing in the same mailing list thread, what fascinates technologist Andreas Schiffler is how Web 2.0 presents a rediscovery of existing technologies such as RSS Netscape 1999, AJAX XML/HTTP Request IE5, DHTML/CSS IE5. These were popular features with browser-based companies, which were then transformed into a 'social phenomenon'. It seems besides the point to classify the seventy odd million MySpace users as mere victims of corporate media, simply because Newscorp's Rupert Murdoch at some point acquired the site. It seems hard for corporate consultants, hackers and media activists, to move away from the broadcast model and fully accept, beyond good or evil, the massive uptake of user content production

and related networks of friends. The disdain of AOLers locked up in their crappy Microsoft products sits deep, but in reality only shows that early adaptors elites have long lost their grip on the Net.

Web 2.0 promoters have rightly been accused of hyping emerging sites so that they can be sold to venture capitalists who then replace the management and alienate users who then move on so a new cycle can start elsewhere. Yet this isn't the end of the story. Jon Ippolito: "To dismiss the innovations behind Web 2.0 simply because venture capitalists are using this silly term to squeeze cash out of investors is like dismissing the environmental movement because British politicians are suddenly waving green flags to court election-year voters. Let's not confuse the carpetbaggers with the communities." Saul Albert admits: "There is nothing wrong with the business proposition if you can maintain the delicate balance of my needs against the imperatives of funders and advertisers." He then gives the example of del.icio. us that had a chance to supersede (kill) Google with a bottom-up public knowledge infrastructure at some point immediately before it got bought. Juha Huuskonen of Pixelache in Helsinki reminds the list participants that it "seems essential for an organization/service/tool to maintain their image as the 'good guys', something that might become increasingly difficult for commercial services in future. One complex and important issue seems to be how to deal with monopolies, both in the case of commercial services like Google but also for projects like Wikipedia. The magic role of the 'benevolent dictators' like Jimbo Wales for Wikipedia or Linus Thorvalds for Linux does not seem like a lasting solution."

DANAH BOYD AND THE DIALECTICS OF CONTROL

The 'user-generated content' is free for a reason. Users do not need to pay for online services for the simple reason that they are spied on. Profiles of millions of the innocent fun-loving youngsters are analyzed and matched with their online behavior. So what, many would say? There is no more privacy, that's a dream of the bourgeois age, some hackers argue. It's a pleasure to watch and be watched, the voyeurists amongst you will say. But what if you lose you're losing your job because of some compromising picture on Flickr? Or fell through a job application because your future employer did some data mining and didn't like your High5 profile from years ago? Perhaps you have made a comment that wasn't 'politically correct' (in 2015) or engaged in a protest that seems suspicious and your face was recognized in a crowd by some smart video search engine?

In the big world out there, and surveillance and control is seen as a limitless resource. There is never enough of it. There are always new techniques and fields of intrusion that have not yet been covered. Against this 'instrumental' resource approach we could put the kynical view which states that control is limited and cannot move beyond its own horizon of technocratic transparency. Software can only read what the programmer of that software instructs the software to detect. There is not more to know once you have already found out everything there is to record and watch for. Once a location or behavior has become transparent, there is little to look for. One can go into detail and focus on tiny aspects of already surfaced information, but that does not increase the control over the surveilled subjects.

So far activists have mainly protested against new control and surveillance method through legal means, setting up campaigns to pressure politicians to change the law. Instead of curbing the power over controlling bodies, the most common strategy of concerned citizens, there is another mentality of relative freedom on the rise that ignores the power of control. The question that I want to pose here is the following: Is it possible for tactical media makers, activists and artists to move beyond the critical enlightenment paradigm, to take an amoral position and see control as an environment one can navigate through instead of merely condemn it as a tool in the hands of authorities?

This argument is a reworking, a remix if you like, of Danah Boyd's findings (www. danah.org). This US-American researcher, who did her PhD at UC Berkeley and works for Yahoo, did research into youth culture on social networking sites such as Friendster and MySpace. Her findings have interesting implications for the usually passive way we complain about the continuous rise of invisible control technologies. Below I primarily use Danah Boyd's speech at the American Association for the Advancement of Science of February 19, 2006 called "Identity Production in a Networked Culture: Why Youth Heart MySpace".[10] According to Boyd hanging out has moved online. Teens chat on Instant Messaging (IM) for hours, mostly keeping each other company and sharing entertaining cultural tidbits from the web and thoughts of the day. The same is true on MySpace, only in a much more public way. MySpace is both the location of hanging out and the cultural glue itself. MySpace, IM and SMS have become critical tools for teens to maintain 'full-time always-on intimate communities' where they keep their friends close even when they're physically separated. Such ongoing intimacy and shared cultural context allows youth to solidify their social groups. The paradox that we have to deal with

here is that the highly public and open Internet is used to create intimate exchanges amongst friends and peers. All these conversation can, and will, be stored and indexed for decades to come.

Danah Boyd notes that adults often worry about the amount of time that youth spend online, arguing that the digital does not replace the physical. Most teens would agree, says Boyd: "It is not the technology that encourages youth to spend time online - it's the lack of mobility and access to youth space where they can hang out uninterrupted." In this context, according to Danah Boyd, there are three important classes of space: public, private and controlled.

"For adults, the home is the private sphere where they relax amidst family and close friends. The public sphere is the world amongst strangers and people of all statuses where one must put forward one's best face. For most adults, work is a controlled space where bosses dictate the norms and acceptable behavior. Teenager's space segmentation is slightly different, and this is where Boyd's theory starts. Most of their space is controlled space. Adults with authority control the home, the school, and most activity spaces. Teens are told where to be, what to do and how to do it. Because teens feel a lack of control at home, many don't see it as their private space."

Activists have not yet dealt with this complex reality and might, as an initial response, condemn the pro-corporate media attitude of youngsters as naïve, immature and pro-consumerist. While this may be true, such moralist approach often has little effect and is in fact irrelevant. A Chomsky-style lecture how evil the Rupert Murdoch empire, owner of FOX and MySpace is, would not result in less MySpace visitors. There is something wrong with media ownership and the dubious roles of venture capitalists and investors in Internet start-ups, not in the need for social networking sites perse.

In order to get a better grip on the unprecedented success of MySpace and other social networking sites we have to see such Web platform as social spaces and only secondary as media. According to Boyd "private space is youth space and it is primarily found in the interstices of controlled space. These are the places where youth gather to hang out amongst friends and make public or controlled spaces their own. Bedrooms with closed doors, for example. Adult public spaces are typically controlled spaces for teens. Their public space is where peers gather en masse;

this is where presentation of self really matters. It may be viewable to adults, but it is really peers that matter."

In countries like the USA teens have increasingly less access to public space. Classic 1950s hang out locations like the roller rink and burger joint are disappearing while malls and 7/11s are banning teens unaccompanied by parents. Hanging out around the neighborhood or in the woods has been deemed unsafe for fear of predators, drug dealers and abductors. Teens who go home after school while their parents are still working are expected to stay home and teens are mostly allowed to only gather at friends' homes when their parents are present. Parents respond to the perceived situation of danger by driving their kids around town in their car up to high school age or even beyond, thereby establishing a vicious circle in which teenagers do not learn to distinguish between a threatening situation and the ordinary dark sites of street life.

Danah Boyd explains that structured activities in controlled spaces are on the rise. "After school activities, sports, and jobs are typical across all socio-economic classes and many teens are in controlled spaces from dawn till dusk. They are running ragged without any time to simply chill amongst friends." By going virtual, digital technologies allow youth to (re)create private and public youth space while physically in controlled spaces. Instant Messaging serves as a private space while MySpace provide a public component. Online, youth can build the environments that support youth socialization.

It may be obvious that digital publics are fundamentally different than physical ones. They introduce a much broader group of peers. While radio and mass media did this decades ago, MySpace allows youth to interact with this broader peer group rather than simply being fed information about them from the media.

The big challenge, says Boyd, that online youth publics mix with adult publics. While youth are influenced by the media's version of 20somethings, they rarely have an opportunity to engage with them directly. Boyd: "Just as teens are hanging out on MySpace, scenesters, porn divas and creature of the night are using MySpace to gather and socialize in the way that 20somethings do. They see the space as theirs and are not imagining that their acts are consumed by teens; they are certainly not targeted at youth. Of course, there are adults who want to approach teens and MySpace allows them to access youth communities without being visible, much to

the chagrin of parents. Likewise, there are teens who seek the attentions of adults, for both positive and problematic reasons."

That said, the majority of adults and teens have no desire to mix and mingle outside of their generation, but digital publics slam both together. In response, most teens just ignore the adults, focusing only on the people they know or who they think are cool. When I asked one teen about requests from strange men, she just shrugged. "We just delete them," she said without much concern. "Some people are just creepy." The scantily clad performances intended to attract fellow 16-year-olds are not meant for the older men. Likewise, the drunken representations meant to look "cool" are not meant for the principal. Yet, both of these exist in high numbers online because youth are exploring identity formation. Having to simultaneously negotiate youth culture and adult surveillance is not desirable to most youth, but their response is typically to ignore the issue.

Parents also worry about the persistence of digital publics. Most adults have learned that the mistakes of one's past may reappear in the present, but this is culturally acquired knowledge that often comes through mistakes. According to Boyd, "most youth do not envision potential future interactions. Without impetus, teens rarely choose to go private on MySpace and certainly not for fear of predators or future employers. They want to be visible to other teens, not just the people they've friended. They would just prefer the adults go away. All adults. Parents, teachers, creepy men." It is through issues of moral panic such as contact between youth and adult inside MySpace that legislation and control systems are being put into place.

Danah Boyd concludes that while the potential predator or future employer don't concern most teens, parents and teachers do. "Reacting to increasing adult surveillance, many teens are turning their profiles private or creating separate accounts under fake names. In response, many parents are demanded complete control over teens' digital behaviors. This dynamic often destroys the most important value in the child/parent relationship: trust."

BEYOND THE CULTURE OF COMPLAINTS
Instead of the usual two, I prefer to distinguish three distinct phases of Internet culture: First, the scientific, pre-commercial, text-only period before the World Wide Web. Second, the euphoric, speculative period in which the Internet opened up for the general audience, culminating in the late nineties dotcom mania. Third, the post-

dotcom crash/post 9-11 period, which is drawing to a close with Web 2.0. Blogs, or weblogs are an interesting in-between phenomenon that really began around 1996-97, during the second euphoric phase, but remained off the radar as they had no e-commerce component. The significant change of the past several years has been the 'massification' and further internationalization of the Internet. In 2005 the significant one billion user mark was passed.

The 'globalization' of the Internet has been mostly invisible for the dominant Anglo-American Internet culture due to organized willful ignorance and a deficit of foreign language skills. It is hard for some to realize what it means that English content on the Web has dropped well below the 30% mark. Growth has also lead to further 'nationalization' of cyberspace, mainly through the use of national languages, in contrast to the presumed borderless Net that perhaps never existed. Western IT firms are more than happy to gear up authoritarian regimes with national firewalls. As they say, the world is a big place. The majority of Internet traffic these days is in Spanish, Mandarin and Japanese.[11] This picture gets further complicated if you take into account the 'cross media' potential of the two billion mobile phone users, blogomania in Iran, South Korea possessing one of the densest broadband infrastructures, and the rise of China. Who would ever guess that Poland, France and Italy are amongst the top European blognations?

There is no doubt that technologies such as the Internet live from the principle of permanent change. There is no normalization in sight. The tyranny of the *New* still rules, and it is this echo of the dotcom era that makes Web 2.0 look so tired right out of the gate. We can despise the relentless instability as a marketing trick, and ask ourselves why we, time and time again, get excited by the latest gadget or application. Instead of transcending away from the market noise and detaching ourselves, we may as well reconcile ourselves to the same old 'change' and enjoy precisely selected and manufactured 'revolutions'. A decade after its appearance and rapid growth in popularity, Internet culture is torn apart by contradictory forces that make it no longer possible to speak of general trends in either good or evil directions. Whereas permanent change takes command and massive control regimes have been introduced, the tens of millions of new users that are being added on a monthly basis give the medium unexpected twists as they accept the given and joyfully appropriate services in ways that market watchers could never have guessed.

In order to prevent cynicism and corporate bashing, just for the sake of it, I would like to propose to overcome the Web 2.0 hype—and it's necessary critique. We have to develop a media literacy that goes beyond questions of access. This has been stated time and again, but I would emphasize that Web 2.0 skills have remarkably little to do with learning or education. We have to move away from the computer and its networks and understand that education will need serious investments, in dollars and euros. Education, on any level, cannot be replaced by access to computer knowledge. Negroponte's One Laptop per Child is about to make this fundamental mistake again.[12] Hackers, activists and artists have to collectively create more distance towards the Digital Sphere in order to emphasize that the computer (networks) can only play a modest role in the elevation of world poverty, climate change, gender inequality, racism and so on. Without falling back into a Luddite position or it's perceived counterpart, techno-determinism, we have to come to a new understanding what computer-mediated communication can and cannot achieve.

In order to develop new social space for action we have to overcome the religion of the free. It is vital for 'social media' to develop its own economy. Giving away one's content should be a generous, voluntary act and not be the only option available. Instead of celebrating the amateur, we should develop an Internet culture that assists 'amateurs' (mostly young people) into becoming professionals. We don't do that by preaching to them that the only choice they have is to make money with a McJob during the daytime so that they can celebrate their 'freedom' during the long evening hours online. What we need is a redistribution of money, resources and power. Web 2.0 has so far only benefited the rich to become even richer. It is time for the 'crowds' to bail out of this logic.

NOTES

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http://www.roughtype.com/archives/2005/10/the_amorality_o.php

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http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/003593.html

5 Ross McKibben, The Destruction of Public Sphere, London Review of Books, January 5, 2006. URL:
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6 Slavoj Žižek, Nobody has to be vile, London Review of Books, April 6, 2006. URL:
http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n07/print/zize01_.html

7 Konrad Becker & Felix Stalder, IP and the City, posted October 22, 2005. URL:

http://world-information.org/wio/readme/992003309/1135254214

8 This is a reference to the famous phrase from the Cluetrain Manifesto: "Markets are getting smarter—and getting smarter faster than most companies: these markets are conversations." (http://www.cluetrain.com).

9 Trebor Scholz, Against Web 2.0, discussion on the IDC mailinglist, May 26, 2006. The following quotes are all from the same thread.

10 Danah Boyd. "Identity Production in a Networked Culture: Why Youth Heart MySpace." American Association for the Advancement of Science, St. Louis, MO. February 19, 2006.

11 See: http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

12 See for instance the independent One Laptop per Child news site http://www.olpcnews.com/.

COLLECTIVE TELEPATHY 2.0 (THE INTERCONNECTED MULTITUDES THEORY)

José Luis Brea

2666: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TELEPATHS

In 2666 there is an extraordinary passage where Roberto Bolaño tells how, when the colonizers invaded the American continent, they found that the natives possessed some kind of secret communication mechanism that let them know almost instantly about anything that happened anywhere on the continent. This information-- or counterinformation, as we would say today— served them as an excellent weapon that could not be fought or neutralized. All the barbarous things the Conquistadors did were known almost instantly by the indigenous people in their towns or wherever they were. They had at their disposal an information network that was much more efficient than anything the invaders were able to come up with. No matter how hard they tried, they were incapable of locating the language they used. They never managed to find it. Gradually, they came to believe the legend that a network of telepaths existed, sacred descendents of the gods, who told each other about events --or I would say: who found out about them simultaneously-- at a speed no contemporary technology has reached yet.

The legend quickly becomes an essential part of the plot of the novel, which tells us about how one of the main characters-- Amalfitano, the unsociable philosophy professor interested in Duchamp and the mathematics of limits-- soon starts to hear thoughts in his head that come from somewhere else. He then discovers, through research that leads him to find a document from that period, that it is quite likely that he is a descendent of one of the legendary heroes to whom tradition and legend ascribe telepathic abilities.

"Only after 1700", says the document he finds—"did the Spaniards notice messages being sent through branches. They were puzzled BY the fact that the Araucans knew about everything happening in the city of Concepción. Although they managed to find the *adkintuwe,* they were never able to translate it. They never suspected it might be telepathy."

Further along in the story, Bolaño adds the conclusions his protagonist the philosopher draws from the document:

"Which leads to the conclusion that, 1: all the Araucans or most of them were telepaths. 2: the Araucan language was closely related to the language of Homer … 7: on the contrary, the telepathic communication was never discovered, and if it ever stopped working, that was because the Spaniards killed all the telepaths. 8: telepathy made it possible for the Araucans of Chile [I doubt you need to be reminded of the country of Bolaño's birth] to maintain permanent contact with Chilean emigrants who were in such far-flung places as crowded India or green Germany. 9: Should one deduce, then, from all this that the author of the document, Lonko Kilapán, was a telepath? Well, yes, that's what should be deduced."

READING AND TELEPATHY: BENJAMIN VS. DAN GRAHAM

All of Bolaño's writing – and I might even say that all writing is, or at least somehow novel writing is - is *telepathic.* What is fascinating about the episode I've mentioned is precisely that it becomes self-referential – which is certainly inevitable in a good Duchampian philosopher. The passage is actually more self-generative than self-referential, in a similar manner to Dan Graham's *Schema*: it produces what it is talking about: *telepathy in the writing*. The passage continues:

"One can also deduce (and with a bit more effort, *see*) –I emphasize what is in parentheses- other things, thought Amalfitano as he conscientiously took his pulse and observed Dieste's book hanging in the night in the backyard".

For anyone who reads the entire passage, their thoughts are immediately full of images, ideas, and contents that actually are confirmed (or disappoint us) further on. The writing quickly becomes *telepathy* – which means one can hear (*see,* says Bolaño) even that which is *not said,* that which has not yet been spoken of. What is curious about this is that, depending on how we take it, this idea that writing is *telepathic* can seem empty, a mad whim, or on the contrary, all too obvious.

In a well-known passage, Benjamin states the belief that one could learn an unknown language if one looked at a text in that language with sufficient persistence and concentration. That might seem to be a matter of great deductive powers but it is not; instead, it is related to the conviction he put forth in *One-Way Street*: that reading is always *hallucinogenic* (sic) and that there is no drug more capable of inducing profane enlightenment. All writing is charged with contents that require an accomplice, the *hallucinatory* exercise - what we call reading - to take place in, shall we say, our thoughts. Of course what is behind all of this is a certain theory

of knowledge, which serves simultaneously as a theory of writing and a theory of reading.

Taking the passage – or even the entire novel – by Bolaño as an *allegory of reading* in the sense Paul de Man uses the term would not be an error. What Bolaño is telling us – and I might dare to say *telepathizing* – is actually *reading,* thinking of contents as the eyes run over a series of signs, of little black marks on a white background (or the ear hears a series of sounds; maybe I am also *telepathizing* a thought to you now), that *reading* is the result of a *productive* operation: one *thinks a thought* that we could say imitates, reproduces or mimics another thought that was previously produced in the other.

Writing is merely the *medium* and reading is the *psi procedure* by which the ghost is embodied in our own spirit. That *ghost,* which is those scribbled marks, in the absolute materiality of its mute gestures, secretly *voices* a thought, a meaningful content exuded in the radical blind darkness of the signifier- taken purely as a scribble, as something that cannot of itself *say* anything but that one can *allow to speak.*

The question then – the matter of telepathy, that is- fundamentally has to do with two things: first, how the meaning appears *as a ghost* where it is not – or how what does not speak, *speaks* - and second, with the timeframe established in its process. In other words: in telepathy, is simultaneousness really produced, a *synchrony* of different thoughts, or perhaps a sort of *anticipation – in two units of comprehension*, *simultaneously?* But let's not get ahead of ourselves; don't *telepathize me:* let's take things step by step.

FIRST QUESTION: ON HOW WHAT DOES NOT SPEAK, SPEAKS.
The first question then: telepathy is primarily to do with the question of how what does not speak, *speaks*. Or perhaps it would be better to say: about how "what-does-not-speak" *thinks.* But in addition, of *how what speaks says something other,* something more, *than what it says.* And while we're on the subject, of how then a text never actually says entirely (all of) what it says. And therefore, of how interpretation -and criticism as its analytical epitome- is actually the only thing that makes reading, the act of thought itself, like a route comprised of the flow, of the textures, of the unconscious, of the purely material.

If we take all of that into account, we will then conclude that it is not surprising that Freud included his own interesting reflection on *telepathy* precisely at the very centre of his principle essays on which his whole theory is based: his meta-psychological essays. And there's nothing odd about it because what is founded on the *possibility* of telepathy- something, as is known, Freud eventually declared that he *believed*- is precisely the very possibility of the unconscious, of the machine that manufactures thoughts without being, as yet, a self, a constituted subject.

For Freud, indeed, *telepathy* is the result of work comparable to that of dreams, to the "dream-work": work that places thought only where there is a signifier, which places psychic life only where there is pure materiality. If we remember a dream where the telepathic effect is red-hot, we will see it. For example, the one where a father dreams that his son comes up to him and shakes him, saying, "Father, can't you see I'm burning?" Awoken by the talking ghost of his son- a telepath, without a doubt-, the father quickly realizes that, indeed, his son is burning where he lies dead in his coffin in the next room, because one of the lit candles near it has fallen onto his corpse, which was laid out for viewing.

What is interesting about the story? Of course, nothing "paranormal" or "meta-psychic", we could say. But rather the fact that in relation to a subtle perception – which needs no explanation: a rise in temperature, reflections of light from the next room...- an entire literary, narrative, interpretive "work" is built, which quickly -I would say, even before the perception that serves as its origin- gives body to knowledge which becomes crucial as it represents an "emergency" -in both senses of the word- for the subject's psychic life. Regardless of whether that "advance" constitutes, as we will see, the timeframe of the telepathic - we could say that it is close to a premonition, in a micro-instantaneousness that precedes its own *occurrence* in the time of the "historical" event - the main thing is how a double fabric is constituted here, a double structure of memory-web.

The first places the subject in relation to the collective from which it is distinguishable-indistinguishable - the web of relations forming a fabric within which its specific being is gestated, the fabric of its "epic story", in Lacan's words. The second places the event triggering the emerging perception in relation to the web formed by its narrative, what we could call a web of mythic –or oneiric- "work" that, by relating each element of the interpretive system with the others builds a plausible unit of meaning.

Thus, it can be said that telepathy- as the latent content of the dream- is only carried out in the subsequent time of the interpretation. But as soon as that is built, although in a way that is not yet self-reflective, at the actual moment of the psychic act – the dream or telepathic impression- we can say that it is already a *thinking act, full of cognitive force:* both the dream and the telepathic impression have already been carried out (due to the dream-work or the myth) in forms of constituted language and thought.

What in the reality of the psychic experience is only a charge-force that alerts us to an inconclusive perception, insufficient but an emergence nonetheless, the emergence of something of interest to the social network of the subject in terms of feelings, is constructed as a connected narrative, like a story, by an ultra-fast interpretive process which actually happens previously – in the logical reordering which the subject makes of it as an interpreting subject- even as a *prior* perception. This is *telepathy.* Let's say: knowing that one knows something that one doesn't know, hearing how something that *does not speak* tells us we know something that we do not know we know...

SECOND: THE LOGICAL TIME OF TELEPATHY AS ANTICIPATED CERTAINTY
The second key question in relation to telepathy is then: that of its own timeframe, its "logical time", a time that we will see occurs "as anticipated certainty", as advance knowledge of what one *already knows* before one knows it.

I am certain that in the title I have offered for this section, at least one of you has recognized that of a well-known Lacanian *ecrit,* which starts out with the story of a group of prisoners who are offered a chance to be granted their freedom by guessing what colour marks them, deduced based on the observation of the one worn by the others (shall we say, by the self-deduction of the being of its own difference based on recognizing that of the others). To do so, each prisoner places a letter (of a total of five possibilities, two are white and three black) on their head in a place clearly visible to the others but that they cannot see.

What this Lacanian passage demonstrates is how the acquisition of a certainty about self-knowledge -the self-reflection in which an acquisition of identity takes place- is not limited to a precise logical equation, with a degree of absolute accuracy (in fact, although one sees two white cards, one may still be either white or black).

The acquisition of certainty depends on the *ultra-fast* perception of how our image is perceived -like that of its reciprocal *otherness*- in what we perceive as the *other.*

Here a decisive double dynamic opens up, which has to do primarily with the speed of what is at stake: to actually win the proposed game-sophism, it is essential that we be the first to acquire *certainty* regarding who we are, what sign we carry, what is the quality that distinguishes us, how we know the one that we erect as our own *difference.*

The problem is that we can only solve it *in relation* to the perception of it that the other has, and to how the other acts by virtue of it –so the other can try to anticipate ours. This is how a sudden course of reciprocities opens up, which is what fosters the *tele(sympathetic)pathic* process, in the form of an establishing propagation. Thus, spontaneously, it is the form of socialization -of a collective, simultaneous, synchronized constitution- that makes this effect of self-perception possible *through the other* in which is established as a postulation, a decisive gesture, (or perhaps I should say "decisionist"), the self-assignation of this or that difference regulated –in relation to the group, to the set of others in their reciprocal movements- at the moment in which "simultaneously" the *suspension of uncertainty* comes into play.

Therefore, there is no acquisition based on logical certainty, there is no sure, well-founded knowledge – of the being that one is. Rather, there is an ultra-fast, permanently revised negotiation of the game of reciprocities, of mutuality, that is cut off solely as an effect of an exercise of affirmative will that instantaneously resynchronizes, at each moment, the economy of reciprocities of the collective itself.

To know if I am A or B I have to pay attention to how those I perceive as A's or B's see me: but to know how they see me, I have to wait to perceive how they move, how they act in relation of the perception they have of "how I, in turn, see them". By that time, quite clearly, I will already have to have moved (if not, they cannot know who they are, with a sufficient degree of certainty, and then I would no longer have any way of winning the game). In the case of winning as well as providing them with information without which they could not do it either, in some place the "logical" uncertainty should be suspended, it should turn into a *supposed knowing,* into knowledge, into thought, into what it certainly *is not.*

What is solely a process of intensive perception of *otherness* is constituted in this way and by the effect of a chain of synchronized perceptions of subtle reciprocal micro-movements, in the form and exercise of a collective *synesthesia -* in which, energetically and instantaneously, a process is developed that establishes socialized subjection (without which no affirmation of one's own private identity has a real base of certainty).

A process that is actually then of the order of desire, of the life of feelings: that has the form of a dynamic constellated by the diffuse summary of the fabric of reciprocities of self-affirmation –of will-, as a projection negotiated by mutual ghosts, by images of otherness that are accepted with no basis other than a suspicion that we quickly need to leave behind to enhance our efficiency to act. That *hastened suspension of uncertainty* is what *produces* as knowledge -or makes pass as knowledge, as thought- what is really merely a presentiment, an economy of micro-gestures interpreted in advance: to become in that ceremony a staggering exercise –fiduciary, mythical-poetic- of *recognition,* of ritual participation in the con-celebration of the arrival of an "I", only in the blurred constellation of a *we.*

What eventually turns into an *elucidated form of thought* thus originates as a purely abstract affective tension -the projection of a desiring form whose final goal is the recognition of the being who makes it-; what eventually turns into a statute of differential affirmation of a particularity of experience -in the *life of a subject*- is no more than the propagation of a whirlwind of ghosts in a social body, in the environment of a relational landscape of reciprocities -before which an anticipatory tension is made, which necessarily is synchronized innumerably, with a speed of refreshing itself that is impossible to record, to perceive, to enumerate. With the same speed as continuous, (a)historical, absolute time -to which a timeless, eternal balcony, extended to all places, suddenly appears to us.

THE PRODUCTION OF THE PSYCHIC: THE SETTING FOR PSYCHO-POLITICS

I would like to turn away from the question of the "telepathic" for a moment to approach more clearly the question that I feel is always really behind my reflections. As I see it, what is at stake is nothing other than indeed a reflection as to how the processes for creating subjectivities are developed, how a subject, "what is *subjected",* I'd say, *is produced* and *is placed* under a set of specific circumstances. Conditions that, in any case, can be fully recognized by a radically materialist analysis, without hesitation –today when a certain *bio-politics* seems ready to flirt

with the return to essentialist *animism*, under "neuromantic" biologistic parameters, all of them camouflaged under the strengths of the new neurophysiology.

I for one would be in favour of affirming rather the character that is primordially political –I would even say doubly political, we will soon see why- under which the dynamics that establish the formations of subjectivity are formalized. We could say, following Foucault in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject[1]*, that that production of the subject is the leading channel for the new *art of governing,* the new way that the political spreads its potential. But also, at the same time, in this production work lies the beginning of any possible line of resistance or deviation, "if one accepts that there is no other place for support, at the beginning and the end, of resistance to political power than the one found in the relationship one has *with oneself"* –here I quote Foucault explicitly.

In other words: producing the "I", the *self*, the *subject* that has a name is very probably the fundamental strategy by which today -maybe we could have said *always;* but, yes, let's say *today-* power operates, the movement by which power establishes its *empire.* The beginning of all relations of domination are actually formatted here, in this *sponsored constitution* of the processes of subjection: in the set of operations by which *human life* is constituted as the "life of a self", of a subject, of a "subjected one", I would also say.

In fact, that is the task par excellence that the capital machine has taken on *today*, to base its logic of power on: the task of generating *ways of life,* how they come into being, under which we *come to be* that "self", that "I", that we would say "we are". Or to say it in Judith Butler's anti-essentialist way, "we are for now" - like when she says "I am not a woman; I am a woman for now". She herself would have highlighted, quite rightly, how in the exercise of *government-ality* today, power creates lives "controlling differences, socially producing and organizing images and desires, investing certain features with power, cutting back certain feelings, establishing hierarchies and separations, even constructing mechanisms by which certain groups are stripped of humanity"[2] –those who are thus reduced to what Agamben has called "bare life".

The paradox begins when we realize that that is the same setting, the same theatre of operations –that has to do with redistributing differences, reorganizing feelings and intensities, modulating desires and work in collective imaginations- in which any kind

of critical or subversive work would have to be carried out (this is at least the point of view of bio-politics). For that reason then the formula making the *care of oneself* -the *souci de soi* proposed by Foucault- the basis for any possible politics of *resistance* will have to overcome a serious initial difficulty: it will have to go through the question of a possible serious contradiction.

Which actually consists not only of the fact that the territory in which power as well as our possibilities of resisting it operate is one and the same, and that what is disputed seems to be also in fact the same object: precisely the *self,* that *we ourselves* that is trapped -produced- in the administration of power but also in our practices of emancipating ourselves from it.

If not, and in an even more disturbing way, we may have a more than well-founded doubt as to whether any of those *practices of resistance* or escape –those that we represent to ourselves in well-meaning fashion as practices of resistance or escape- are no more than yet another plan, another twist, prefigured by the segregation of how things are imagined- in this case, how resistance is imagined, which leads the people hunting down tendencies to seduce us with slogans like "your rules", "be yourself", and so on- which fit well into the constitution of the process establishing subjectivities in the context of the new *economies of experience* that contemporary capitalism uses as an identifying capitalism, as a mega-factory of subjectivities.

We must not fall into the defeatism we might recognize in that overwhelming fantasy -which reminds me of the sequel to MATRIX, when the architect explains that *the illusion of resistance has been manufactured* to ensure the total confinement and reclusion of the subjects in the heart of the *model of experience generated* developed through programmes that manage the psychic reality the inhabitants of the matrix feel as their lives, even as resistant or emancipated lives-

I say: we must not fall into the defeatism we might recognize in that overwhelming fantasy, and we could at least say something like it would be in the exercise of its work of government-ality that *it,* that power *produces* us, but it does so in such a way that at some point that factory allows us the commitment and will -or at least an extremely strong desire, perhaps- to escape from its pressure by some *escape route*, although only to return at some other point, under some other economy, to the same management, the same task: that of producing ourselves, to end up manufacturing

ourselves as subjects of existence, as an *instance of life*- except that now, perhaps, in another way, *under a different regime.*

From a Deleuzian point of view, we would not have to call here on any "second" substance –but rather admit that it is the extension of *life as immanence* that procures both that tension of resistance, of subversion, of a shift, an excess, and breaking down of the structure in which it is trapped and subjected, as the factory prior to -perhaps- that same despotic, subjugating structure. We could even argue –looking at the fantasy of reclusion and its rather tedious story of salvations- that if it happens that way, under that despotic conformation, it is precisely in order to make possible and well-founded the occurrence of our existence told precisely as being permanently adrift, nomadic, that breaks down and de-territorializes all boundaries –and primarily any modelling, and crystallizing in an established structure.

Thus, and if we allow ourselves to be carried away by one of these extreme fantasies, we must admit that confronting bio-power should –under this perspective, which is that of bio-politics- should avoid returning to any classic model of bipolar confrontations, dichotomies which are more or less Manichaean in their analytical-critical simplifications, to accept that in regard to modalities establishing ways of life and formations of subjectivity, everything is, primarily, purely an intensive matter: fundamentally, a matter of speed, of regimes, of experimentation, of intensification...

BIO OR PSYCHO-POLITICAL EXPERIMENTATION
Experimentation, then. Movements that are unexpected, anomalous, excessive, subtle, intensive, affective, stylistic – Foucault is most convincing in formulating his politics of the *self* when he enumerates among them the *practices of style-,* movements that because of all that de-territorialize or at least displace the models that institutionalize the current ways of life for any existing being, to keep it subjected to an increasingly precarious, devalued existence, to an impoverished and alienated life of the spirit, to the indignity of feeling *the lack of a life of one's own.*

It would not be easy to enumerate –and even without trying to be exhaustive- the series of these possible movements -experimentation. Among other things, something tells us it is better to be silent, to stay away from those *cool hunters* who so quickly would turn their escape lines into (new) tackle for capture, in operations of institutionalization. Some of those present would surely wish to point to the fertile association of some practices of social activism with others of artistic communication

as a privileged territory for their development, and I for one would agree that it probably so. But, at least for now, I would rather be cautious and keep silent...

And instead of enumerating or proposing some examples of those kinds of practices of resistance that I particularly value, what I would like is to suggest something about how I understand they should move in relation to a very specific axis: that of the formation, I would say, of the *formations of subjectivity.* Not so much then in relation to the production of life in general, but rather quite specifically in relation to the *production of psychic life,* the production of *modes of experience* through which each life feels and imagines itself, perceiving itself as a *lived life.*

I will say -and with this I will end this long digression- that they will always be trapped in the dominant model of administration by power –associated to the contemporary form of capital- inasmuch as they move up and down along a sole axis of resolutions: that of *organic formations,* the one that below leads to the institution of the self, toward the privatization of its individuated form, and perhaps above toward the notion of the state, of an organized social body -let's say the nation, now that the universalist fantasy of a cosmopolitan and pacified humanity on the horizon of happy homologation achieved under the tutelage of the project of lights -that is, as a utopian result of the progress of knowledge and the speculative and ethical uses of reason -has finally been abandoned as a fantasy used for ulterior motives or sterile.

Therefore: the experimental production of *inorganic* formats of subjection will be where we will be able to find or raise escape lines from what has been laid out in organic models, where those experimental practices are able to lead us, on a micro-scale, toward the untamed explosion of the pure becoming that configure each life, toward the recognition of a complex of multiplicities -of intensive singularity- which, boiling beneath its ominous figure -refuse to be reduced to the figure of the individual-I, of the self.

Likewise, at the other end of the axis, we will find increasingly insistent -and effective, I'd say- attempts to structure, from the point of view of bio-political practices, inorganic formations of collective subjugation –like the community in Agamben or in another way in Bauman, like the notion of the multitude in Negri-Hardt- that operate like abstract machines, like devices, projected from the aspiration of making them resistant to the reduction the organicist conformation will always aim to carry out, the crystallization that as a result of the cathexis on an intensive field that determines

the homologizing imposition of a sole despotic signifier projected as identity as a repetition of the same imposed on the collective of differences stripped under its imposition of their untamed, wild deployment of strength.

All the notions that political practice has tried to structure around an organicity in the formations of subjectivity have been prone to the same defect: they aim to make something crystallize in identity, something that is rather pure anomic tension of reciprocities, of a life of mutuality, of coalition, to which, in order to presuppose that it is capable of *purpose-oriented action*, it is not necessary to hand it over to the entrenchment its organic, organized constitution supposes, whether in the deception of the individual-I, or in that indecency they call nations. As Nietszche wrote, *there is no self, there is no state, there is no species: there are only highs and lows of intensities.* It is solely a matter, I would say, of releasing their power.

COALITION 2.0: THE INTERCONNECTED MULTITUDES THEORY

Let us return now to our reflection about the telepathic, about the form of thought and how the subjectivities are produced that take place in it, as a potential tension of a coalition that is inorganic, reticulate, and "Uni-minded" (it could sound like a joke, but those who are familiar with Kirby's comics know what I mean). The form that the figure of (not)knowing we have been describing takes lacks recursivity: there is no going back. Nothing of what happens in that (not)knowing was prior to it, a priori, or transcendent. Nothing of what is produced there was already there, but rather happens, *it is placed* there, it is pure becoming. Something that is placed as an interpretation or a thought from the instant prior coming from the possible (entropic) future of the system (from both the system of matter and the system of reading), from a *topoi* that was surely (if we wished to guess what) its spontaneous line of fall - of distension, shall we say.

Thus, a double compression movement –that charge equation by which the game is attracted like an abstract, irresolvable sophism and immediate distension like a fulfilled form of (no)response determines the functional logic of this operation. Systole and diastole, compression and distension, inhalation and exhalation, something captures the differential game constellation of the parts as a centripetal magnetism of its molar cloud, stops once again, and instantaneously, lets it distend, propagating itself in a loose dispersion toward its infinite escape lines.

Coalition is the name of the momentary centripetal equation, the vectoral moment of a force of mutuality that depends on being placed in *the same place*- in the same plane of consistence, as immanence- an itinerant multiplicity of differences, of highs and lows of intensity, the electrified moment of a tension of intertwined potentials. Coalition, or we could say *multitudinous moment,* the tension of an a-numerical group that is embodied instantly in the form of a constellated, composed movement, as if directed by unanimous will. But it would be a serious error to take this emerged and self-establishing collectivity as anything except that mere *moment of force,* the provisory virtual body -a body without organs, an abstract machine- of a functional (and trembling) unity of action and (no)consciousness, a machine of flashing movement that takes place, almost instantaneously, between the lines of time.

And it would be a serious error because nothing in it is stabilized, nothing takes on a symbolic body, nothing is crystallized in the form of a fulfilled closed identity, in the closure of a name of its own. No: this is not the setting of some fixable collective identity, it is not the name of a transcendent autonomous Subject of History that is recursive, anchored to some bio-territoriality –it has nothing to do with nations, ethnic groups, classes, of a unit of destiny in history, nothing to do with any of that. No: here there is only the moment of spinning, an economy of feelings measured by an inapprehensible intensive-time, the complement of a pure aerial drawing that gathers and disperses in tenths of a second an indeclinable multiplicity of conjugated autonomous movements, of converging trajectories at the instant of magnetic negotiation, of intersecting lifelines that are, at each moment and simultaneously, lines of meeting and lines of escape.

This is the setting of a figure in ephemeral change, negotiated instant by instant in the course of a possible action –which is executed, which *takes place.* In constant construction, nothing here is given papers confirming stability, territory, passport, or an act of government or parliament. Instead, at the most, papers granted subsequently, by common law, the power of joining together and sharing life. We are here in the setting in which the city is understood as a pure fractal constellation of feelings, of potentials for action. It does not matter that it has no body of its own, no specific materiality –or territoriality: there are no borders or biology, but rather the pure negotiated transivity of respective movements, a relational space that is underway, a mere public-sphere, a place for mute dialogues spread by propagation, by the pure contagion of feelings, in that economy of anticipation of the recognition of the other that flows constantly, never still, like an instantaneous pulse and always

falling, always in transit between its movements of compression and distension, Eros and death.

The citizenship granted here does not ask for or give names: it flows liquidly in the tension of contagion of a dynamic of the feelings propagated (there where they procure growth, mutual strength). All of that which runs through the bodies and hurls them beyond themselves to flip them into the power of one without organs, tensional, that no-body (or the body of the *socius*) where the powers of action of all of those who comprise it multiply exponentially, with the force of every node in their intersections with all the others. No: this is not the cold statistics of that rude remark they call a *state of opinion.* If anything, at least, it is a historical effervescence, an Eleusian fire of the passions of life, of a better life, of a nobler, higher life. We could say perhaps a *state of passion,* a fluidics of feelings that move at the speed of a sole implacable equation: that of desire in its reciprocal compositions, in its innumerable routes through the citizenry, constantly negotiated. No, there is no *collective intellection* here, but rather shared affection, collective *tele-pathy*.

REVOLUTION AND TELEPATHY: THE POLITICAL UNCONSCIOUS

And the question then, might be: what kind of knowing does this constitute, which is the fruit- we said- of a pure collective *telepathy-* of a state that is merely an epidemic coalition of affective states, propagation and distant flow of empathies –in the setting of a *body without* organs, a pure plane of abstract immanence- not logical, formalized thought, a self-reflecting formulation.

I would say it is a structurally negative thought, a thought about exactly what there *is not* in each time –a thought induced precisely by *what there is not.* Telepathy –as an expression of the collective imagination, of a kind of uni-mind conformed as the sum of an uncountable number of small micro-forces- is always a thought of that order, a thought constituted on the other side of the insufficiency with which our desire -an infra-thin desire, which never gives up, nonetheless- expresses its absolute inconformity with the world we have, with the diminished way of life that is handed to us as life -supplanted by the impoverished vileness that, in every effective construction of the world, founders in *the false.*

An abstract machine, what speaks in this form of *affect-thought* is then the unfulfilled longing of something other, of authentic life, the uncontained passion of magnificence, of plenitude –that runs through all the moments of history like a red

thread, to find in them the vicinity of the same revolutionary impulse. What speaks in this form of *affect-thought* is the same equation of reciprocity that institutes as a *system of citizenship* the body without organs of an uncountable multiplicity, that *imitatio afecti* that Spinoza imagined as a radical political utopia: the city as a swarm of spirit formed by incorruptible men.

This knowing-(not)knowing is then the flag and machine of war before it is actually thought, before it is constituted knowing. It is *cupiditas,* inflamed passion before it is a formulated object or place. It is the opposite of constituted knowing, it is the form in which what has no place of its own, no legitimate voice, speaks: something that then perhaps we could call *the political unconscious* of each time, to recognize it in ours.

It is, finally, the nebulous typing and grammar of reciprocity, a fire of desire of the absolute which takes no other form that that of a moving, fleeting flight, expressed in an indecisive succession of floating formations -of the collective imagination. Which says nothing but perhaps the demand for a higher, truer life: the refusal to settle for anything less.

 It is perhaps the outbreak and power of a tension of thought synergized in the complicity of the many, there where their multiplicity postulates an inexorably unclosed management –and therefore, always open to deviations, to its deviations. It is perhaps the product of an *intensive memory* which is nothing less than the equation of the interaction of *the others with their others* than the inverted memory of a longing for the future which has always, and as the consciousness of fatal incompletion, beats as *political drive and power* in the silence of what, in every time, speaks with the voice of an unbeaten ghost. It is perhaps that *spectre* that from the distance of time still to come, asks us forcefully about a beloved destiny, with the vocation of deserving a name that is yet, that we still, are certainly very far from having the right to bear. Simply, that of *humanity.*

NOTES

1 And Francesco Giorgi and Robert Rodríguez remind us of that in the introduction to their collection of *Ensayos sobre biopolítica (Essays about bio-politics).*
2 Idem.

THE LAPSES OF AN AVATAR: SLEIGHT OF HAND AND ARTISTIC PRAXIS IN SECOND LIFE

Mario-Paul Martínez Fabre y Tatiana Sentamans

From the outset, the Internet has proven to be an ideal channel not only for communication and aggressive capitalism, but also for artistic creation and counterculture. A review of the history at net.art will doubtless bear witness to how the development of a specific expressive language in the web has been consolidated over the years, configuring an autonomous artistic discipline. It has been backed and promoted by the production of specific know-how disseminated by portals such as *w3art*, *rhizome* or the now deceased *aleph-arts*, among others. Similarly, as regards the specifically artistic aspects of this format, there are several virtual galleries that exhibit and/or trade with the artistic works that hang from their binary walls, with varying degrees of success, a set of individual websites of artists "of all kinds", digital publications, reviews, blogs, etc., that have altered and widened the traditional artistic and cultural circuit.

After it was opened to the public in 2003, Second Life, a three-dimensional virtual universe that is hosted in the mesh traced by the Internet, has allowed for the coexistence of these productions inside and on the periphery of the vast community of Internet users. In a short space of time, and supported by an economy that is cultivated both inside and outside its limits, it has modulated a virtual environment that functions as an entertainment platform, an expressway for the exchange and purchase of information and a headquarters for social work projects that has managed to recreate a popular spirit that is open to the accessibility, interactivity or reciprocity, etc. offered by the new technological media.

The purpose of this research project is to determine and analyse the position that artistic ideals and their quota of productions occupy in this virtual universe, the extent to which the creative projects developed by avatars (the Internet users that participate in Second Life) or groups of avatars, might constitute an artistic reference, configured by an imaginary and a set of new *modus operandi* or unique *scripts* that might enrich R+D+i (research, development and innovation) of new artistic practices in the future, or the extent to which it all might be, in the last analysis, an

empty phenomenon, devoid of depth, anchored to a mere theatrical transgression of "reality" and betrayed by the speculatory excess that characterises the platform at certain levels.

1. WHAT IS SECOND LIFE?

For those who are not yet familiar with it[1], Second Life is described as a virtual universe[2] hosted in the mesh of the Internet. A parallel world, very similar to the world that we know – with its bars, shops, homes and so on - where it is possible to stroll around, go shopping and socialise with other users with the ease provided by the fact that one acts behind a virtual alter-ego (or avatar, as they are called) that is configured from top to toe for the occasion. In this space, we can map out, as the title indicates, a second life that can make up for some of the tangible inconveniences of reality. I am not referring to the ease with which the programme allows us to fly, travel in time or change our gender or race at will, but to the opportunity to prosper socially and economically without the complex obstacles to which we are accustomed in the real environment. If we manage our linden (the local currency) well and fine-tune our speculative intuition, any purchase that we make may become a rising value that may be renegotiated for real dollars. The real financial scope of the invention will be easier to understand in the light of the investments and imports that companies like IBM or Nissan are making on the ground.

2. BACKGROUND: VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES

The origin of virtual communities is usually attributed to MUDS, Multi-User Domains[3], collective communication systems that emerged in the early 1990s, when the Web, which did not yet have today's technology, still based most of its functioning on textual language. Without graphics, participants had to use their imagination and collectively develop all of the literature that would describe the surroundings and the plot of the game, as is the case in live role-play games.
It is not as if there had been no precedents, such as the case of the "Habitat" game by Lucas Arts, which had already tried in 1985, via the Compuserve network[4], albeit not very successfully, to build a virtual community with graphic systems and avatars. The fact is that the communication networks in which these communities were registered were not strong enough for these projects to solidify.
The next generation, by then supported by the Internet, came along with the on-line videogames[5] and their attempt to create globalising platforms that could support the games via the Internet. Although the goal of the game is to achieve objectives

that are irremediably violent, the premise of survival depends on the need to solve problems as part of a group. Special mention should be made here, from among the few attempts at on-line videogames developed by the Spanish industry, to the game "La prisión" (Prison). It is clear from the first games that in order to survive in this community, the user depends on his/her negotiating skills and promotion among the gangs formed by the rest of the users.

Another peculiar on-line social construction project is "Haboo Hotel", a space that combines the pixelled aesthetics of the early days of synthetic image with the possibilities of the Chat, creating a textual dialogue space determined by the communication systems that had already brought in the IRC[6] or the Messenger[7] programme.

None of the above examples complied with the basic evolutionary factor in Second Life: the economic system that supports it. Therefore, nowadays, as may be seen from its number of members and the dimensions of the investments, we may only count two direct competitors to Second Life, i.e. "Entropía Universe" by Mindmark and "Cyworld" by SK Communications. The former is a futuristic metaverse[8] that brings together the concept of a peace-loving, constructive virtual community and the addictive sense of adrenalin in the on-line violent videogame with clearly defined aims and missions. In this system, the exchange currency ensures permanence and power; i.e., the better the weapons, the more superior the defence systems and evidently, the better relations to cover your back. The other system is "Cyworld", an electronic society for the exchange of data and the performance of financial operations, the functioning of which is based on a highly-evolved system of personal blogs, like updatable diaries that with their three-dimensional central screens, are used at the same time as meeting halls, private clubs or offices for exchanging and trading in currencies.

3. CHANNELS FOR DISSEMINATING ART

Within SL, there are various channels for disseminating art. For example, museums inspired by *Real Life,* like the Second Louvre Museum[9], which make the most of the power in the name and then proceed to depress any minimally specialised spectator when he/she comes across a hotchpotch imitation of the most banal precepts of museum culture, combined with the most irritating tastes in the virtual life.

Aside from this type of experiences, more and more RL art centres and galleries are opening premises in SL. However, they do not offer much more than a virtual substitute with displays of the "real exhibits". For example, the cultural centre that supported by the Caja Madrid Savings Bank social fund,

La Casa Encendida, recently complemented its Madrid premises with a replica in SL (on *Casa Encendida* Island), where visitors may visit from their terminals the exhibitions on display there or attend on a deferred basis the concerts and shows that are hosted on their premises.

On the other hand, the *Art Plus Association pour le Développement de la Création Contemporaine* (Association for the Development of Contemporary Creation, which was created by the French Minster of Culture and Communication, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, has set up a centre called the Contemporary Art Simulator that acts as an interface for this organisation, which lacks an actual premises in RL. It was the politician himself that inaugurated and visited the Arts Plus[10] facilities in SL.

However, of all the virtual centres and galleries, on an exclusive basis and limiting ourselves to the artistic praxis that is specific to the environment, we should mention the avant-garde gallery *par excellence* in SL, Ars Virtua, New Media Center[11], a New Media centre that defines itself in its statement as "a space set aside for the new media", which helps us to understand the new creation practices developed on and thanks to the platform, although also sometimes for what they call "traditional art".

Its objectives include issues like how to develop the SL environment for artistic production, to become a laboratory for training on new artistic practices, to provide a platform for the intersection of the media and the fields of knowledge/ information, or to promote the development of communities in the web, as well as offer a place that will be propitious to the exchange of ideas that goes beyond the borders in a space dedicated to experiences and participation. The gallery may be accessed 24 hours a day by an unlimited number of people on a simultaneous basis all around the world. The centre has also developed a residence programme for artists, pioneering in SL, known as AVAIR (Ars Virtua Artists-In-Residence), which is aimed at consolidated or emerging artists that work with the SL 3D setting, who are paid a salary of 400 dollars, given a certain degree of training and provided with a mentor or tutor - if necessary-. The residence programme, which lasts for 11 weeks, culminates in an exhibition and/or event at the gallery. It is interesting to note that the AVAIR project is a theoretical proposal aimed at reflecting on the concept of residing in a space that has no physical location, as a radical alternative to artistic proposals, because there are no physical limits or as regards construction materials; the artists are only

constricted by social conventions and software (which is flexible and developable). The artistic forums that are most visited and that have the highest prestige among the artistic communities in SL include specific on-line magazines like *Slart[12],* whose name is composed by the acronym for the multiverse and the word "art", or *Spark Magazine[13]*, a magazine that may only be found and read at specific coordinates in SL.

4. ARTISTIC PRAXIS IN SECOND LIFE. TYPOLOGY

As described above, a great number of artistic projects whose composition and expository assembly are governed according to the most conventional codes from the "real" artistic circuit are predominant in the synthetic multiverse. In the last year, the number of art galleries opened in SL has increased at a vertiginous rate, going from the very small group when the platform was launched to more than 200 now in existence. This is an indication of the growing awareness of the market potential of SL, because despite the fact that many are not making a profit, there are artists, such as Dancoyote Antonelli, a.k.a. DC Spenseley, that estimate to have sold about 5 million Lindens (almost 19,000 US dollars according to the exchange rate) and who are receiving an increasing number of orders. This money is reinvested in research, payment for programmers and other SL employees. In fact, we can find the majority of these "art markets" grouped together in thematic neighbourhoods like the Cetus Gallery District[14].

4.1. DIVERSIFIED PROJECTS: HALF-WAY BETWEEN THE REAL AND THE VIRTUAL

The "Femmes héroïques, une mythologie moderne"[15] project is carried out by the group known as The Computer Band, which is inspired by the iconic universe of comics and more specifically, by the superhero universe. The members of this group are the protagonists of the first thematic exhibition organised by the aforementioned Arts Plus association in their SL centre. "Heroic women, a modern mythology" aims to pay tribute to women all over the world, with a labyrinthic installation of 11 silhouettes representing a set of mutating creatures and their powers".[16] In the real world, the exhibition took place between 8th and 30th March of this year at the Musée de l'Homme at Palais Chaillot, located on the Parisian Place du Trocadéro. After the inauguration of this Women's Day – at which the French Minister was present-, the exhibition was echoed at the association's facilities in SL (108, 161,33), where the residents of the environment created by Linden Lab were invited to produce and introduce avatars based on the 11 heroines described in the exhibition. However, it is

a project that is based on a stereotypical and essentialist concept of women, which bears the imprint of the classical opportunism of the prototypical political agenda of 8th March each year.

The active Eva and Franco Mattes, also known as 0100101110101101.ORG, made their first incursion into SL at the beginning of 2006. Since then, they have been exploring its sites and interacting with its peculiar inhabitants. Given the intrinsic condition of the SL environment as a "factory of identities", the tandem has been attracted beyond redemption to its domains, which is logical, considering that the demolition of the cult around the figure of the artist and the concept of conventional artistic ownership have constituted a centre of interest   for the duo since their early days at Luther Blisset (1994-1999), including the creation of the alias Darko Maver, a tormented artist (1998-1999).

The first visible result of what they called their "video-game flânerie" were a series of portraits, exhibited for the first time at the Ars Virtua virtual gallery and titled, in tribute to Warhol, the "13 Most Beautiful Avatars", inaugurated on 15th November 2006. For this display, the Mattes – with the help of James Morgan (Ars Virtua)- virtually recreated in the gallery an exact reconstruction of the physical space of the Italian Academy at the University of Columbia in New York, where the works – digital prints on canvas - were exhibited 15 days later (on 30th November 2006). A giant screen connected to the virtual exhibition was installed on the second floor. It is a game of mirrors orchestrated by the artists between the real and the virtual: the virtual space is a reconstruction of the reality of the gallery, but the real exhibition is a reproduction of what had previously been done in the virtual plane. In this regard, it is also interesting to reflect on the audience in RL and in SL. In the virtual application, the members of the audience were visibly some of the subjects of the portraits, while in the case of the real exhibition, who knows if any of them could have gone to NY City and even then, if they could have been recognised without their virtual interface?

What is the sense of making a portrait of an avatar? The artists understand the very concept of avatar (the visual interface of a subject in a synthetic on-line world) to mean a self-portrait. Unlike the majority of portraits, the portrait technique in SL is not based on what the subject of the representation looks like, but rather on what he/she would like to look like. Therefore, they are not exactly portraits, but rather self-portrait images.

Eva and Franco Mattes do not choose beauty as a theme. Instead, they underline this concept in the title of the series. In their opinion, those that choose beauty according to the classical Western stereotype are the "alter-egos" of the avatars that build their morphology according to this stereotype. The portraits are as cool and sexy as they are tragic and terrifying, a classical cocktail from the pop culture menu, which is very much present in this work and confirmed by the allusion to Warhol in the text and in quotations from his texts. The fact is that they consider that on-line communities and videogames are the equivalent in today's popular culture to comics in the 60s and what they represented in the imaginary of artists like Warhol or Liechtenstein.

Synthetic Performances is a series that was started in January 2007 and which consists of the representation of historical performances in a synthetic world like SL. They have all been carried out via their avatars, built on the basis of their actual physiognomy. People can witness the performances online as they are being carried out, or visit the documentation (photographic and videographic) afterwards. The performances by Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic, Valie Export and Peter Weibel were broadcasted at their individual exhibition in RL, titled "The Theatre of Life" and shown at the Galleria d'Arte Civica di Trento (Italy) on 31st January last, hosted in Ars Virtua thanks to James Morgan. The Mattes carry out a major production with collaborators -programmers in charge of making architectures, animation and 3D-modelling for them, as well as designers of the their avatars' figures and skins. These recreated performances include titles like: "Synthetics Performances/Valie Export´s Tapp und Tastkino" (2007) or "Synthetics Performances/Chris Burden´s Shoot" (2007).

"Synthetics Performances/Joseph Beuys´ 7000 Oaks" (2007) is the recreation of the project started by Beuys on 16th March 1982 at Documenta 7. This project consisted of planting 7,000 oaks, each of which was paired with the action of planting a granite stone in the form of a column. The intention of the German artist was that the work done in Kassel should become the first stage of an ongoing reforestation project that would spread all over the world as part of a global mission whose purpose was to bring about an environmental and social change.
The Mattes have reactivated Beuy's work, carrying out the first performance in the synthetic world of SL. The first virtual trees and stones were planted on 16th March last, exactly 25 years after the first original oak had been planted by Beuys in Kassel. 7,000 basalt stones have been amassed on the Mattes' SL island, called *Cosmos*

Island, the reduction of which will indicate the progress of the project, which will continue until the 7,000 oaks and rocks have been placed (distributed) around the synthetic world.

This project has been displayed recently as part of the exhibition "*Deambulatorios de una jornada, en el principio y el proyecto Tindaya*" (curator Nilo Casares, for the *Centro de Arte Juan Ismael de Puerto del Rosario* (Fuerteventura)[17], between 16th March and 14th April, including works by Eduardo Chillida, Robert Smithson, Hamish Fulton, Christo or Santiago Cirujeda, among others. The purpose of the exhibition is to study the links between art and nature, displaying documents of masterpieces in art and territory and other contemporary active works.

BORDER-ART. John Craig Freeman, a.k.a. JC Fremont, is an associate professor of New Media in the Department of Visual and Media Arts at Emerson College, Boston. The work *Imaging Place SL* is an application of a homonymous work from the "real world" that has been under development since 1997, in collaboration with Greg Ulmer, who has provided the theory for the project. It includes fieldwork carried out all over the world, combining panoramic photography, digital video and 3D technologies to research and document situations in which the forces of globalisation produce an impact at local levels. The objectives of the project include the development of technologies and methodology for obtaining an immersive, browseable narrative, based on real places. However, this will be achieved by using non-linear narrative structures, which are made possible thanks to computer technologies and the telecommunications provided by the World Wide Web. Instead of following the prototypical structure of traditional documentary cinema, it is closer to the "narrative database" and the "soft cinema" of Lev Manovich, as the project allows to connect the stories by means of non-linear browsing on the basis of the database generated by the artist and simultaneous exploration of the latter on various spatial planes.

Imaging Place documents places that are historical for political, social, economic or environmental reasons or places whose culture is being displaced and eliminated by globalisation. Initially, it focussed on places where the forces of globalisation affect the lives of local communities, such as borders, posts, walls and fences, the limits of public policy.

On 5th January 2007, Gallery 2 in Ars Virtua saw the inauguration of an exhibition of a partial portion of the global project, titled "Imaging Place SL: U.S. / Mexico Borders". For this work, Fremont spent 15 days at the border between Mexico and the USA in the Tijuana region, specifically in the town of San Isidro, researching and carrying out his prototypical fieldwork (videos, maps, photos, etc.) that then go to the digital postproduction table.

In this particular piece, Fremont reflects on 3 issues related to the public and the political: first of all, the contradictions and intolerance of the USA's immigration policy towards Latin America; secondly, the environmental exploitation that is propitiated by the North American Free Trade Agreement and thirdly, slave trafficking, the deplorable working conditions in the "maquila" or in *yankee* territory and the sex industry.

The work is formally divided into two parts: a long border and an audio work with 360 image nodes. The formation is a replica of the border between Mexico and the USA in Sao Paulo Castelinho, a wall with electrocuted fences and threatening spotlights, a set that is intended to make the audience experience something similar to a border experience.

4.2. MACHINIMA

Another more successful type of artistic project in Second Life is Machinima. Machinima is the art of creating animation shorts and other kinds of audiovisual works using videogame processing engines. As this definition indicates, the origin of this practice does not lie in Second Life and neither is the experience exclusive to this medium, but for reasons of obvious affinities – which we shall now go on to explain -, it has found one of its best recording platforms/ sets in this virtual environment.

The beginnings of Machinima go back to the animated presentations and fragments[18] that videogames intercalate between going from one screen to the next. As a prize (and a pause) for when the player successfully completes one level, there is usually a linear animation that continues the narrative thread of the game. What would happen if we were to take over these presentations in order to create a new assembly, with a more personal reading and new meanings? And what if we were to add sequences taken directly from the action occurring on the interactive scenario of the game? The result is an animation created by ourselves, acting via the videogame characters - jumping, shooting, hiding, etc.. All of the other movements

that are permitted in the game then become the tools of action that we can use to build a story. We can also add the possibilities that the game offers of controlling the cameras, the lighting and even the props and the costumes worn by the characters.

Machinima emerged precisely when a series of videogames, many of which were for multiple on-line players, such as Quake or Unreal, included these creative options (Mods)[19] in their menus and scenario-editing, camera control or recording and assembling games became commonplace to players. These restructuring attempts led some users to take control of the game and reinvent it in their own way. What originally started out as the sole objective of jumping platforms or killing soldiers to redeem whatever princess or treasure was up for the grabs, can become, for example, a SitCom[20] (situation comedy) like the ones on TV, or a statement on the racial uprisings occurring in the suburbs of Paris.

In Second Life, creative liberty is greater still. Far from being constrained by the aesthetic and functional factors of the script established by the game platform or by any problems with the copyright[21] associated to such appropriations, this space offers no barriers other than the limitations of its supporting software. Anyone may model the figure of the actor, transcending the make-up and costumes and defining biomorphic subjectivities that defy the laws of physics. The scenarios are built like on any stage, but the costs are laughable, there is no need for maintenance personnel and no inconveniences as regards transport. The fact is that one of the curious aspects of Machinima in SL is to imagine a group of avatars recording in real time[22], while on the other side of reality, flesh and blood actors play their roles using the buttons of the mouse and movement cursors. Interaction becomes a peculiar third-party game that is governed by specific codes, for the most part derived from the communicative languages of videogames.

In this regard, because the development of the graphic and audio interface[23] has not yet reached its optimum heights, the actions betray an orthopaedic touch not unlike the silent cinema films. These meta-puppets do not have expressive faces and they do not emit any sounds – although dubbing or subtitling cover up an inconvenience that is already being addressed (there are already Beta versions of the programme for voice communication) - and communication is based on attention to gestures and the dramatic effects that are allowed by the machine. It is relatively simple to swing arms in rejection while we set our avatar on fire and vomit out a myriad of cats.

Lev Manovich, in his work "The language of the new media"[24], is the person that has come the closest to defining this type of operations. He calls it "teleacting", alluding to the power of remote control in real time. However, following the recent death of the master Jean Baudrillard, it is hard not to remember his definition for this type of cases: "Cyborg", as man and machine operating via the interface[25]. What would he have made of Second Life? And of its production, Machinima? This meta-drill based on the interaction between a human and his/her digital projection, with the rest of the avatars and a synthetic environment that does not exist on the earth plane? At this stage, he would have a tremendous offering ready for research. The production of Machinima in Second Life is overwhelming. There are several different proposals and one can go from video clips to virtual porn with the ease of the Internet in fancifully hosting all types of contents.

Although it is possible to highlight among all of these productions, some that are quality works, we have to differentiate between them according to the category of their sources of support and production. On the one hand, we have high cachet manufactures that are financed and disseminated by visionary companies awaiting future profits. In this group, we should highlight a "Machinima" work that is a pioneer in full recording in Second Life: the short "Silver Bells and Golden Spurs" (see images 44, 45 and 46), a western recorded in verse – yes, in verse - and produced by Bezzadle Studios and Linden Lab itself, the parents of the SL multiverse. Action, bullets and blood inspired by an old poem from the American Wild West, and drinks from the sources of cinema classics such as John Ford[26].

Another producer backed by Linden Lab is "La-Interactiva", the group directed by the Spaniard Richard Gras, a veritable guru in machinimas, who in his attempt to bring this art closer to the Internet and to SL, created the "Machinima Island" in the year 2005. A virtual island for exclusive use that is at the same time a centre for tests and meetings, as well as the set where the series by the same title is developed. The intention of "Machinima Island" is not to restrict itself to merely exercising the style and it encourages the audience to participate in the future of the series. For the second episode, which has not been published to date, comments in the form of posts, mails and even sms messages sent using mobile telephones are being taken into account, as they provide new layers for the basic script established by its creators.

In watching these recordings, one realises that although the examples are an unquestionable testimony to the Machinima movement, the narrative background does not rise above the conventional guidelines established for the seventh art. Moreover, neither the peculiarity of the scenarios or characters, nor the cooperative script modes offer a lexicon that is exclusive to Machinima in Second Life. The absence of models and conducts that are characteristic of this type of virtual communities, such as, for example, the gift of ubiquity, gender transgression and the identity performing modes or the use of syncopated communication systems, is noticeable.

So far, the risk resides at the lower levels of independent productions. It is here, among the teeming millions, that little jewels like "My second life" appear: a definitely decent model of what in the future could become a typology of the Machinima produced in Second Life. The work is presented as a document that floats around the Web, like a bottle adrift, containing a message that hopes to be found by a user. By opening it, we watch the filmed diaries of Molotov Alba, a person that has gone missing from the "real" world and according to his narrative on his adventures, has been seeking to find himself again since the day on which he left his physical corporeity behind to start life again in the second life. In fact, behind the scenes of this immersive insight is Douglas Gayeton, who with the excuse of the false documentary, lifts the lid on a series of issues that are intrinsic to the Web and to Second Life. To start with, he deals with natural concepts such as the dichotomies between reality/ virtuality and fiction/ non-fiction; which explore the notion of existence via the adventures of a virtual ghost. A practice based on fraudulent notes, marked by precedents like the fictitious myth in met-art, "Mouchette"[27], which had already carried out a study on existences in the web. Gayeton also approaches, albeit less successfully, the standards for adapting and modulating identity that are necessary in order to mediate in SL. His character, in her attempts at configuration, does not go beyond the merely anecdotic black-white, fat-thin, tall-short, etc. and fails to cross the morphological barriers of gender or species that are allowed by this environment. We only notice a hint of these possibilities when he appears drifting around with the appendix of his memory tied around his neck.

Formally, the sequences boast many of the advantages of synthetic production: air travel, fractal landscapes, effect-seeking immersions in the temples of Socratic memory and wisdom, alternation between synthetic images and real photographs, etc.. They vaunt the use of software in SL. Such processing is of greater interest still if we continue to bear in mind that it is an independent production. A synthesis

of the new illusionism that leads us to ask ourselves, as one of the following main questions, what the ultimate possibilities of formalism in Second Life are and what links it establishes with its origins: the source code[28] and the real and virtual mesh that supports it.

4.3. SPECIFIC PRACTICES

4.3.1. HYPERFORMALISM

"Hyperformalism" is the term introduced in Second Life by the avatar Dancoyote Antonelli, DC Spensley in the real world, in order to establish an art that, to quote his words, is defined by the unique relationship that connects the creator to his/her digital tools of work. On the basis of the fact that these tools are in themselves mathematical abstractions controlled by algorithms [29], - which, so that nobody gets lost here, is the same as explaining that behind the cursor of the mouse lies a system of sequences and coordinates that allow it to work - Dancoyote emphasises that digital/ pixel-based creations are no more than code processes taken to a higher scale[30]. A cosmological thought that claims that everything is connected, from the micro to the macro, and that any phenomenon on a small scale implies the existence and the link to a higher equivalent. Not in vain, what is translated into our language as "hyperformalism" has also been called "Mathematical Art" by other members that practise this discipline, such as Bathsheba Dorn or Seifert Surface.

In any case, both neologisms point to the continuation of an art, practised on other occasions, inside and outside the computing field[31], which combines the purely formal or abstract qualities of a work (structure, composition and colour) and the sequences of numbers and algorithms that define mathematical operations.

The termination "formalism" also alludes to the formal or axiomatic system that explained the use of a thorough mathematical method to represent a particular aspect of reality using linked symbols. In this regard, one of the closest precedents is "Fractal Art", or the development of creative works using similar structures that are repeated on various scales, in which their own evolutionary dynamics may be identified.

A romanesco, a hybrid between broccoli and cauliflower, is an element of nature whose structure presents fractal geometry. Its similarity to hyperformalist sculptures, such as those of Batsheba Dorn, is sufficiently revealing in order to explain the virtues and drawbacks to this artistic trend. Regardless of the effort invested in refloating the theory of mathematical-computational formalism, the ideals behind this trend have long been weighed up by the minimalist and conceptual movements[32].

The fact is that the best contribution that may be made by "hyperformalism" is the megalomania of its authors, who are determined to transgress in Second Life, the natural laws that limit the elements in everyday reality.

The virtual sculptures and interventions that they promote, by making the most of the environmental conditions of Second Life, i.e. by knowing the ins and outs of its IT codes, allow alterations of gravity, weight or size (improbable in reality), as well as unheard-of chemical achievements that bring together divergent particles like those of fire, water, acid or metal. These aberrations only comply with the laws of perspective and the masses on a tangential basis, in order to lend a certain degree of credibility to the consistence and metamorphoses of the sculptures.
This service involving the impossible in physics also eludes the problems of the real economy. Few artists could afford these colossal productions and their prospective buyers would also be few and far between. It is in this virtue of Second Life that we find the reason for the success of these practices: the lack of corporeity is compensated by the increase in spectacularity and the cheap financial cost.

Dancoyote Antonelli also stresses the importance of understanding that sculptures that have not been made by hand need not follow the same display modes as are used in reality[33]. This has led him to explore the terraforming limits of the Second Life environment, forcing the scripts/ code that establish its matter and space. In October 2006, at the virtual campus "NMC Campus Observer"[34], he made a colossal intervention that altered none other than a SIM in the landscape; a dimension equivalent to a 16-acre plot, about 65 square kilometres in reality. What started out as a simple inscription of his personal signature – a six-fingered hand symbolising the human being's primitive capacity to adapt, in this case to the virtual metaverse – ended up detonating a festival of unstable sites that were broken down into fluid and solid patterns and textures.

As may be seen in these works, the interest is maintained, mostly because of the grandiosity of the performance; and although the theories of the connection that Hyperformalism breaks down between small and magno processes, the moment we downscale, some works fall apart under their own weight. This is the case of the popular avatar Sasun Steinbeck and her also renowned work, "Morphing Sculpture". This avatar and work are notorious because for a time, Steinbeck, with her work under her arm, visited all of the specialised media in SL until she reached a height of fame that almost eclipses that of the sculpture itself and that has won her

a considerable number of front page reports. It is a metamorphic work, with sound incorporated, whose changes may be controlled using a control panel. The avatar uses it to change colours, textures and densities, which are combined in a harmonic set of variables. Part of the interest in the work lies in this interactive proposal, but after a while, after many of its combinations have been tested, the sculpture becomes a superfluous exercise with no accent other than the one that is imposed by the formalist aesthetic. I am not disdaining the technical skill of the artist, much less her *savoir faire* before the media – as is apparent from the nudes obtained in the Second Life Herald[35]- but after all, if we are honest with ourselves, the only memory of her work we are left with is the three-dimensional Windows Media Player screensaver.

On this scale, we may state that there are projects of greater significance, such as the works "Come Together" or "Second Soup", by the avatar Gazira Babeli, which, despite not strictly following the hyperformalist postulates, nonetheless are similarly related as regards the use of script/code as the essential plastic tool in restructuring forms and space. Babeli, like Steinbeck, also opens a door on interaction, inviting us to enjoy the metamorphosis. The difference is that the former, rather than incite us to the calm modulation of forms promulgated by Steinbeck, advocates the cruel deformation of what is known by means of the exaltation of abnormality and anomaly. In "Come together", the avatars that climb onto the pedestal will end up being overlapped, on top of each other, forming a new symbiotic body that provides a new definition of physical and psychological relations in Second Life. In "Second Soup", if we come too close to the Campbell cans, we will be persecuted by the Warholian heritage until we experience another transgressional exercise of fusion as we are swallowed.

4.3.2. CODE PERFORMANCE

Within the group of specific artistic practices, as well as Hyperformalism, what its own fans call "Code Performance" is also worthy of note.
 This is none other than an updated variation of what we know as *performance,* with virtual additions. In *performance* as an artistic genre, various fundamental concepts, i.e. time, space and physical presence, come into play. In Code Performance, the aforementioned concepts are present in a diverse manner thanks to the Internet and the characteristics of the SL environment, real time – with an implicit delay due to the fact that the orders are sent from the artists' terminals to the Internet [36]-, but virtual

space and presence.

The specific procedure consists of writing a prior script, which is liable to be varied during the course of the work. Using their avatar as the performing medium, the *code-performers* send a series of *code-scripts* or encrypted orders, which make their avatars behave in a particular manner – sometimes even the unsuspecting audience – and/or which modify the virtual environment in which they are located.

Second Front is apparently the pioneering artistic group of *code-performers* in SL, founded in 2006 and currently formed by 8 members[37]. According to themselves, they are influenced by numerous sources, including Dadá, Fluxus, Futuristic Synthesis, Situationism and performers like the New Yorker Laurie Anderson or the Mexican Guillermo Gómez-Peña, references on the basis of whom, as they claim, they "generate theatres of the absurd that challenge the concept of on-line performance and the creation of virtual narrative".

This is a very active group, whose works include a review of some of the most significant artists in the 20th century, titled "Translations / Tower of Babelfish" (13th April 2007), a mobilisation in the form of a peace demonstration titled "Martyr Sauce" (2007) carried out in one of the conflict zones in SL, where some of the members of the group lost some of their lives[38].

What is presumed to be SF's first collective code-performance took place after the première of *Strange Culture*[39] in SL, an independent documentary by Lynn Hershman in which the arrest and pending case against Steve Kurtz, a member of the Critical Art Ensemble[40], to which the SF were invited[41] is debated.

The story unfolded in 2004 when the artist's wife, called Hope Kurtz, died of a heart-attack at their shared residence in Buffalo (NY) and the artist called the emergency number 911. At the time, Kurtz was working on a cross-disciplinary project on genetic engineering, titled *Marching Plague,* for the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, nowadays available on the CAE website.

The members of SF attended the event dressed in yellow overalls bearing the bio-hazard symbol on the breast-pocket in red and wearing gas masks, as a symbol of support to the Kurtz cause and to mock the U.S. authority, as despite the fact that the bacteria that were found seemed inoffensive and in spite of Kurtz's credentials as an artist and associate professor of art in the Department of Visual Studies at

Buffalo State College (NY), the police officers telephoned the FBI, fearing a possible bioterrorism attack. Given the presence in the home of biological cultures and other types of biotechnological research materials, the FBI cordoned off the home and seized equipment, books, correspondence and computers, dressed in anti-bacteriological suits. The bewildered suspect Kurtz was then held in custody for 22 hours under the new Anti-Terrorist Act[42].

The members of SF sat down and watched the film and after the screening, the attendants stood up and chatted together, while Kurtz himself, on an audio feed, answered the questions posed by the avatars and the SF carried out some mini-performances (e.g. the avatar Great Escape, as a corpse surrounded by buzzing flies, did somersaults around the place). Kurtz even commented amusedly at the appropriateness of the SF clothes and the iconic reminiscences to the graphic identity of McDonald's (yellow, red and compositional proximity to the biohazard icon). After the Q&A session, Gazira Babeli launched question marks and McDonald's logos – the majority of which were inverted - into the sky, while Great Escape showed off his "fires", albeit not fireworks.

On the other hand, on 17th January last, Second Front took part in the multimedia section of the *Art's Birthday Festival[43]* curated by Peter Coutermanche and organised by the Vancouver Western Front[44], with a performance titled "Art's Day Birthday" , which was broadcast by the Web and screened live at the centre.
This intervention may be divided in two parts. On the one hand, in the virtual space of the SL room prepared for the occasion, various members of SF carried out a performance, in which various characteristics of the group's *modus operandi* and iconography may be observed, such as the circular movements, the use of fire and especially, because it was "art's birthday", a cake with candles, drinks, food and firecrackers. While one of the members throws fire, another drinks from a glass and vomits on a cyclical basis. This performance bacchanal in the purest Roman style culminated with the other part of the action, the screening of a live mural titled "The Last Supper" (2007), a parodical review of Da Vinci's mural *The Last Supper*, in which the 8 members eat and drink to excess, throwing up everything they ingest, circling around and on top of the "sacred table".

Spawn of the Surreal took place on 11th February 2007, as part of the programme of the festival *Chaos* organised by In Kenzo for the NM Connect Campus (New Media

Campus). It started after the audience took their seats, literally, assisted by some SF members equipped with torches posing as ushers, who insisted that the attendants should sit down, under the pretext that the performance was about to start. In fact, on the staircase chairs prepared for the spectators, some green cushions like the ones in football stadiums that were "loaded" with a code that gradually converted them into mutating avatars, adopting formal configurations, had been conveniently installed.

The members of SF also took part in the physical mutation, varying at random the formal possibilities of the code. Unexpectedly – it was not on the initial script – part of the metamorphic choreography, in which extremities and bodies were transformed into bizarre forms, took place in the air, which disoriented the audience still more, if possible. Some even ran terrified off the stage, while others asked for more intensity in the mutations.

The idea of the mutating avatars came to them - according to their own explanation - when one of their members, Gazira Babeli, reported that one of her *code scripts* was behaving badly and deforming her avatars. In Second Life and in general, in other virtual worlds (e.g: *multiplayer online games*), there is a prevailing compulsion to create avatars that are physically attractive according to the stereotypes. It was then that they considered that the most effective way to question the stereotype of beauty in Classical idealism was to "infect" members of Second Life with their "bad" or "rotten" code, a.k.a. *Code Deforma*, the effects of which include elongation and contortion of limbs and inversion of heads, a magic potion supplied by the scripted staircase chair that was part of the installation.

According to SF, after several discussions, they titled the performance "Spawn of the Surreal" because they considered that it encapsulated the B-flick fantastic and horror films and the type of surrealist operations of confusion, disorientation and rupture that they planned to launch on their audience. During the closure of the first act, not only did avatars run off the stage, but others requested further deformation, which one member, in tribute to the SF programmer Gazira Babeli, called *gazzing*.

Really, more than a performance, it was a happening, because the work was made possible thanks to the involuntary "participation" of the attending audience, which became part of the work, involuntary mutating actors in the work itself. The unexpected nature of the occurrence was an escape for SF in what was an official,

organised event, when the group is more inclined towards interventions without prior notification.

The sculptural group composed by barricades generated for the end of the aforementioned *Spawn of the Surreal* was used in the performance made by the group for the inauguration of the exhibition *Imaging Place SL: The U.S./Mexico Border* by JC. Freemont at the Ars Virtua virtual gallery (2007) mentioned previously. Under the title *Border Patrol,* it consisted of a site-specific performance in real time, developed on the basis of Fremont's work on borders. Thus, they generated a situation of chaos and persecution, with sounds, shots, fire, barricades and helicopters and rangers in order to generate among the attendants a feeling of being persecuted at a border.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The content of this research project does not leave room for many doubts; it is undeniable that there is an emerging artistic culture in Second Life, a movement that responds to the taste and the demand of both users that are not knowledgeable about the field of the arts and of a series of users that are already informed about the arts and have decided to explore the plastic spaces offered by virtuality.

This has been made possible due to various factors, two of which are because of the needs and failings that human nature retains, unable to abandon even in the virtual universe: the ego and the "purse" (the economy). The ego, because Second Life is a young universe, with a lot to be explored and created and a lot to be declared as wealth. The purse, because in SL, everyone is free to exhibit, manage and assemble an artistic space without the political and financial shackles of the real world. In a sense, the user enjoys the *tabula rasa* that is represented by the novelty of a medium that is relatively accessible, in terms of connection and learning about its tools and systems and whose only drawback is, like in all of the arts, the need for specialisation and improvement in their use.

According to what we have explained, it is easy to discern that not all of the works that glitter in Second Life are made of gold. On the contrary, this lack of restrictions, this virtualised freedom, does not elude the lack of standards that many display in their creations. Internal criticism is scarce and despite the work done by the media mentioned herein[45], what predominates is an "art" with no hesitations, of shaky inspiration, closer to the technical virtuosity or the casual discovery that facilitates

play with the interface of the programme, rather than to art of real plastic coherence. Moreover, in the majority of cases, the artists decide to upload to Second Life works that they have created in reality. For example, by hanging in virtual galleries photographs of their oil paintings, drawings, etc. or low-quality reproductions of the latter, in order to market works that at no time participate in the evolution of a proprietary virtual art and that, in the last instance, apart from the mere commercial transaction, only facilitate the individual promotion of the artist.

This brings us to the answer to another of the key issues governing this research, i.e. can these practices constitute a quality artistic reference? With the exception of the obstacles already commented on, we believe that it is possible for this to be the case.

Throughout this text, it has been proven that Second Life hosts an artistic production circuit that is interested in finding new plastic formulae that do not betray the spirit of virtuality, i.e. that use their language and systems to generate a proprietary art, willing to go deep enough in order to be consolidated. These attempts have not only overcome the status of the new genre, but have, with the enthusiasm of the artists that produce them, found a channel of interest that goes beyond the very borders of its metaverse of action.

The most interesting practices are thus grouped together in two spheres of action: one that seeks out friction between reality and virtuality in order to set up a field for reflection between the various levels and perceptions in the living environment, and another that refers to the specific artistic practices that have arisen in this medium and that, as their description indicates, do not function or make sense outside this area.

The first block, represented in this research by examples like the projects carried out by Eva and Franco Mattes or the work completed by JC Freemont, establishes a healthy plastic and conceptual exercise in favour of that of reflection, which offers the reflection of oneself and poses a series of interesting topics that have been raised by issues like virtuality and reality overlapping in a reflection, the distortion that one world causes to the other, the exchange of realities, etc.. All of these are issues to which the analysis of gender, migration, micropolitics, etc. may be applied in order to question both realities in order to understand them better and comprehend what the future has in store for us.

The other block is formed by the arts that have been assimilated by the environment or that have been inspired by references from reality and then established new

forms of expression that are inherent to the medium. These practices[46], with their accuracies and inaccuracies, may or may not convince the requirements of a higher art, but what is indubitable is the patent signature left by their authors that, in their constancy, have managed to define a new sentence in the virtual artistic circuit. The attempts of Machinima or those made by the hyperformalist authors cannot avoid, for example, carrying a (paradoxically insubstantial) dead weight in their works, which provokes the suspicion of vacuity, often encouraged by critics in need of corporeal veracity.

In the case of Code-performance, the various exercises, sometimes with an aesthetic and sometimes with an activist slant, are lacking in the essential corporeity that inherently implies an accusation of declared lightness due to the evident lack of (physical) risk and by the comfortable shield of acting behind the virtual alter-ego of the avatar. This is the framework in which code-performances may be compared to their imminent predecessors. Artistic works like the actions articulated by Marcel. lí Antúnez Roca[47] or Stelarc[48], in which the teleacting involves painful physical exhaustion, or the surgical manipulations carried out by Orlan[49], in which surgery may not be reversed, recreate a veracity that is hard to sustain in the *Second Front* performances. In non-virtual body art, the performer's body, his/her "real" physical interface is exposed not only to the public, but to pain; the skin, the flesh, is the artistic medium – in fact, Orlan himself calls it *Carnal Art*- and pain is a "natural" limit of this medium that may on occasion be mitigated by technology (anaesthetics). Therefore, we can affirm that one of the inadequacies of code-performance is the non-existence of risk, because the alter-ego interface is not exposed to any damage and/or public scorn.

It is interesting, in this regard, to comment on how there is nonetheless an evident iconographic connection between the type of actions perpetrated by the artists mentioned and Code-performance, which allude to the technological manipulation-transformation of the body (using home-made interactive torture and plastic surgery machines, in the case of Marcel.lí and Orlan respectively) and to the concept of "zero gravity" in its more formal aspect (in the case of Stelarc).

Therefore, when looking for consistent artistic values in Second Life, we should view and assimilate these practices in their most transcendent facet, which lies, precisely, in the researching and construction of systems of knowledge based on laws of virtuality that may not only be extrapolated to other future virtual communication

platforms, but that may also serve as a source for analysing a culture that is marked by the inertia of technology. The works generated in Second Life have created a point of departure from which a spectrum opens up, containing an awareness of reality, communication and emotion that is capable of reinforcing the alternative experiences of virtuality and its ways of living outside the body.

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NOTES

1 Several news items and dissemination texts have covered the recent origin and development of the Second Life universe. Since its creation and up to the present date, the quality of its proposal has been reinforced by the curiosity of an audience that had for years imagined the possibility of being able to enjoy an alternative world in the IT and virtual spheres. Millions of users, estimated at approximately 4,500,000 million residents, have by participating

in this collective dream, attracted attention from various spheres of reality. In politics, no party has failed to flirt with the environment (unique cases like the speech made by Gaspar Llamazares, the main representative of the group Izquierda Unida (United Left) in SL, or the demonstrations of avatars in front of the virtual headquarters of the Socialist Party, protesting against the hunger strike of De Juana Chaos, were the first such appearances in the media); architects like N. Foster have already sized up the possibilities of this metaverse and artists like U2 or Suzanne Vega have also fallen prey to SL, providing live performances with their avatars.

2 "Virtual universe" may be understood to mean an interactive environment that is generated in three dimensions by means of IT resources. This definition includes all of the branches that are derived from this concept, from the VRML (Virtual Reality Modelling Language) scenes to the 3-D videogame scenarios and virtual reality films in QuickTime format.

3 MUD is the acronym for Multi-User Dungeon, which may be translated literally into Spanish to mean "mazmorra (o calabozo) multiusuario". It is an on-line role game that is run on an Internet server. MUDs were created in the decade of the 70s, in the first era of the Web, when the majority of programmes were managed using text. Obviously, the genre evolved with time and games of a similar type, but increasingly advanced visual and graphic interfaces were created. These were known as MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games). Nowadays, there are many games of this kind, including Diablo, Neverwinter Nights, Lineage 2 and World of Warcraft. However, the subject matter is still the same: to improve a character's physical skills and abilities, equipment and wealth.

4 CompuServe, (CompuServe Information Services or CIS), was established as the premier commercial service in the United States in the decade of the 80s, because of its offer to create information networks for companies. It produced and distributed its own web-based processors and wrote all of its software in order to sell connectivity at national level. Nowadays, it is still at the forefront of the most important services in the Web.

5 On the spectrum of the Internet, the term "on-line" refers to the connection that is established with the Web. In colloquial Internet user language, if a user is connected from a terminal, this means that he/she is "on-line".

6 IRC (*Internet Relay Chat*) is a text-based real-time communication protocol that allows for debates in group or between two persons and which is classified under Instant Messaging. It is a chat system that is widely used by people all over the world. It was created by Jarkko Oikarinen (alias "WiZ") in August 1988 with the purpose of replacing the programme MUT (multi-user talk) in a BBS called OuluBox in Finland. IRC is popularly used to chat, make friends and join groups of people with the same interests. Any person can start a specific channel in this regard. Moreover, an iRC channel is also used as a file-sharing site. Some of these are specialised in music or books, or other areas. Another modality that is very often used is the games modality, among which Cybergames are the highlight, with hundreds of channels on all servers.

7 Windows Live Messenger, also known as MSN Messenger, is an instant messaging application that was created by Microsoft. It is currently one of the most successful communication systems in the Web, particularly among the young audience. It is an evolution of the IRC systems, because it bases its functioning on similar parameters: Connection and textual chat and more downloading of files among affiliated users. The most recent versions already allow for communication via voice and video-conferences.

8 The term "metaverse" comes from the novel *Snow Crash* published in 1992 by Neal Stephenson and is often used to describe the vision of working in totally immersive 3D spaces. Metaverses are environments in which humans interact socially and economically as icons via a logical format in a cyberspace that is acted out as a metaphor of real life, but without the physical limitations.

9 Coordinates in Second Life: 153, 97, 100

10 Coordinates in Second Life: 118, 160, 32

11 Ars Virtua, New Media Center. Coordinates in Second Life: 11, 16, 52

12 www.slartmagazine.com

13 Coordinates in Second Life: 38,154,26

14 Coordinates in Second Life: 217, 7, 40

15 www.femmesheroiques.com

16 The group "The Computer Band", which is responsible for the project, focuses on the status and image of women and uses the figure of the superheroine as a metaphor. Thus, just as each of the goddesses in Greek mythology represents the forces of the universe, each of the heroines represents each one of the paths followed by women over the course of the centuries to the present-day, "such as love, the transmission of life and knowledge, physical beauty, the relationship with work, family and power" – free translation from the French-. For example, *Esthetica* is the heroine of the metamorphosis that seeks youth and eternal beauty (!).

17 Recently, also in 2007, the Mattes took place in the collective initiative *Gameworld*, organised by the Art Centre at Gijón Industrial University, directed by Rosina Gómez-Baeza (30th March – May 2007)

18 These introductions, also known as "intros", have been established as an art that is highly appreciated among videogame consumers. Apart from their leisure and narrative function, they also play an exhibitionist function that serves to display the productive skills of game creators. This has now led to an all-out competition to overcome the barriers in the genre. Several digital art festivals have also included a special category for this type of practices. This is the case, for example, of the autochthonous festival *ArtFutura*, a pioneer in the field. Its *Full motion Theater* section includes the best productions carried out in the international videogame panorama on an annual basis.

19 In IT terms, a "mod" is a modifying programme that produces any type of change in a programme, in general to make it more complex, partially or wholly improving it or changing it from its original form.

In the world of videogames, a "mod" (from *modification*) is an extension that modifies an original game, allowing for new possibilities, surroundings, characters, dialogues, objects etc.. Practically all modern games incorporate tools and manuals so that they may be modified and thus create a mod.

The most popular mods are the ones that were developed for the *First Person Shooters* games and for the aforementioned Quake or Unreal Tournament, which allow to change the appearances of the characters, the sounds they emit or even the levels of violence in the game. Real Time Strategy games like *Warcraft III* or *Command & Conquer* also include several mods that allow to vary the game programme. It is important to note that although the programmes that are used to create mods may be official, the *modders* (people that create mods) are, in the majority of cases, amateurs that want to explore their favourite games further.

20 A *Sitcom* (Situation Comedy) is a type of television comedy that originated in North America and which usually includes an attending audience that livens up the series with their laughs. When the budget is tight, "canned", i.e. previously recorded, laughter, supports the performance. Most of the action takes part on sets and they are usually self-conclusive, i.e. the stories start and end in the same chapter.

21 The characters in videogames or the engines with which they function belong to the companies that create them. The *Super Mario* character is owned by the Nintendo company, just as *Sonic* is owned by Sega. If the pieces of Machinima that use third-party productions are used to obtain financial profits, this gives rise to an infringement of the copyright code that is punishable by law. This means that at professional level, very few producers/ production companies can afford to create Machinima without skipping the copyright, which currently restricts this movement's capacity for options.

22 Name for a very short reaction time in the computer, less than is required for human perception, which allows for the sensation of immediacy between action and reception/ reaction. Commonly associated to "live" data transmission, but this is just an illusion, effective real time is not yet scientifically feasible.

23 According to the definition by Claudia Giannetti (*Estética Digital*) the interface is the "Connection between two hardware devices, two applications or between a user and an application, which allows for data to be exchanged by means of the adoption on common physical or logical rules".

24 MANOVICH Lev, *El lenguaje de los nuevos medios de comunicación*. Paidós. Barcelona. 2005.

25 BAUDRILLARD, Jean, *Cultura y simulacro*. Kairós. Barcelona. 1984.

26 John Ford is considered to be one of the most important directors in the classical Hollywood period (between the late 1920s and the 1960s). His achievements include the consecration of the stereotypes of the cinematographic Western, with key films like *Stagecoach* (1939) or *The Searchers* (1956), which are masterpieces in the genre.

27 Http://www.mouchette.org. "My name is Mouchette. I'm almost 13 years old. I'm an artist or maybe an artistic project. In the web, there is no difference between being an artist or a work of art. In the Internet, nobody knows exactly what "I" means and this word will probably take on new meaning". This is the personality of Mouchette. An identity in full puberty that regularly threatens to commit suicide and that celebrates her last birthday every year (My_Last_Birthday_Party), to which she invites her favourite   net.artists to display their work. Her website may be considered in itself to be a multifaceted work of net.art containing a constant tone of erotic insinuation. Any Internet user may become a member of her fan club and write to her. Mouchette will write back.

28 Set of lines that make up a block of text, written according to the strict syntax rules of a programming language.

29 An algorithm is a finite set of instructions or steps that are used to execute a task or solve a problem. We use algorithms on several occasions in daily life to solve everyday problems.

Formally, it is a finite (mathematical or logical) sequence of performable instructions, which if performed will solve a problem.

30 This property is also known as *modularity*, a term that Lev Manovich (*The language of new media)* uses to define the "fractal structure of new media". His propositions indicate that "just as a fractal has the same structure on different scales, a new media object has the same modular structure throughout". In referring to the new media, Manovich alludes to the media objects (radio, TV, photography, etc). that have passed through the IT filter and become *computerisable media*. Via this transformation, they become modulatable architectures that may be modified in any order and scale.

31 A great many artists support their projects on mathematical pillars. Michael Field uses mathematics to trace sequential pictorial representations. Mario Merz integrated the currents of Land Art with the mathematical concept of *Succession/ Fibonacci Series* in his interventions and sculptures. Moreover, in the album *Lateralus* by the U.S. band Tool, the drum patterns (Danny Carey) in the song *Lateralus* follow the Fibonacci Succession of the number 13 (number of tracks in the record): 1,1,2,3,5,8,13,1,1,2,3,5,8,13,1,1,...

32 These artistic trends, especially minimalism, tend to strip the ideas and techniques of everything but the essential. In this regard, minimalist art is a current that polishes the elements that are left over until just a trace of their creative structure is left. This search for the essential has taken many artists towards a geometric abstraction that eliminates the figurative imaginary and the pictorial space of illusion, in favour of a single purist image. The simplification of the works has often led to the use of mathematical compositions to discern the essential aspects of nature. For example, these words by the artist Sol Lewitt: "In conceptual art, the idea or the concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form, one must understand that he/she has previously gone through a whole process of planning and decision-making, so that the execution is merely a mechanical issue. The idea becomes a machine that creates art".

33 KRASNER, ROSE *Hyperformalism in Second Life.* Slart digital magazine, see www. slartmagazine.com

34 The NMC Campus Observer is an experimental platform that has been developed in order to educate and inform on the artistic possibilities and projects that are offered in the Second Life environment. Since the beginning of 2006, the NMC Campus has built a series of virtual buildings and sites to put these exercises into practice and open up to all kinds of formal and informal, traditional and non-traditional explorations that reinforce the possibilities of virtuality.

35 Regular media on the Second Life universe that functions mainly from its website, www.secondlifeherald.com/

36 See in this regard the concept of "teleaction" coined by Lev Manovich, who has been mentioned previously in this

text.

37 Jeremy Owen Turner (Vancouver), Doug Jarvis (Victoria), Tanya Skuce (Vancouver), Gazira Babeli (Italy), Alise
Iborg a.k.a. Penny Leong Browne (Vancouver), Patrick Lichty (Chicago), Liz Solo (St. Johns) and Scott Kildall (San
Francisco)

38 In order to carry out their march of protest against violence in SL, they came to the place armed with what they
called the *peacenik* kit, composed of protest signs with written slogans like "Peace & Love" or "Martyr Sauce"
and drawings of peace symbols, SLSD (SL's LSD) code-scripts offered by the avatar Wirxli Flimflam, gigantic
psychedelic flowers and floating marijuana leaves, etc.

39 According to the avatar Hazardous, a member of Second Front, the following were present: Gazira Babeli, Wirxli
Flimflam, Tran Spire, Great Escape and Lizsolo Mathilde, Alise Iborg Zhaoying, and Man Michinaga (Tea Chenille
was unable to attend because she had to comply with some RL obligations)

40 The CAE is a group of 5 artists from various disciplines that are dedicated to exploring the intersections between
art, technology, radical politics and critical theory.

Its publications include the following: *The Electronic Disturbance*, *Electronic Civil Disobedience* (1995), *Flesh
Machine*, *Digital Resistance*, *Molecular Invasión* or *Marching Plague*, all of which are available on their website
http://www.critical-art-ensamble.net in pdf format.

41 The film was screened later on – that same week – at the Sundance Film Festival, which made this tape the first
première in SL.

42 The investigation is being carried out by virtue of the new antiterrorist laws in the U.S., which are the cause
for great concern among the artistic community in Internet. The accusation against Kurtz and another member of
the CAE, Robert Ferrell, may lead to a custodial sentence of up to 20 years, which appears to be a form of veiled
censure from the federal government, given their critical past. In July 2004, a grand jury refused to indict him on any
"terrorism" charges, but did indict him on the charges grouped under the heading "federal crimes", such as mail and
wire fraud, due to his having obtained biological microbes by fraudulent means.

43 *Art's Day Birthday* was an initiative organised by the French artist Robert Filliou, who suggested in 1963 – in
his ever humorous tone, characterised by the absurd -, that art had been born about a million years ago, on 17th
January, to be precise, "when someone threw a dry sponge into a bucket of water", and that the presence of art in
our lives should be celebrated, for which purpose he proposed an annual public holiday. In recent years, Filliou's idea
has been recovered, and for the most part channelled by the web - since the mid 90s -, because the central ideas
are exchange and the development of telecommunications for art, becoming an annual event that is organised on a
simultaneous basis by some individual centres and initiatives.

44 The Vancouver Western Front is a "real" centre that has been in operation since 1973, located at 303 East 8th
Avenue Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

45 See the section on "Artistic dissemination channels".

46 Hyperformalism, Code-Performance and Machinima in their specific variations for Second Life.

47 See in this regard, for example, *Epizoo* (1994).

48 See in this regard, for example, *City Suspension* (1985) or *Sentado/Balanceándose con unas rocas suspendidas*
(1980).

49 See, for example, *Omniprésence* 1993.

EMERGING SCENARIOS IN SOCIAL AND ARTISTIC PRACTICES WITH MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Efraín Foglia

INTRODUCTION

There is a new element that must be added to collaborative social practices: mobile technologies, which are fast becoming the catalysts of mixed co-existence spaces where artificial information co-exists with urban space. These emerging technologies come at a key historical moment in which the network culture is entering a new and beneficial cycle for social and artistic practices. The promises of the so-called 2.0 are starting to show their true colours through collaborative practices which in many cases repeat the errors of the past. However, the absence of intermediaries in areas such as journalism (Blogs), information exchange (P2P) and the creation of decentralised nodes for Internet connection (WiFi) offer us new ways of constructing knowledge. In addition to this, the penetration of mobile technologies offers the possibility of generating alternative communication scenarios in geographically disadvantaged places due to the precariousness of technological infrastructures. The portability and processing capabilities of mobile technology are giving rise to practices that facilitate collective action by increasing the possibility of working from outlying areas.

GLOBALLY PARTICIPATIVE AND LOCALLY RESTRICTED SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In the nineties, there were certain social movements which have become a reference in world history. These social practices were gestating at a time when different communication technologies were emerging which would ultimately position themselves as the catalysts for collective participation. Today, it is difficult to imagine these movements without the use of communication networks such as the Internet. It can be said that those participative experiences gave rise to new social practices which have become the norm today. Thanks to increased access to telematic networks, collective participation on the Internet has become the focus of action. «Furthermore, above and beyond the social morphology level, networks are increasingly related to the values associated with basic participative democracy, self-management, horizontal connections and decentralised coordination based on autonomy and diversity.» (Juris, 2006:417).

We can situate the emergence of these social phenomena in the Zapatista

movement in the Chiapas jungle in Mexico in 1994. To understand this socio-political event, we need to analyse the actual participation of Mexican society in this information flow process via the Internet. At the time, Mexico was - and continues to be - a developing country despite the fact that it was a signatory to the North

American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, which supposedly placed it on the list of developed countries. Stark economic and social contrasts reflect enormous inequalities in the standards of living of a large part of the population. In short, Mexico is a country that has historically struggled between large quantities of poverty and the enormous economic flows generated by the wealth of natural, cultural and industrial resources it possesses. Against this backdrop, an important factor is its proximity to the United States which has provided it with a bridge to the immediate access to the most sophisticated technologies - whether legally or illegally – whose distribution among the population has been irregular.

It can be said that in 1994, the bulk of the Mexican population - which could easily be more than 50% of the total – had no access to the new technologies emerging in global societies, even at the public university level which at the time had restricted access to the Internet, not to mention the fact that outside of the country's three largest cities - Mexico D.F., Guadalajara and Monterrey- there was little knowledge of what Internet even meant.

However, on the northern border, the relationship with technology has always been different due to its proximity to Californian technology centres.

Obviously, the information on this conflict was transmitted to the bulk of the population via the *Old Media*: daily newspapers, magazines, television, all monolinear media controlled for the most part by very specific interests. At the same time, as a form a collective participation, there were protests in the streets of some Mexican cities. Hence, the great media *boom* generated by the Internet took place externally since it was directed at foreign receivers.

In the book, *The Global City,* published in 1999, Saskia Sassen notes in relation to these social movements that they are "movements restricted to young, middle class individuals with Internet connections and the resources to travel", young people living in primary or secondary "global cities".

In relation to the Zapatista movement, we can conclude that most of the Mexican population missed out on the flow of information via the Internet. In fact, it was the upper middle class and the foreign participants who finally nourished this movement

with the use of new technologies. In this regard, the Zapatista movement benefited from the possibilities of new forms of communication which made it possible to transmit their ideals through the Internet to the people that were open to receiving them, people who, unlike the Mexicans, had the infrastructures needed to receive them and expand upon the information. Paradoxically, the national population did not participate as actively as other groups in the strategies that brought this movement to the public's attention at the global level. However, with the passage of time, the seed planted by global cooperation through cooperative networks has grown over the years, resulting in an exemplary participative model based on a social cause.

BRIDGING THE TECHNOLOGICAL DIVIDE AND NEW PARTICIPATION POSSIBILITIES

The standardisation of mobile technologies in society is due, to a large extent, to the commercial component involved. The historical evolution of technologies such as landline telephony or the Internet can attest to this. What is paradoxical about it is that many of the outlying areas where landline telephony and, by extension, Internet have never been fully developed now have mobile technology: «[…] the paradox of being saturated by the latest telecommunications technologies like the mobile telephone, while other basic infrastructures such as roads, postal service, rail service, electricity and landlines deteriorate.» (Rheingold, 2004:185).

Portable digital data transmission systems that were previously perceived as luxuries reserved for only a few can be found today in almost any underdeveloped country due to commercial pervasiveness and low costs.

Real time communications are one of the factors that have driven social movements. Previously, disseminating information was complex and costly and the response was not instantaneous. The new communications networks «provide specific mechanisms for the creation of physical and virtual communications and for real time coordination of the different movements and groups.» (Juris, 2006:418).

To a certain extent, the technology gap has been closed in places where Internet or landline telephony had never been fully accessible due to the precariousness and lack of social policies. These mobile technologies have fostered cultural forms based on new formats and self-organising groups with data transmission capabilities and constant updating.

The new cultural models based on network cooperation through wireless devices have the potential to become laboratories of democracy in the information era. The technological leap has generated new social cooperation options in the Third World and this technological paradox could be the source of participation formulae and the creation of knowledge: «the expansion and diversification of networks is much more than a specific organisational objective: it is also a very valuable cultural goal in and of itself.» (Juris, 2006:429).

By way of example, in cities like Rio de Janeiro or Mexico City, countries within countries, chaotic cities of disproportionate geographic dimensions, the use of Internet from a desktop did not represent any logistical or organisational support in the difficult task of moving about these large cities, with all that that involves. On the other hand, portable communications have been a great help in different problematic aspects such as public safety or organisation, with the consequential impact on local economies. This is very significant when one considers that, due to global migratory flows, cities are gradually becoming the most densely populated places on Earth and communications play a key role in their development.

Obviously, the new opportunities in this globalised world are effectively used by corporations seeking market niches in any social change, regardless of how minimal it may be. The behaviours generated by the use of mobile devices have attracted the attention of the audiovisual industry which has lost market share with the rise of Internet and is planning and implementing strategies to invade our small screens by sending all types of contents intended to generate mass consumption. At the recent *3GSM World Congress* held in Barcelona, it became clear that this industry expects to earn millions of euros from the distribution of pornography for mobile devices. Perhaps the positive part of this is that since this is big business, the investment in this form of communication will continue and if we are capable of devising alternative uses there are probably important social benefits to be obtained.

TECHNOLOGICAL SIMPLIFICATION AND FREE ACCESS
When one speaks of communication technologies and mentions the omnipresent Microsoft *Messenger* service, it usually has pejorative connotations and its use seems to reflect computer ignorance.

The success of this program and the free electronic mail programme *Hotmail* resides in the fact that they are free, easy to use and, above all, easy to manage. While it is

not my intention to publicise the company that created these computer programmes, much less its monopolistic policies, it is important to note that these services have permeated society due their ease of use and accessibility and today are a part of popular culture at the global level. Their pervasiveness in society has been gradual to the point where many millions of users today use these services on a daily basis.

The study of these cases is essential when trying to promote their positive aspects and choose paths leading away from corporate control.

Our feeling is that their strength resides in how easy they are to operate and use. The more uncomfortable users feel about technological devices, the more complicated it will be to get them to use them and they will probably end up being more concerned with operating aspects than with the contents themselves. In addition to the success of these services, we have the emergence of the so-called Web 2.0 technologies: Blogs, Wikis, P2P, etc., all of which have a common theme: the simplicity of use and the collaboration possibilities through which knowledge is acquired. «It is also a process of cultural revindication in which individuals once again have access to the information production and distribution circuit.» (Rheingold, 2004:195).

Not long ago, the famed theorist Lev Manovich spoke of a recently coined concept, the *controlling nature* of technological devices which refers to the aesthetic experience of possessing and handling new mobile devices. While this is important to the industry, it would seem that simple and intelligible use for societies in which illiteracy rates are very high, i.e., more than three-quarters of the world population, is something that still has not been resolved.

NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR OLD PROBLEMS
What do we do with the new possibilities of collective participation? What are the advantages and disadvantages for society of new mobile devices with processing and connection capabilities?

Obviously, developing countries with serious problems such as unemployment, housing or poverty cannot change their socio-political situations overnight simply by using these cooperation technologies. Social change has always been accompanied by social policy and economic reform, but it is also true that if we combine past experience and knowledge, we can envision future scenarios of action that point

toward social change. Obviously, the power structures control the informative and cognitive flows that pass through their hands, but what happens when these flows are small and they circulate through new distribution channels? In this regard, it is necessary to take an in-depth look at the new cultural and interaction spaces being generated, since it is there that we will find ways of creating collective knowledge disassociated with the dominant power structure. «Wireless communications offer a power platform for political autonomy through independent channels of autonomous and person-to-person communication.» (Castells, 2006:289). On the other hand, the research coming out of the artistic territories working with these devices could be the seed which germinates into social exercises for basic democracy coordinated at the local, regional and global level. «The mobile resources which can complement informal information exchanges, generally unwittingly, which occur in the order of interaction or influence the size or location of the public of such exchanges, have the capacity to change the threshold of collective action.» (Rheingold, 2004:201).

THE ARTISTIC METAPHOR AND ITS PROXIMITY TO SOCIAL ACTION
When an idea in the art of new resources strays too far from a potentially real application, it becomes a utopia.

Artistic practices have – to a greater or lesser extent – been the catalysts of utopias linked to the technological future of civilization. The premonitions of science fiction literature and cinema have produced innovative ideas in relation to the new possibilities for the co-existence of men and machines. In reality, many of these Utopian ideas have created hope but have finally crumbled, leaving society waiting for another Utopia in which to believe so as not to fall once again into despair. We are approaching the peak of a new Utopia, that created by the Web 2.0, which has created an aura of optimism. This new label is riding the crest of the wave and in many cases promises to be the "informative democracy" so many have yearned for, although history has shown us that we should be cautious with future readings of these phenomena.

Perhaps the *gap* can be seen in the fact that in the field of research it will always be possible to go farther with words than with events. As a result, we get theoretical lines that are either completely outside of the realm of possibility or applicable only to very reduced sectors of society. The balance could lie in parallel research located at the halfway point between theory and application in practical technological

development, as in the case of artistic laboratories and innovation and design laboratories.

With regard to these social practices, one of the most interesting lines coming out of the art world could be the one that is based on the daily use of technology by common, ordinary citizens without the need to train them in order for them to participate in a piece or installation. When referring to technological resources, Marschall Mcluhan affirmed: «As they become easier to use, decentralisation becomes more intensified.» (Mcluhan, 1996:131).

Interesting in this regard is the work of Antoni Abad, *zexe.net* which consists of participation projects using emerging technologies – mobile telephones – to generate a network in a sector where there are significant social self-organisation advantages to be found. As he explains on his website, this is a «cellular audiovisual communication project for groups without an active presence in the preponderant communication media».

This group has generated its own, independent knowledge based on the artist's initial guidelines, who disappears when the project begins. Mobile devices are used to document taxi drivers' travels around Mexico City, the experiences of prostitutes in Madrid and the lives of gypsies in Lleida: "groups that have been mistreated by the media who manage their own representation […] through the construction of platforms and tools wherein the reality speaks for itself.» (Peran, 2007).

These types of projects highlight the different aspects of the problem, from the access to technology to the possibility of generating an alternative to the dominant media. «Only by reconstructing their costly negotiations for accessing the necessary technology in such diverse places can an eloquent account of the economic, social and political protocols that govern the management of new communication technologies be constructed.» (Peran, 2007).

Another example is the British Blast Theory group with its project *Can You See Me Now?* They work with alienated sectors in developed countries, more specifically rural inhabitants, adolescents and others who, due to demographic and/or geographic circumstances, are disadvantaged. Involving these types of social groups is noteworthy since the importance of a particular population has historically been related to its proximity to the centre of power. «When a type of operation "cultivated"

outside of the specialised areas and the restricted media within which they are generally framed is put into practice, we will have begun to solve many of the contemporary world's most critical problems.» (Lévy, 199:108).

The project mixes virtual information and physical space and explores the relationship between technological infrastructures and the cities and interaction scenarios where the inhabitants live. The fact is that the pervasiveness of wireless communication devices in society is an irreversible process and this type of project helps to visualise potential future practices.

One subject that has been addressed recently is the pedagogical work that needs to be done by art and new technologies focusing on the people outside of these realms. In this regard, the understanding of these projects must be facilitated by their design, i.e., on the basis, for example, of the use of pieces that are easily digestible by the public at large. Perhaps we should think of the design as a clarifying discipline so that not only can researchers and artists imagine future applications but the common man on the street can also contribute, transforming technology and adapting it to his needs. After all, he is a part of this society.

FROM THE OUTSKIRTS TO THE "GLOBAL CITY"

Global Cities, as the places where the power and technological infrastructures are located, are characterised by having too many political and economic interests, which is understandable when one considers that in the age of the global market, corporations project their power onto the nation-state. In addition to this, telecommunications policies constitute one of the main themes in the development of many countries. Following this logic, small or less important communities due to their lack of visibility and distance from these major arteries have the chance to experiment in a carefree way and to become the research laboratories for socio-technological research. The paradigm in the world of technological art is found in Linz, a small Austrian city located in Central Europe which lived in the shadow of Salzburg when Mozart was a resident there. In the era of globalisation, places of these characteristics can, through their innovative ideas, become genuine communications laboratories, creating models that are subsequently copied by the large cities due to their proven effectiveness.

In the city of Vic, in Cataluña, the *guifi.net* project came about as a reaction to the need for wireless data connections between the surrounding villages. The project

has been developed independently with the collaboration of people who, without any kind of economic interest and remaining within the boundaries of the law, have worked together to create 3,253 wireless nodes for file transmission and shared Internet connections located in Vic and neighbouring villages.

Joan Gaudes, a student at the Escuela Politécnica de Vic, says that the project was developed for the sole purpose of cooperating. They have asked the town council for assistance to buy the necessary hardware since, according to Gaudes, the town council should help because «we put them there and if they want to continue they need to help the citizens; the money they contribute is our money». The idea behind this project was to connect two villages by cable to play video games simultaneously and today different groups in the city of Barcelona have asked them for help to do the same. Gaudes is convinced that if the system of distribution cells for access nodes were to be installed in some buildings in Barcelona, enough people would certainly join that it would get to the point where the telephone companies would buy into the system, since it would be more profitable for them to render their services with this model. According to Gaudes, people approach the project at first thinking that the only benefit is the Internet connection, but the project encompasses communications in general and involves cooperation, the exchange of ideas and advise on the installation of this system in other villages. All of this takes place in an atmosphere of collaboration in which all of the participants apparently understand there is a common benefit.

A similar case related to this trend would be the open code programmes used by the government in Extremadura. The Junta maintains that there are numerous advantages, including simpler relations with users and the fact they it now saves millions of euros previously spent on the purchase of commercial programmes. These projects lead us to believe that a new model is in the making for collaborative mass production and that, despite the industry's interests, we can see a light on the road to group knowledge, a road which apparently runs from the outside to the centre.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been 13 years since the Zapatista insurgents surprised the world with their innovative way of using a new medium for social purposes and many things have changed, particularly the use of Internet. Nowadays, the possibilities for collaboration are infinite. Perhaps the problem lies in understanding whether there are really

new forms of social action or whether we have merely become consumers of these practices for the benefit of technology producers, without actually making any improvement to society. In short, society has matured and as Manuel Castells mentions in reference to wireless technology: «Not only do we find new scenarios, but there is now a series of strategies at the institutional and consumer level for using wireless communication technologies for the purpose of spreading access.» (Castells, 2006:331).

The new possibilities for collaboration using portable resources could enable us to integrate the part of the population that was left behind in the first Internet wave and that will never have the infrastructures needed to use a computer. Moreover, if the metaphors coming from artistic practices are brought closer to social practices, discovering the alternative possibilities for the use of mobile technology, the results could be enriching.

One of the burning questions to be analysed in these territories includes the smoke screen created by the so-called Web 2.0 and its goal of incorporating the voice of the people. We are referring to the promise of sharing in the media which ultimately turns into an enormous database that is once again centrally controlled, with the possibility of selling the information without consulting or remunerating the creators/participants. The new business model is not clear yet, but it is known for sure that generating and storing audiences is a practice that is on the rise and that becomes an asset when it can be used for economic negotiation in which the promise of social participation is merely a pretext for generating hyperconsumption.

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THE ARTIST AS A GENERATOR OF SWARMINGS. QUESTIONING THE NETWORK SOCIETY

Carlos Seda

I. PROBLEMATISING THE 2.0 WHY IS THE BARCELONA CIVIL ORDINANCE A POLITICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE NETWORK SOCIETY?

In the media, there are two ways of presenting the news: live and pre-recorded. The first of these takes advantage of the capacity of the "real time" image with all of the unpredictability it involves, while prerecording makes use of selected images which are managed by media editors. Today, we are witnessing the triumph of pre-recorded news because even when a news item is broadcast live, it is already known in advance for whom it is intended.

11S was an attempt to break with prerecording. The first aircraft attracted the attention of the world's cameras and the second one crashed when the media were filming the towers and reporting the news. Consequently, the unforeseeability of live broadcasting blew up in the face of spectators creating the greatest irrational gesture ever seen on television. Since then, the media is more cautious when it comes to showing images of terrorist attacks so as not to play into the hands of the terrorists and their disturbing actions.

The Barcelona civil ordinance attempts to establish prerecording for all reality, with the city council rising up as the city's publishing house in an attempt to manage our lives. Therefore, we believe that our only possibility for confronting them would be to act like the 11S terrorists, throwing our bodies into the streets to make use of the unforeseeable. The problem is that there are people who live in a pre-recorded state and who have internalised the city's message to the point where they believe that anything that violates the ordinance must be repressed.

We are trapped in a way of seeing things the same way as those who are repressing us do. We are also living in a pre-recorded state, with our prejudices in the face of reality, since everyone lives in pre-recorded for all that he or she considers normal and is on alert to anything he or she does not consider normal. Everyone controls him/herself and everyone else; our society is the vigilance of everyone by everyone.

If we live tied to normality, what is left? How do we escape? Going back to live, to the spontaneous and unforeseeable gesture that arises out of our most basic instincts? That would be going back over a well-trodden road, a romantic one where the genius, by an act of inspiration, has a brilliant idea. And that road is no longer open to us because we must accept the fact that we live in a pre-recorded world.

Ever since the fall of the Berlin wall, it can be said that we live in a transmodern age which is defined as the age in which all tenses are presented simultaneously in the present. There is no longer any future or past, everything is here and now, all of time represented in the same moment. One can therefore speak of the end of history, which came to a halt at a certain moment and will never begin again. All tenses are now represented in the same moment. This is the triumph of prerecording.

In this regard, we accept that we are living in a pre-recorded state and that we can never go back to live. Each one of us lives trapped in our own pre-recorded state, in our own discourse, in short, in our own normality. How do we confront our own normality, our own pre-recorded state, our own vigilance, ourselves?

Apparently, there are only two strategies: silence and noise. Silence would be absolute disenchantment, nihilism, not believing in anyone or anything (not even in ourselves), living in a vacuum. Noise, on the other hand, could open the door to all pre-recorded states, to all of the possibilities of the present, to everything. These are the two strategies available to us: to be everything or to be nothing, not to limit ourselves to just one state of normality.

The problem, as always, is visibility. Both silence and noise convert us into "terrorists" against normality and the revenge taken by normal people is to label our attitudes. The clinical name given to silence is autism, while noise is labelled schizophrenia. At this point, knowing that we are mentally ill, our arguments do not carry the same weight as those of a normal person.

The Barcelona civil ordinance splits the difference, on the one hand managing our lives and on the other repressing the uses that do not fit into its plans. This is what a war economy is based on: the new markets are not supported by the creation of content since anything one might say that is different than the established normality is considered to be questioning which is tantamount to a terrorist threat. For example, according to the Barcelona City Council the use of the city should

be a repetition of the same thing day after day. There should not be anything new happening on its streets: always the same skaters, the same shows, the same people out for a walk…

How, then, are new markets generated in a war economy if every day is an exact repetition of the day before? New markets are opened using increasingly sophisticated ways of managing the content on the streets. The same thing happens on the Internet…. Youtube triumphs by managing videos, Flickr by managing photos, Del.icio.us by managing links, etc. It is not so much a matter of producing as knowing how to locate the contents easily using labels and capitalising on this ability. So it is that the city of Barcelona is interested in locating a series of acts which are, in principle, prohibited by the civil ordinance, in specific places: street performers on La Rambla, MACBA skaters, subway "musicians"… normalised places intended for tourists and "civic civilians" to enjoy the Barcelona brand: cosmopolitan and avant-garde. The Barcelona City Council is therefore a machine that produces and manages spaces of normality. Any act that attempts to question the civil ordinance politically by using the street in a different way is contained in a localised space and if it is suitable, is capitalised upon; if not, it is repressed.

In this regard, transmodernity exceeds modernity to the extent that it is no longer as interested in being able to support rational thinking as it is in being able to manage anything that can be produced by any rationality. Hegel would have been the first transmodern thinker had he explored more profoundly the aspects of the differences with which postmodernity would struggle: i.e., if it had integrated into its management alternative possibilities for "play" such as, for example, "stop", "pause", "forward", "reverse" or "rec". Since all of this has already been achieved, one can say that history and this reality, which is one with capitalism thanks to Marxism, is nothing more than the convergence of all time into a single moment: we must start with Fukuyama to understand where we are.

If history has collapsed at a given moment (more specifically, with the fall of the Berlin wall), if all of time is here and now, it is no longer possible to think about tomorrow or about a tall tale that will "liberate" us, bring us to a utopian state. The world is the way it is and it will never change. In this case, we are no longer interested in situating our discourse in time. It is now necessary to think in cartographic terms, creating maps where we can observe what is happening in order to manage reality better. This is the reason why the World Wide Web became, at that

very moment, the first Internet revolution and is now expanding definitively all over the globe. It is a network (a hypertext) that allows us to trap and multiply reality at the same time by representing it in playback. All of time is now concentrated in a single moment, the only thing we need to do is manage it.

The second Internet revolution took place when we became aware of the need to manage the information produced and reproduced. It was at this time that Flickr, Youtube, Del.icio.us, InnoCentive, Starlab and blogs came about along with content maps created using folksonomy, RSS and trackbacks, replacing, to a certain extent, indexing with the brute power of Google. This cartography would not be possible were it not for the fact that behind all of these tools there are "communities" which undertake the work of "labelling" these pre-recorded realities. Terms such as crowdsourcing, long tail or the Cluetrain Manifesto are those which enable us to shape the operations of these communities.

Finally, the third Internet revolution, which is taking place right now, is its omnipresence thanks to the ability to access it through mobile devices using wireless connections (WIFI, WIMAX, UMTS...) which, along with RFID technology and the new videovigilance devices using IP, make it possible to overlap the atomic world with the Internet in a single dimension. This is when the Barcelona civil ordinance makes complete sense. It is possible to manage the lives of citizens because the technology exists to build a map of our lives. The civil ordinance is nothing more than the political consequence of a network society that has been in the making for the last fifteen years. The attempt to break the prerecording caused by the civil ordinance overlaps with an attempt to break an Internet that is envisioned by certain corporations as a vigilance tool.

The logic of globalisation is a consequence of transmodernity. For years, the anti-globalisation discourse has tried to tell us that opening global markets would homogenise culture under the dictates of the "empire". This has turned out to be false since what it actually promotes is the preservation of everyone's differences since every difference, regardless of how minor it is, opens a new market. This is called the Long Tail theory. A simple example: being communist implies a market with its own consumer products, from the "merchandising" offered by the party to the "fetichised" tourism countries (Cuba, Palestine, Chiapas...).

Markets are therefore communities which are identified by a series of ideas to

which they are faithful and ultimately, as stated in the Cluetrain Manifesto, markets are conversations where each voice reproduces the discourse of a community. Obviously, to create a community there needs to be an "inside" and an "outside", a friend and an enemy who are identified by either embracing or rejecting the ideas espoused by the community. Therefore, in order to belong to a community one must live with the vigilance of the normalised space: vigilance of oneself in search of coherence with the ideas he/she defends and vigilance of others in order to repress possible threats.

In conclusion, the way in which capitalism works today is based on opening markets by managing communities which are labelled and arranged on a map according to a series of consumer products. The members of these communities are mobilised in all aspects of life around a series of ideas, producing and reproducing the vigilance and forming what we call the network society. This voluntary mobilisation of each one through the ideas that are confused with life has been referred to as "crowdsourcing". The problem is that the differences that are reproduced are not capable of questioning this capitalist system because they do not question the tool that allows them to open and manage new markets: vigilance.

Barcelona is a brand of brands within which new markets are continuously being opened by positioning differences that are incapable of questioning the vigilance of everyone by everyone that makes this city-idea move. From the artistic-revolutionary young people who believe they are questioning something through their street performances to the anarchist who repeats the discourse on speculation *ad infinitum.* We've all seen them. They live in a well administered pre-recorded state.

The requirement is to have a project and to execute it in Barcelona. To generate a voice and join the conversation. Barcelona is that great conversation that houses within it thousands of small conversations. Barcelona is a great conversation that shields and protects the thousands of conversations trapped inside it by the imposition of the obvious. Barcelona is the Forum of cultures. No one questions that we must strive for peace, dialogue, in short, civic-mindedness, and many citizens will internalise that brand by piercing their neighbours with their looks in order to ensure that their neighbours support the idea of what we all want because "we all move Barcelona". You are either a friend or an enemy of Barcelona; either you are part of the great project or we will turn you in to the police.

This mobilisation of citizens for the obvious, for life, which is confused with Barcelona, is a way for city hall to protect the management of differences as a way of "vitalising" the city and thus be able to sell it as a succulent product to tour operators and events organisers. An avant garde, social and civic-minded product, with each citizen enclosed in his or her own normality reproducing the vigilance that greases the management apparatus of the Barcelona brand. This process is no different than what certain corporations try to do on the Internet.

II. SWARMING AS A PROCESS WHICH QUESTIONS VIGILANCE AND FALSIFIES OUR LIFE MAP.

How do we confront our normality, our vigilance? How do we do this without being displaced?

Modernity is a debate on the refinement of the ways in which the contents and lives of many people can be managed by just a few. The movement toward a management model in which everyone is managed by everyone, transmodernity, involves the sum of all normalities which, although it might appear to mean the triumph of differences, does not question the root of modernity, the content management model, here and now, the vigilance of my own self by my own normality, my own life map.

One's own life map may be understood as "personality" but that concept does not fit in here because it assumes the acceptances of a privateness which has been eliminated today. We are absolute externalness. Therefore, we start from the premise that our life map is that which "others" see, i.e., the action. Any action, in order to be defined, needs certain horizons that limit it: non-action. So the character of a man or a community is differentiated from another by the limits that prevent him/it from going further and trap him/it in normality: its obsessions/dislikes, fears/death and taboos/modesty.

11S is a model for apparently throwing all normalities into crisis, but that crisis was quickly normalised and politically disarmed in a triumph of the pre-recorded state, the ultimate gesture of distributed normality. Effective questioning can only occur from within by means of falsifications, by means of swarming generation practices[1]. Since swarming puts normality in suspense in a temporary autonomous zone (TAZ) that dislocates the subject, it forces new coordinates on a false life map which has simulated the rerouted simulation. The crisis of transmodernity is achieved through

map falsification traffic, which is the only process capable of short-circuiting the content management model.

The swarming of 13M peaked when the people gathered in front of the Popular Party's headquarters under the suspicion that the normality which had been represented to them had cracked. All swarming starts with a suspicion (that it had not been ETA) and the simultaneous experience of an alternative reality (that it had been Al Qaeda). The distributed networks that connect the individuals do the rest. The crack gets longer and deeper with each message that is sent. Like a virus, the information spreads until the event reaches a crescendo.

Swarming causes the horizons of our life map to explode, displacing our obsessions/dislikes, fears/death and taboos/modesty, giving us new limits for an instant, reinventing for a few minutes the way in which we relate to space, making the real existence of everything we've dreamed of a possibility. 13M was an outreach of civil society that took to the streets to demand an explanation of the events different than the one given by the ruling government. Could the same rebellious attitude repeat itself at this time? Not a chance. Swarming requires a period of gestation.

Swarming apparently does not have a direct "origin". It works the same way as rumours do, with a "snowball" effect that is set in motion by the slightest tremor. But tremors and snowballs are different in nature in should not be confused with one another. The tremor shakes, awakens suspicion; the snowball sweeps, generates and augments the parallel reality. If we look for the "origin" of swarming, we will need to find out who or what awoke the suspicion since the generation of a parallel reality has no owner but rather is the consequence of an imagination shared by all of the nodes which, by communicating with one another, defined its nuances.

We can find an example of a search for the "origin" of a swarming in the case of the video that showed three hooded men stealing Zapatero's bench. How it was discovered consisted of a planned swarming attempt. What went wrong? Let's take a look at the events.

The video appeared on Youtube[2] on 30 September and by Sunday someone had published it on Meneame[3]. It soon began to appear in the headlines and several blogs were talking about it. By that time the collective intelligence of the so-called "social web" was beginning to realise that the video was fake, but that did not bother

the mass media which, in its desire to attract the audience's morbid attention, omitted that detail and treated the contents as authentic. First it was Telecinco on the programme "El buscador" followed by La Sexta and Antena 3 in their daily news broadcasts. The news reached the mass media through a Telecinco blog called "Al abordaje"[4]. Finally, by Monday, the news had crystallised in the traditional media and it was known that the video was false, which is when the question was first asked: Who did it? The operation was uncovered and it was found that the advertising agency "Amo a Laura" was behind it. The author was located and labelled, the intention revealed, the swarming aborted.

This swarming attempt met all of the necessary prerequisites, i.e., on the one hand it surpassed the limits of normality of the collective imagination and made possible the taboo represented by the fact that people could get into the Congress to steal something without being seen (the improbable becomes probable, the unthinkable, thinkable); on the other hand it generated a simultaneous and alternative reality that encouraged people to take action against poverty, to make people see that it was possible for anonymous guys to put the government on the rack to demand "social justice".   However, what failed was the fragility of the credibility, the fragility of the anonymity that enabled every subject to become part of the action of the message, thus converting them into the message itself. When the emitter of the message was discovered (the author of the video), a receiver immediately appeared and this hierarchical duality that locates the two extremes of the communication impedes the reality (and hence the subject) from becoming the message, the reality from becoming swarming. How many people would have tried to repeat the feat of the stolen bench if it had not been discovered that the video was staged? This is what we are referring to when we say that the subject is transformed into the message when a swarming is generated. The example of 13M is apropos once again with its "pass it on". There were no people but rather only a message that dissected reality. Anonymity is an indispensable condition for a process such as this one to take place.

But the swarmings that can break normality can also reinforce it. On 4 February 2007, the following news item appeared in the media, distributed by EFE:

"Two camp counsellors accused of sexual abuse and recording and distributing child pornography arrested."

No one realised the problems that could be caused by including the nickname

("Darzee") of one of the alleged paedophiles in the body of the article. Entries soon began to appear in the comments section of the digital version of "20 minutes"[5], supposedly written by indignant mothers trying to protect their children from the rotten swine.

The news quickly reached the headlines of "Meneame"[6] and a user decided to take the law into his own hands using Google. He ran a search for "Darzee" and among the first hits that came back found a "boy scout" forum whose administrator's nickname matched that of the alleged paedophile. Without the need to reveal his sources, the user began to propagate in the comments section of the "Meneame" and "20 minutos" news items that the forum was operated by the alleged paedophile and enclosed the email address so the rest could lynch him. Not satisfied with that, the user decided to open a post on that forum accusing the administrator in front of the whole word and taking a survey asking people if he should be lynched[7].

The forum administrator accused of being a paedophile by the avenging user now has a problem on his hands. He is not the alleged paedophile who was arrested and yet he is receiving an avalanche of emails insulting him. He therefore decides to clarify the situation on his blog and announces that he is going to sue the user who took the law into his own hands and harmed his honour[8].

Obviously, he also sends this information to Meneame and it quickly appears on the front page, clearing up the whole matter and showing the avenging user up[9]. But it's too late. The name "Darzee" is spreading like wildfire and a photograph of him with his daughter is circulating, raising the ire of the users who comment on the "20 minutos" site, who use him as a scapegoat. The avenging user, seeing the commotion which his error has caused and faced with the threat of a lawsuit by the accused's wife (who is a lawyer)[10], attempts to smooth things over by apologising on a blog especially created for that purposes [11] which he sends to Meneame and appears on its first page within hours[12]. But it's not enough. The moral damage is done and someone who has nothing to do with the case has been stigmatised by the mob (reminding us somewhat of the case of Dolores Vázquez, except for the fact that now it is the Internet rather than the television where the lynching occurs).

The conditions which enabled this incident to come to the public's attention are clearly explained on the blog of the lynched user:

"But none of this prevented an Internet user, thinking himself invisible behind his computer screen, to publish my personal data on various websites and even to propose my lynching on my own portal."

"Very simply, this individual was merely trying to achieve his own personal gain by spreading this unfounded rumour on a website where users compete with their comments. And nothing could be better to do so than a shocking subject seasoned with a perverse imagination. Put it all together and throw in the word scout to heighten the morbid fascination and what you get is an enormous ball that is impossible to stop".

These are the conditions for swarming: anonymity, break with normality (it is unlikely that a boy scout is a paedophile) and the creation of a simultaneous and parallel reality by means of a message that is manipulated at each node (the possibility of lynching by an enraged mob, the photos, the forum administered on Google).

There is something horrific in this case. Once again, the vigilance of everyone by everyone thanks to the fact that each one of us has a ubiquitous screen that is like an extension of our own bodies. The "reality" becomes transparent and we can all be seen, until we are nothing more than a simulation subject to what is "politically correct" under threat of a media lynching. We are what the rest of the world sees … and if what they see is the information that can be found on Google, this is one of the dangers of the power of the Internet.

In both cases we see the central role played by the Meneame tool in promulgating these events.

Meneame is similar to a cubist work: the vital and divergent perspectives of the users cross to generate a credible, parallel and simultaneous reality to those generated by the traditional media, which is no different than the "We are the web" proclaimed by the magazine Wired a couple of years ago.

There was a time when Baudrillard complained that the simulation of reality (hyper-reality) produced by the television was replacing our own vital reality; its message deferred everything, diluted us in the indifference of the mass-media, in a share where the spectator had nothing to say or do about it. With Meneame this got twisted around: the spectator becomes the actor/user to the delight of the "Debordianos" and

is the one who decides which reality he/she wants to see (by voting on which news items should appear on the front page).

The message continues to be dominant, the mass media continues to exist but the essential difference is that housed within this "indifferent one" are the particular differences of each user. Each user with his own fears, taboos and obsessions does battle with others to bring forth a reality composed of bodies. A carnal message that we can touch and in which we can believe.

There is an option on Meneame to refrain from playing the game and not to use the tool as a way of promoting news and focus on launching RSSs that allow us to read what interests us. In other words, there is a possibility of refraining from the democratic game and creating our own space where we manage the information ourselves without impediments. But to choose this option would be tantamount to enclosing ourselves in a perspectivistic individualism rendering us unable to deal with the different perspectives of the other users to transfer the perspective itself into a plausible reality. To renege on this solipistic attitude is therefore to understand Meneame as a battlefield where "the One" (the message/reality/normality we all believe in) must be synchronised with "the other" (the difference / the vital perspective). It's not a very different task than that performed by Hegel (except that for him the message always won; it took the postmodernists to come along and correct him).

Meneame and society/life are not two different things. The same arguments we have put forward can be applied to physical social relationships. In fact, Meneame can change society and vice versa (the virtual and the physical have been overlapped for years). Swarmings that sweep the nodes along, transforming reality, are commonplace on Meneame to a greater or lesser extent. Meneame is a machine for producing and reproducing swarmings, but it is at this time when we find ourselves with our "here and now". Swarmings can turn into "events/gestures" that reproduce vigilance and repress those who fall outside of the realm of normality (see the example of the avenging accuser) and "events/gestures" which can liberate us (the sit-ins "you'll never have a house in your bloody life"). In other words, Meneame can be used both to reproduce what is "politically correct" and to liberate us from its claws, which is why the battlefield is drawn and we have to think about strategies for generating "swarmings" that punch a hole in reality to escape from the overwhelming "common sense" that silences divergent voices. Or in other words, discover how to

recreate messages that destroy the message, realities that destroy reality.

The message of the "anonymous man" that lives inside all of us (it is not innate, it has nothing to do with Chomsky) is what connects us and allows us to generate different realities. We use the message to attack the message because once the "anonymous man" is dead all we are left with is our body, our vital perspective liberated in the event and it is only then when we can rebuild the "anonymous man", communicating from our own corporality, our own difference.

We live entrapped in our pre-recorded state, our discourse, in short, in our normality. A normality which has certain limits that differentiate between action and non-action, limits that define the vigilance of oneself by oneself. Breaking free from this normality leads to the ostracism of mental illness, to autism, to schizophrenia. Therefore, if we want to stay normal we must be visible and let ourselves be heard. And there is no possibility of direct noise; we must accept the triumph of playback.

Swarming makes it possible to remain among the normal people and yet for a parallel and simultaneous reality to exist. Swarming opens the way to a multi-pre-recorded state, i.e., the possibility of surpassing the limits of our actions, of escaping from the vigilance that entraps us in our normality, of liberating us for just a moment to enable us to experience new limits. In conclusion, swarming is a general displacement of reality and subjection, a falsification of our life map.

Every normal subject in this community which we call "society" reproduces an image of the Body that he/she has internalised through measured language and is situated within certain limits of attenuated vigilance where what he/she wants corresponds to what is expected by everyone. What is currently understood as "life" requires that we project our own normality, that we give in to the image of the body that has been launched into the future of each one and it is there where everything is devoured. Normal subjects are cannon fodder for the city-brand and the state-war.

Breaking with the Body and with Life is the only option for living and recreating the body, for liberalising the character. When we break with our normality, all roads are opened up to us, all of the projects converge in us simultaneously.

The past and the future are virtualities that determine the present state of a body. "To be someone" is to be a body whose ability or inability to de certain things is delimited

by the past and the future. Our memory and what we imagine about ourselves and our lives are the materials we have to confront ourselves.

In 1984 it was said that: "Whoever controls the present, controls the past and whoever controls the past, controls the future". Our memory and our dreams are the materials that can be moulded: forgetting, reinterpreting or inventing our past is what enables us to change our present body and open ourselves up to new possibilities in the future. The past and the future are like the waves of the sea pounding against the shore in which we play, building fragile sand castles. "Being someone" is nothing more than a creative aesthetic game.

Internet, as the maximum expression of virtuality, is the tool that converts human beings into "information". The absence of bodies in the here and now converts the Internet into a big dream-generating machine but in a sterile place until someone comes along to "embody" them in the physical world. The screen must burst to plunge the glass into those who are watching. The projection of our past and our future generates that which we call normality and that normality in turn which we call "I" (or personality). Only when the normality breaks into a thousand pieces that are plunged into our bodies do we realise the point to which we are living with that unrealness and how far we really are away from the dreams of this bundle of flesh, fluid and nerves.

III. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT OF ART TODAY?

How can we confront our own life map from art? How can we escape the limits that entrap us in our normality and force us to be our own vigilantes? Let's look at the history.

One way to achieve this would be by situating our representation in the spaces that have been normalised for accommodating representations such as artistic spaces. Previously, exhibiting a toilet in a museum and stating that the piece was not a work of art was a way of making it one. The presentation of something in a place where no one expected it liberated the artist from being an artist. But today that is a hackneyed path that has given rise to the tag that "everything is art" and since we are prepared to understand that anything can be artistic within an artistic spaces, we normalise our conduct toward that anything and turn into snobs.

The next step was obvious. If any object could be artistic in an artistic space, why not

turn the human bodies in the place into works of art? Performances and happenings arose out of this idea and would later gain autonomy with respect to artistic spaces, bringing art into the street. At any time we could participate in an artistic activity and, since anything goes in art, we could break with the normality of our lives for an instant, opening ourselves up to chance. But today the performances and the happenings have been normalised due to the interest in recording them on video for reproduction, introducing a narrative line that is internalised by the participants in these activities. Everyone knows that "something out of the ordinary" always happens at performances and happenings, thereby normalising the non-normalised.

It is at this point when the use of video becomes a way of escaping from our normalisation. In the presentation of the video there is a narrative line that leads us to believe that it is all taking place, even though it's already happened. That is the genius of the most extreme snuff movies or pornographic videos. In video, anything goes and thanks to the fact that we can record videos and exhibit them on the Internet, we can all be participants in the liberation from our limits. It is no coincidence that amateur porno films made at home are triumphing today since they are more realistic than the Penthouse superproductions (although, curiously, the homemade tapes use the professional ones as visual models). The popular imagination is reproducing.

And if we were to consider the attempt to generate swarming with the video of Zapatero's bench as art? And if the artist today had to suppress him/herself to give priority to the message and give way to a constant ubiquitous performance where each network node were a potential reproducer of same?

Here we must consider the interface above and beyond the bi-dimensional nature of the screen. From this perspective, the artist becomes a generator of swarmings which are distributed on the network and have effects on the atomic world. There would not be any "I" in it, a transcendental subject with decision-making capabilities, only a constant flow of masks, of delirious contractions, inside a body that serves as a temporary autonomous zone through which the messages run.

The field to be explored is the combination of Youtube and Meneame, generating videos and messages that are capable of falsifying the reality of the collective imagination. More specifically, the potential experiences using mobile telephone cameras are interesting due to the fact that they can be used at any time to capture

the apparent human banality, i.e., removing the narrative in favour of an image that has not yet jumped into the imagination or, in other words, questioning imagination through images, the vigilance crisis generated by the community through images. The problem with conventional cameras is exactly that. They are so flamboyant that people around them know how to locate them and know when they are being recorded and are therefore able to condition their conduct to the collective imagination, i.e., to what they expect that people want to see. This can also occur even without a camera. The human eye and the memory are vigilance technologies. Therefore, the most genuine image that could be produced by a mobile telephone camera would be to record elements that cause vigilance to go into crisis. Obviously, what would differentiate it from a traditional security camera (like those in the underground) would be its mobile capacity, i.e., the ability to occupy spaces where one would never expect to find it.

Therefore, the language which needs to be explored in telephones with cameras is the language of movement, no longer understood as a narrative but rather as the flow of temporary autonomous zones, strategies that put the collective imagination in suspense, occupying places where no one would expect to see a camera, dashing people's expectations of what they are going to see.

It all fits: the video of Pedro J. Ramírez, the girl with the dog on Sorpresa Sorpresa, the robbery of Zapatero's seat, the boy in the Valencia underground, the girl with the stain in her hair... in all of these cases an essential condition is met, which is that of an image that "shouldn't have been there" and which brings the reverse of the collective imagination to light, the most horrible part of reality, the fears that we conceal under the blanket of normality and which we do not want to admit we are morbidly fascinated with (when we know we aren't being watched). Internet has allowed us to do just that, the ability to observe the dark underside without being observed, liberating use from our own vigilance and knowing that there are other people out there who share our interests. The job of the artist in the network society, today called the "web 2.0", is precisely that, to bring out its dark underside to liberate it from itself.

NOTES

1 As explained by David de Ugarte on 4 June 2007: "We could define a cybermob (civil swarming) as the culmination in a street movement involving a relevant number of people of a social discussion process carried out using

electronic communication means and personal publications in which the divisions between cyberactivists and the mobilised eliminated". (http://www.deugarte.com/wiki/contextos/Ciberturba)

2 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nd1q_JIR_B8

3 http://meneame.net/story/le-roban-silla-zp-en-congreso

4 http://www.blogs.telecinco.es/abordaje/post/2006/10/01/el-robo-la-silla-zapatero

5 http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/198160/0/pornografia/infantil/monitores/

6 http://meneame.net/story/dos-detenidos-azotar-violar-ninos-distribuir-grabaciones-internet

7 http://foro.larocadelconsejo.net/viewtopic.php?t=591

8 http://blog.larocadelconsejo.net/2007/02/la-falsa-imputacion-de-un-delito-si-es-un-delito/

9 http://meneame.net/story/falsa-imputacion-delito-si-delito

10 http://meneame.net/story/dos-detenidos-azotar-violar-ninos-distribuir-grabaciones-internet#comment-39

11 http://grancagada.blogspot.com/2007/02/una-gran-gran-liada.html

12 http://meneame.net/story/explicacion-de-gran-gran-liada

CULTURAL PROCESSES ON THE NET
Perspectives for a digital cultural policy

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Originally written for a Doctoral degree in Cultural Law at the Instituto Interuniversitario de Comunicación Cultural (U.N.E.D. / Carlos III in Madrid), it is part of a research project in progress on the possibilities of adapting cultural policies to the digital era.

It is – wants to be – the natural child of the network culture which nourishes it and consequently does not pretend to formulate answers but merely to suggest connections.

INTRODUCTION

"*A good futurist is one who can predict the present*"

Bruce Sterling.

To talk about culture in the context of the Web 2.0 has become a commonplace occurrence faced with diverse obstacles.

The first is tautological in nature, due to the intrinsically cultural dimension of the web 2.0 concept. Oftentimes, the discussions surrounding this phenomenon – in favour or against, revolutionary or opportunistic, marketing strategy or new paradigm – base their arguments on technical questions that debate the characteristics of the tools that make it possible. Second generation, pro-user, interactive tools - here again the terminology is prolific – that have, in short, made it possible for the average Internet user to participate actively in something that has been accompanying digital culture since its origins: the decentralised collaboration and exchange of knowledge. The problem is not whether the web 2.0 is intrinsically different but rather to what extent these new interaction possibilities can modify our habits and behaviour on and offline. In other words, *create* culture. From this point of view, the web 2.0 (or

second generation) cannot be analysed only on the basis of a set of social software technologies but rather in terms of its *meme* dimension. In other words, in terms of a *cognitive replication unit* with the ability to represent the current changes and give them a charter of legitimacy as cultural transformation elements.

The second obstacle is the polysemic dimension of the term "culture" which conditions the manner in which one approaches the relationship between cultural change and technological intervention. Hence, from the art world people imagine the possibilities for the creative exploitation of these new media – once again, with a long list of terms which may not withstand the test of time: *net art, media art, new media art, network art, blog art*, to name just a view – and discuss the models for exhibiting and conserving them. Cultural law and culture management focus on the problems associated with the digitalisation of media and the rights of intermediaries, consumers and creators. The private cultural sector – cultural industries and media conglomerates - focus on the problems associated with the sectorial exploitation of digital cultural property (arte, cinema, music, editorial sector, video games, the media and other forms of multimedia entertainment) and with some hesitation explores the ways in which these technological changes can be adapted, optimising resources and creating products adapted to digital consumption habits. In the midst of it all, the discourses on "free culture" extol the need to guarantee open access to cognitive production resources and computer codes. Finally, cultural studies warn of the new forms of exclusion and invisibility accompanying the informational economy.

When we talk about digital culture, what is the idea of culture we are using? Is it synonymous with "cultural property", identifiable and crystallised, the fruit of formal education? Or the set of processes which give meaning to social life? Since the early twentieth century, anthropology and philosophy have been trying to distinguish between two concepts, the objectual and processual, and to emphasise the limitations, from a social science standpoint, of viewing cultura as merely the *product of a process* rather than a *process in and of itself.* In the different approaches to digital culture, there are still some openly objectual ones that assimilate the new practices with a "set of digital cultural goods" which are therefore able to be exhibited, conserved and merchandised as though they were definitive and identifiable works. Consequently, the implications of the new generation web for the art world are analysed on the basis of specific technological innovations that add new supports for creating or distributing art without modifying either the content or the socio-semiotic environment in which the "artiotic" gesture is produced.

On the contrary, processual approaches start from the socio-semiotic nature of culture and the consideration of the work of art not as an object in and of itself but rather as a social product, the result of a certain conjugation of forces. From this point of view, culture is identified with a group of relations involving the production, circulation and consumption of meanings in social life, marked by a socially dynamic context in which *supports, contents, agents and uses* are permanently negotiating relationships of meaning which may never be complete. Hence, technical innovations are analysed as *factors of sociality and meaning* present in the cultural processes from the origin and not merely as more or less effective or "revolutionary" modes of transmission.

Except in the case of education (where culture is contemplated as part of a process that is related to sociality), by and large public policies take an exclusively objectual view of cultural phenomena: digitalisation of collections (museums, archives, libraries), technological literacy programmes (focusing on the acquisition of technical knowledge but not on the investigation of new techno-cultural forms) or investment infrastructure (networks, applications and computer equipment). For the most part, they have been and continue to be actions intended to foster the production of cultural objects and their conservation, more concerned with crystallising the work of art (and all of the mythology that surrounds it such as authorship, exhibition, archive or collectionism) than the underlying social processes.

The aim of this text is to propose some lines of thought that will help to move the central theme of the debate *from objects to processes,* which is where the relations of sociality and meaning that determine cultural change reside. This approach is not exclusive to the digital environment - or, of course, to the web 2.0 super meme – but rather is applicable to any past or present cultural form. The socio-semiotic conception proposes an integral (and disciplinarily borderline) perspective in which the digital revolution is interpreted in light of an entire spectrum of contemporary social transformations marked by economic tertiarisation (and even the appearance of a fourth sector dedicated to the commercialisation of meanings), the weakening of the cultural references of modernity and the semiotic capacity of technology. By understanding culture in this way, the conceptual horizon for contemplating the relationship between culture and the new generation web is broadened considerably, both in terms of studying the intersections between the new web and technology and

the possibility of articulating transversal policies to accompany the new forums of socialisation and production of meaning in the digital age.

CULTURE, TECHNOLOGY AND HISTORICAL CHANGE

The new generation web cannot be analysed without taking into account the advent of the information society associated with the economic, political and cultural transformations of the final decades of the twentieth century. In general, the concept of *informationism* is used to denote a *change of paradigm* in the socio-economic organisation of countries with advanced capitalism systems marked by the emergence of cognitive capital as the driving force behind the economy and the exponential development of information and communication technologies that are more highly perfected with each passing day.

To a greater or lesser extent, all human societies have been information societies based on the production and consumption of signs, particularly starting with the creation of the modern state, supported by the management of information through a complex bureaucratic organisation. But now, as Castells points out, "*for the first time in history, the human mind is a direct productive force, not merely a decisive element in the production system*"[1].

The term technology emerged in the eighteenth century as a result of the interaction between techno-scientific advances and the emergence of the productive systems of the first industrial revolution. Since the beginning, then, it has been closely related to the rise of *industrialism* as a model of society and at the service of its needs. Unlike science, which responds more to the will of abstract knowledge (although this does not make it less dependent social and ideological dynamics) technology is decidedly more operative and practical. Due to its keen ability to penetrate human activity, technology is not an autonomous device that manifests itself in specific innovations but rather inscribed in the dynamics of social processes: its power relationships, its organisation of productive factors and how its recipients use it.

For Mattelart[2], the idea of society as a network interconnected through techno-scientific mechanisms is prior to the so-called "information revolution". According to this author, the *integral* and *systematic* articulation of all human realities through

information flows circulating through a mesh of interconnected nodes (tables, databases, models, protocols or standards) is the natural result of the modernisation that began in the seventeenth century. Its guiding principles, from a practical point of view, would be the operating requirements of the capitalist market economy and the management of the society that supports it. From a theoretical-ideological standpoint, it would be the establishment of a way of viewing the world based on progress, science and what this author refers to as the "*romanticism of numbers*".

One of the elements that characterises societies to which capitalism came late is precisely the application of industrial logic to all areas of human activity, including the implementation of affections and meanings. Hence, the contemporary evolution of culture is marked by that reciprocal movement that attracts two traditionally autonomous spheres: one economic-industrial (associated with values of use and change) and the other cultural (which focuses on the production of sign and symbol values). This displacement alters the rightful place of culture and redefines its position in respect of society, experience and life.

The artistic avant-gardes of the early twentieth century, such as those who espoused the Dada movement, were the first to note this curious fusion and its consequences for the art world. But it was primarily starting with the crisis (social and economic but also the value crisis) provoked by the Second World War when some European authors began to analyse the implications in more detail. They all started from the same premise: the cultural event cannot be analysed separately from the society that produces it. The place where the possibilities of social transformation come into play is no longer that of the political economy (as Marxist currents would think) but is increasingly found in the spaces where the mechanisms of meaning circulate. The data then shifts to cultural industries, mass communication media and the new middle class being lifted up by the consumer society.

This alliance between the register of the economy and those of symbolic production characteristic of the information society would be one of the principal indicators of cognitive capitalism, heir to the concept of *general intellect* or *intellectualism of the masses* which Marx would coin in 1863 in a stroke of intuition. In his "Fragment on Machines"[3], Marx noted the growing application of science to the productive process, objectivated in the system of machines, so that "*general social knowledge*

has become an immediate productive force". Along these same lines, years later, Guy Debord[4] would affirm that: "*the spectacle is human communication transformed into merchandise*". This means that the mass media and cultural industries, which constitute one of the greatest sources of the creation of wealth in the global economy, trade in the human ability to communicate and the verbal and symbolic language as such. The spectacle is the characteristic product of cultural and knowledge industries. But within the context of post-Fordist productive organisation, human communication becomes an essential ingredient for productive cooperation that goes beyond its own sphere (that of cultural and similar industries) and affects the entire economy. "*The spectacle then has a dual nature: the specific product of a particular industry and the quintessence of the production mode overall.*"[5]. And the productive forces that create the spectacle are increasingly the linguistic-communicative competencies and the *general intellect*. In the opinion of J. L. Brea, in "cultural capitalism" (which would be a specific form of the new economy), there is a collision of the *"economic-productive system and the subsystem of cultural and representative practices*"[6]. In other words, the processes of cultural capitalism occur when the economic-quantitative logic expands its scope of action and takes over fields traditionally beyond its reach, such as the production of identities and meanings.

In relation to the mercantilisation of everything social, a new type of superficiality emerges in the most literal sense of the word which makes modern ways of thinking about culture archaic. In the opinion of Jameson[7], this has led to "*a new kingdom for the supreme sense of the contemporary age which is visuality*". A society centred on images transforms what is real into a "*collection of pseudo-events"* that intensifies the logic of capitalism. This produces a "*death of the tragic*"[8] that dismantles the "*quasi-autonomy*" enjoyed up to that point by culture[9]. José Luis Brea goes so far as to note the emergency of a *fourth sector* composed of *subjectivity industries*[10] that respond to social demands in the areas of mental and emotional life. Jameson insists that this transformation of the cultural sphere is not limited merely to a question of contents or to the activities that are the object of mercantile exploitation. He notes that there is "*a more fundamental mutation of the objective world itself, converted into a set of texts or simulations*". The value of change associated with the spectacle is generalised to the point where all memory of the value of use fades away. Images, converted into the final form of mercantile reification, takes the form of a *sham* culture based on the production and distribution of identical copies of originals that

never existed. This transformation of the place of culture affects modes of abstract thinking *"Nowadays, abstraction is no longer that of the map, of the double, of the mirror or of the concept. Simulation does not correspond to a territory, a reference, a substance, but rather the model-based generation of something real without origin or reality: hyperreal."*

APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES AND COGNITIVE TECHNOLOGIES

To address the relationship between culture and technology from a socio-semiotic perspective presupposes defining the concept of technology itself, distinguishing between *applied technologies* (like the printing press, the telegraph, the television or the Internet) and *cognitive technologies* (like the alphabet, the system of thought inherited from the Enlightenment or the new forms of knowledge associated with the web 2.0).

In the history of human knowledge, the emergence of the alphabet meant the appearance of a cognitive technology that transformed human communication and separated written communication from the visual system of symbols, relegated to the world of arts and liturgy[11]. With the invention and dissemination of the printing press, written culture was established as an intellectual artefact of learning, description, explanation and modification of the world around us. Hence, almost all social acts are accompanied by a written register that validates them and situates them in reality. Many years of training are dedicated to the development of the reading and writing skills which will be key instruments in the acquisition of formal knowledge. But writing, which we situate "*in a central place in our conception of ourselves as people in possession of culture*"[12], is nothing but an accumulation of suppositions which are the basis for many of the myths of western culture: from the supposed superiority of written cultures over oral ones to the relationship between literacy and economic development.

As McLuhan indicates, "*using a sign stripped of meaning linked to a sound stripped of meaning, we have built the shape and sense of western man*"[13]. Along with other authors from the Toronto School, he questions the psychological theories that associate writing and mental function, literacy and the capacity for cognitive development. In his opinion, the cultural differences between the peoples of oral

tradition and those of written tradition can be explained in terms of *communication technologies*, i.e., in the manner in which applied and cognitive technologies are combined in certain social organisations.

In his history of reading between the ninth and eighteenth centuries (i.e. in the transition of written culture as the patrimony of just a few to its proliferation as a popular habit),   Roger Chartier[14] divides it into three levels. The first level would be that of an intrinsic analysis of works that focuses on style, content and discourse, ahistorical and disconnected from the economic, political and social conditions of the time when they were created. The second would consist of the formats which serve as the vehicle for the intrinsic content of the works, i.e., the media which have historically been used to transmit them and make them objects of consumption and identification (material, typography, size, shape, illustrations, etc.) And finally, the practices and uses through which the works are received and internalised (reading aloud; solitary, intellectual, professional, intensive and extensive reading...). Chartier's theory is that in order to understand the way in which the multiplied circulation of the printed word transformed the canons of sociability and thinking of societies of the Ancient Regime, the study of it cannot be confined to an ahistorical and autonomous analysis of the works but must incorporate the external conditions that had an impact not only on the contents but also on the transmission conditions. Unlike a purely semantic and structuralist conception which considers that the public is faced with an abstract, ideal, intellectual work stripped of materialism, Chartier maintains that the technological and social mechanisms of production, transmission and reception determine their meaning. In written culture, these devices include the author's writing strategies, editorial and printing decisions and social reading practices. And the way in which they are articulated creates a space which is where the overall and historically situated meaning of the work is located. Changes in formal mores affecting the presentation of writing modify their register of reference and their codes of interpretation. With the triumph of whites over blacks, for example, the publishers of the Ancient Regime decided that dividing the page into paragraphs and sections would facilitate the reception of the discourse by the less knowledgeable public. By facilitating access to the work by new communities of readers, not only did they open up the commercial perspectives for their businesses but they also began to *suggest* a certain way of reading and understanding the works. Thus, the evolution of manufacturing and reproduction techniques, the

transformation of forms and supports permitted unprecedented appropriations and creating new uses, new publics and new contents.

As we know, the digital culture brings with it an alteration of the *factors in the production of meaning* in the context of a global and technological cognitive economy and an immaterial, decentralised environment that resists hierarchical organisation, in which millions of signals which can be stored, hypertextual and infinitely reproducible, circulate leaving a trail. Their extensive use configures a reticular architectural space organised in nodes that can be travelled non-linearly through multiple pages, folds and interconnections. It also creates a relational and socialisation environment in which notions as disparate as those of the producer and the consumer, original and copy, and even fundamental categories of modern thought as private space and public space are confused.

With the rise of multimedia language, which incorporates hypertext, images and sounds, a new oral form appears in which different forms of communication, previously separated into different domains of the human mind, converge to influence social relations and knowledge creation processes. But beyond its information transmission function, digital language (binary code or multimedia) is a space of action and reaction with the capacity to intervene in what is real, "*establishing or reconfiguring new relations, opening or closing universes of meaning, channelling modes of action and reflection*"[15].

In the "Manifest for Cyborgs", Donna Haraway notes that[16]: "*The dividing line between myth and tool, between instrument and concept (...) is permeable. Moreover, myth and tool are mutually constituted*". According to this author, the technological determination is an open space for the game of writing and reading the world. In her opinion, technologies and scientific discourse can be understood in part as *formalisations* of the social relations that constitute them, but must also be seen as *instruments* for validating meanings. Furthermore, the Foucaltian concept of technologies reveals the manner in which power is articulated in the framework of social relations, cultural grammar, everyday practices and institutions[17]. Foucault reminds us that some machines have been operating so long in reality that they have produced orders and structures which we consider normal – *normalised* – while others that burst into the social context produce rejection or excitement about the

changes they anticipate. In any case, we live among multiple technological systems that define and delimit *what we are and what we can do.* In Barandiarán's opinion, new technologies are added to the pre-existing disciplinary technological systems and redefine the power structure. In the information society, "*cultural-institutional technologies and electronic-informational technologies are merged; furthermore, the technologies of production, the systems of signs, of power and of «I» are closely interwoven.*"[18]

THE ARTIST AS *NETWORKER*

One of the principal contributions of *media art* to the world of art is its capacity to approach art and communication jointly, one of the most recurring problems in contemporary creation. Works of *media art* often incorporate *"hybrid spaces"* that gather inside them a multitude of creative, formative and informative proposals without making distinctions between the frontiers of the two disciplines. The Uruguayan artist Clemente Padín[19] uses the concept of *network* to express the way in which the connection between art and communication, characteristic of media art, are linked to the processes of meaning in the contemporary world: *"The network is the alternative art that puts the accent on communication. Communication is the message. The network emphasises art as a product of communication, the fruit of human toil (the "work") and as a weft of relations between communicators, joined on the network, the circuit that interconnects them (the "net"). The same as a network of computers without a central unit in which each one (networked artist) acts as a switchboard for recycling and creating communication*".

It is not about the use of computers or other forms of technological reproduction but rather the *reproduction of processes for organising, storing, recycling and creating information*: a circuit of "networkers" that explore the new media which the communications industry puts in their hands. This corresponds with what José Luis Brea considers "*the new statute of artistic practices*" in the communication age, in which the artist has become a *"producer of media"* in the sense already used by Bertold Brecht: *"participant in the games of information exchange that generate critical disposition, takeovers that favour the intertextuality of data, the contrast of the ideas received."*

Communication, notes Padín, is neither an entity nor an object but rather must be produced and distributed in order to be realised, consumed and legitimised

as a product. Unless it is consumed and feedback is generated, there is no communication. In other words, the "network" can only exist on the net (physical or online) and this cannot exist without the active and essential participation of the spectators, in turn converted into media producers: *"each networker is a communicator".* On the one hand, as a *"product of communication",* the network is inseparable from the social production generated in the social weave of the author's relationship with his/her environment – human, social and technological. On the other hand, it acts as a production aid by favouring or obstructing its processes referring to the interchange of procedures and ideas between the members of the community of which the network itself is a part.

David Ross[20], Director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, notes that there are various distinguishing qualities of artistic languages such as *net art* or *media art.* In his opinion, net art is an accelerated and inapprehensive art that is not based on *objects* (web pages) but instead on *processes (network actions)* so that it is materially impossible to embrace all of its works.   *"Net art is developed in an instant, resisting any attempt to be fixed in time (...). Each work is nothing more than a trace, a mark that is subject not only to the evolution of the artistic process (the author usually modifies the work periodically) but also to the erosion of the digital environment (change of URL). Collecting net art would be somewhat like collecting snake skins: you've got the proof, but the snake is somewhere else."*[21]. This first characteristic alludes to one of the problems that is of most concern to cultural managers and art curators: the intrinsic impossibility of exhibiting and collecting works of net art. Antonio Cerveira Pinto[22], in charge of organising digital art for the MEIAC in Badajoz (one of the first Spanish museums to acquire digital art), ironically expresses his frustration at not being able to exhibit these creations in the "original version". To guarantee their conservation, it is also necessary to buy the original technological medium (software, operating system and hardware) so that they can still be enjoyed when the technology changes. The net art is exhibited in museums on closed-circuit computers, which means that they cease to be net art in the strict sense of the word since they are no longer connected to the network. The only way to enjoy these works in their original form is via the Internet with the work on line, something which the visitor does not need to go to a museum to do.

This alludes to another characteristic of net art mentioned by Ross: free access to the works and the documentation. Since the Internet is at once the creative support and the exhibit place, the production of net art is permanently accessible to all

users, an advantage which has no precedent in other types of art, technological or otherwise. Because of its link to the network culture that drove the emergence of the Internet – which could be compared to a sort of deontological code for net artists - most of the bibliography that refers to both the theory and practice of net art is freely accessible and subject to user intervention. Third characteristic: net art assumes the intervention of the user in the creation and legitimation of the artistic process. It is not necessary to fall into the Utopia of democratisation and global access of the new media to see that the network has expedited the artistic creation process, favouring the author's independence and his/her direct relationship with the spectator-user based on the pieces that lead the user spectator-user to *take decisions* and intervene in the contents. The works that fall into this category, in addition to articulating images and text in an imaginative way, are also participative events and communication processes.

What is interesting to note is that the network culture associated with the network and virtual communication enables *new models for the circulation of cognitive capital*. Pérez Tapias[23], in relation to political movements, indicates that "*the idea is not to create parties as companies but rather to organise parties as networks*". Similarly, cultural policies applied to the digital environment must be oriented toward managing cognitive capital as what it is – a group of networks - taking advantage of social netting, pre-existing resources and the self-organising capacity of rhizomatic architecture.

FROM WHITE CUBE TO NETWORK CULTURE

With some exceptions, the ideas expressed here have not transcended the field of cultural politics but have had an impact on artistic practices and it is through them that the network culture is beginning to be taken into account by art centres and institutions. The reference to new artistic practices responds to the need to draft intervention policies and instruments based on a profound knowledge (lived and experienced) of network socialisation without which it would be difficult to articulate programmes relative to infrastructure, training and the promotion of new cultural manifestations.

Some artistic institutions have begun to include lines of programming that *explore and exploit* communicative processes as another artistic discipline. The aim is not to preserve or exhibit the final works which are the product of the communication

itself (as in the MEIAC's case) but rather to emphasise their intrinsically artistic value separate from there materiality. Below I will give some examples of the possibilities offered by the network culture for cultural policies as they relate to the promotion of new practices and to cultural communication and democratisation.

The Fundació Antoni Tàpies of Barcelona was created in 1984 to *"promote the study and knowledge of modern and contemporary art"*. In December 2005, the foundation's management staff presented its new website, noting that it would not only serve to publicise the foundation's activities and as an exhibit space but would also be used as a networking space[24]. First of all, the website was designed using the SPIP programme (Système Pour l´Internet Participative) developed by the Belgian company Constant. SPIP pertains to the generation of web 2.0 tools that prioritise the dynamism of contents and their accessibility, distancing themselves from the web publishing tools of the nineties, highly influenced by the audiovisual culture. While those tools placed greater emphasis on sophistication and aesthetics to the detriment of accessibility and browsability, new generation tools like SPIP are designed from the beginning as communication and accessibility tools. No complex technical knowledge or great bandwidths are required to use them and work with them. Anyone with a computer and basic connection can access them and become a content summariser and hence a producer of cognitive capital.

The second characteristic is that the foundation's website is a networking space for the institution's own employees, in keeping with the traits of the new cultural workers, *"know-worker"* par excellence. In addition to its public facet, this website is also – literally - a virtual office, a workspace for the different collaborators involved in the centre's work (curators, translators, producers, designers, etc...). To cite an example, the organiser of an exhibit, once the text of the presentation has been written, makes it available to his/her co-workers in the corresponding space on the website. The translators and designers get to work on the text, right in that space, and their work can be supervised at all times by the person responsible for the exhibit. The same is true of production tasks which require a great deal of organisation and documentation. Since all of the functions and stages of the work are located in a single virtual environment, coordination and management are greatly facilitated. These systems provide greater flexibility in time and space and adapt better to the circumstances of contemporary life[25]. Private companies operating in all sectors are assuming these telecommuting practices that allow them to cut costs and orient production toward the management of cognitive capital. However, their

use by cultural institutions, where they could be extremely useful, is still scarce and anecdotal.

Thirdly, the website of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies also functions as a network creation space for cultural producers as a whole, regardless of whether or not they work for the institution. The section dedicated to weblogs and, more specifically, the *Intermedial* section, proposes an interaction dynamic that calls upon internauts to collaborate in the contribution toward legitimising new artistic practices. Here again, there is a specific allusion to the condition of *"explainer: commentator, narrator, lecturer, who speaks before, during or between the images for spectators. The forebear of the film narrator's voice, the voice in off. In Japan, the explainer, who is called* benshi*, also read the dialogue of all of the film's characters. Hence, the internaut, by taking direct and person responsibility for the cultural production, becomes a creative agent"*.

The case of the Madrid Medialab illustrates another way of incorporating network culture into cultural policies directly related to interdisciplinary and education in new media that is based on the aforementioned convergence of artists, researchers, scientists and users. Along with the training programmes and exhibits, meetings of *media producers* – in the sense of content catalysers in all of their facets - are organised. The activities may include projects on biology, geology, architecture, philosophy, visual arts, music, theatre, design, communication, computer science and programming. A transdisciplinary and permeable research environment is provided which explores the intersection of art, science, technology and society, which is where the cultural dynamics occur. It is also part of a national and international collaboration network that exceeds local or national boundaries and, thanks to new technologies, enables Latin American and European artists to participate.

Like other media labs, the Madrid media lab rounds out its "in person" meetings with the creation of online files on digital culture, new media and the network society, providing the required tools and the knowledge free of charge, so that everyone can have access to these new practices [26]. And within the current context of privatisation of the spheres of knowledge and particularly of education, the ability to access this information from any computer at a relatively low cost is extremely valuable in terms cultural development and democratisation.

Finally, the Rhizome is *"an online platform for the global community dedicated to new media"* which is run by the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York. In reality, what lies behind that ambitious definition is a resource and documentation centre, a digital publication, an employment, news and announcement forum, a discussion list and a centre for content production and financing of artistic projects. All located on a website that places these virtualised activities at the disposal of users: artists, curators, cultural producers, journalists, amateurs, onlookers, researchers and programmers. The key to its management lies in the fact that, in addition to its employees, Rhizome receives the selfless collaboration of the digital art community which sends information on its own projects and thereby contributes to the dissemination of its own work. It is, above all, a meeting place for people interested in this subject who can not only find practical information but also contact one another, easily and very inexpensively.

Rhizome is dedicated to new media and projects in which art and technology intersect. Obviously, its users are knowledgeable in the field. They know how to browse, find information quickly and find the people they want to contact. But the way it works offers management possibilities which would also be applicable, at least partially, to centres dedicated to other types of artistic fields. The virtualisation of some of the traditional activities of an art centre (e.g., the classic Club de Amigos and the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao) make it possible to optimise and free up resources. This virtualisation does not replace a walk through the physical space of the museum but can be a complement and opens up a world of possibilities for accessing and enjoying culture which are well suited to the needs of modern day life.

CONCLUSION

"Stick close to your desk and never go to sea
and you all may be rulers of the Queen´s Navee"

First Lord of the Admiralty

As demonstrated by the confusion among artists, scientists and social investigators, the frontiers between different fields of knowledge are becoming more inoperative by the day. And we forget that this is not due to an ontological fragmentation of reality but rather to the need to approach it in an orderly manner. The aim of the reflections

presented here is to provide some keys for navigating the seas of the network culture. They are based on the conviction that the journey requires patience and an adventurous spirit and that it cannot be done from the shore or using ships built to sail other types of waters. Otherwise, we could end up like the captains of the British fleet who directed the fleet from land and were unable to protect the crown against the attacks of pirate ships, which were faster and more accustomed to navigation.

NOTES

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25 Telecommuting also opens up new possibilities for precarious labour relations but it is important to note that this does not mean that technology is, per se, a factor in that precariousness unrelated to social policies. The multiplication of precarious employment contracts in the field of culture is a recurring phenomenon in Spain and in other economically advanced countries, as demonstrated by the mobilisations of "intermittants du spectacle" in France, which ended with the cancellation of the Avignon Theatre Festival. But these should be interpreted more as the result of economic liberalisation and a disregard for workers' rights than a product of technological evolution, per se.

26 In the academic world, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has also joined this type of imitative. Since 2001, it has provided access to its Open Course Ware, a virtual space containing the didactic materials of 2,000 subjects, including science and humanities, also in Spanish. As indicated on its website, this is not equivalent to taking the courses at MIT and does not lead to the obtainment of a degree, but it is an indication of some of the public cultural possibilities offered by new technologies. Since it was launched, the MIT Open Course Ware has been visited by internauts from more than 210 countries, including students, professors and independent researchers. The courses include bibliographies, detailed syllabi and even recommendations on schedules and study times. See http://mit.ocw.universia.net/

FOSSILS AND MONSTERS: ARTISTIC COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS EN IN THE SPANISH STATE

Lourdes Cilleruelo

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the principle aspects of artistic creation on the Internet and it also characterizes that medium. This text focuses on the creation of **social networks on the Internet as an artistic resource and practice**[1], providing an overview of how these communication platforms have evolved and the resources that were determining factors in that process. Centred on initiatives arising in Spain, it examines creations from the early days of the Internet (late 1994) until the present (October 2006).

An analysis will be made of communication platforms (decentralized alternative channels) constructed by artists or for artistic projects using their resources and tools. It will take a chronological look at different projects related to user networks that have developed along with the Internet, from BBSs to the Semantic Web. Given that their primary purpose is based on creating social communication networks, those projects have a large social component, fostering the use of resources that make users the main producers and managers of information. Communication and collective creation, characterized by the simultaneous action of different users in real time, stand out as the protagonists of these artistic events.

Two different periods have been defined: the first, where the prevailing concept was that of archives and globalized access to information (E-lists, E-zines, and directories); and the second, where what predominates are collective creation, remixing, and classifying information so that it can be recovered and subsequently re-used (folksonomies, blogs, and wikis). Both periods include the idea of an archive where community contributions are gathered and classified. In order to gain a better understanding of the classification concept inherent to the idea of archives, we will review different attempts at order throughout human history.

In his essay *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* Michel Foucault establishes three significant phases. The first is based on the idea of similarities (as exemplified by the figure of Don Quixote). The second responds to the Classical conception (until the 18th century) that posed an artificial, unique and unchanging order characterized by identities and differences, which introduced

the possibility (it's just a matter of time) of gathering all human knowledge into one room. Different thinkers as of the 19th century have contributed to the breakdown of the Classical model rooted in Cartesian rationality: Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution; Karl Marx and historical materialism and Marxist economics; Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis; and Albert Einstein and the theory of relativity. Foucault mentions a third stage, comprising two ways of constructing natural history. In the first, time *"draws a line perfecting the set of a classification table",* a sort of memory built piece by piece that ensures continuity (fossil: stable set). The second is constructed out of cases that together form a continuous network of species. That continuity is not assured by memory but rather by a project (monster: emerging set). Foucault demands a place for aberrations, given that, in his opinion, that is where differences emerge.

This double conception of evolution comprised by the figures of fossils (the idea of continuity, memory) and monsters (the idea of aberrations as an element allowing for emergence) can be applied to the two primary models of virtual communities: the first, where the idea of archives is foremost (E-lists, E-zines, and directories) which suggests the continuity of a linear, fixed, and immutable history; and the second, represented by monsters, something mutable, infinite, and emergent. This second idea places us in what is known as Web 2.0, in the construction of archives and social hierarchies of knowledge that attempt to solve problems like information overload and its heterogeneous character.

1. THE "FOSSILS": ARCHIVES, E-ZINES, AND E-LISTS

Forerunners in Spain are few within the binomial "art and communication". They include two local communication actions led by Antoni Muntadas: Cadaqués Canal Local[2], 1974 and Barcelona Districte I, 1976, in which the artist altered the programming on local channels to broadcast a programme he produced; and the action carried out by Marisa González at the Circulo de Bellas Artes in Madrid: Fax Station, 1993. The majority of projects on the Internet can be defined by three key concepts: globality, communication, and interactivity. They were already present in currents of thought and artistic practice prior to the appearance of the new medium. The birth of the Internet only meant the solution to some technical problems involved in devices that were already in existence.

During this first stage, virtual communities, of which **e-lists** were the chief exponent**,** had two aims: to gather information of interest to the community and to create

meeting spaces for criticism and reflection. On the international scene, Nettime[3] and Rizhome[4] must be mentioned. They served as examples for experimental sites such as Aleph[5.] headed by José Luís Brea, which arose with the aim of becoming a Spanish language "Rhizome". His e-list, Eco, was embraced enthusiastically by the artistic community. However, massive mailings of *spam*[6] made many subscribers drop out, which led to its closing. This section must also include *netart* (artistic projects), *e-shows* (on-line exhibits) and *thought* (texts). Projects following Aleph included Estudios on line: estudios sobre arte *(On-line studies: Studies of Art)* by Ana Martínez-Collado, which gathered texts on cyber-feminism and highlighted the Internet's importance to that collective. Nettime, Aleph, and Estudios on-line, although their archives are still available on-line, have become inert memories (data storage sites).

The true importance of these communities is that they serve as a meeting point for criticism and reflection, a task reserved until now to festivals. In addition to e-lists, there are what are known as **discussion groups**[7], which arose out of email and allow people to subscribe and unsubscribe freely, keeping one's email inbox free of spam. They usually offer a brief description of the contents of the list and access to previous posts. The list of subscribers is available only to subscribers, and authorization is needed to access their administrative interface. An example of these groups is Copyleft-arte -- Debate y reflexión sobre copyleft en las artes visuales *(Copyleft-art – Debate and Reflections on Copyleft in the Visual Arts),* administered by Natxo Rodríguez of Fundación Rodríguez, which arose based on a conference on intellectual property and copyleft held at Arteleku.

Other resources based on the notion of archives are e-zines and directories. Of all the **e-zines** or electronic magazines, Artnodes is currently the most influential publication on electronic art. Pau Alsina heads this magazine, which publishes articles, interviews, and a full catalogue of the intersection of the arts, technologies, and sciences. Other examples include Forward, the electronic magazine by Zemos98 and SalonKritik, also headed by Brea[8], a repository of texts on art criticism in blog format. The **directories** are conceived as working tools on the Web, living archives that must update their links. Examples include El transmisor by Laura Baigorri, defined by its author as a *"working tool aimed at facilitating the free circulation of information as well as access to certain almost inaccessible news items, whose dissemination is ignored by media corporations"*[9], where she offers

a vast list of annotated links on activism. Along similar lines, Arte.red, by Roberta Bosco and Stefano Caldana, offers a chronological and theme-based history of net. art.

2. BLOGS AND WIKIS: "MONSTERS" UNDER THE EFFECTS OF CREATIVE COMMONS

Tim O'Reilly, in 2004, coined the **Web 2.0 concept** to refer to a second generation of the Internet which allows people to collaborate and share information online, using new tools and services: social networks, wikis, blogs, folksonomies… The new formats for virtual communities coincided with the objectives proclaimed on what is known as Web 2.0: the developments of autonomous languages and technologies on the Web have overcome various attempts to control the Internet. This second phase has two key characteristics:

1.   Classification and indexing with the aim of enhanced information recovery

2.   The step from archives to *remixing*: collective construction of information where users' collaboration and interaction takes on a crucial role; they form a complex adaptive system highlighting values such as self-organization, emergence, relations, feedback, adaptability, and non-linearity[10].

Folksonomies, or collections of metadata[11] generated by users, offer a new form of indexing information based on social patterns. They represent a step forward, from hierarchical content classification to a social one; in addition, they transfer the responsibility of the author (one or several authors) to an emerging collective. Web sites based on folksonomies allow users to publish archives of different types – videos, photographs, and bookmarks – which are then organized and shared via the Web thanks to the tags or labels that describe them. These social tabs' influence is so great that they are better known than the famous PageRank algorithm used by Google. That explains the importance accorded this type of social indexing tools by companies such as Google, currently the owner of YouTube[12]. The fact is that Youtube (used by Sinapsis) or DailyMotion[13] (the European competitor of the former, used by Mediateletipos and Zemos98) are the protagonists of audiovisual content on the major blogs. Moreover, many blogs insert automatic links to add tabs to del.icio.us,[14] a very popular site that hosts social bookmarks.

Just as popular as tags is **RSS,** a language based on XML that makes it possible to identify a series of *metadata* with which contents can be specified for syndication (dissemination). Through this easy-to-use language, it is possible to share headlines

and news, which is why it has had widespread acceptance *bloggers*. Processing, sharing, and re-using data, adapted to users' preferences, have become common tasks. Although some tend to differentiate wikis from blogs, both phenomena are replacing the traditional format of e-lists like Aleph. These new formats, under the flag of **Creative Commons**[15]**,** have become popular on the Internet: they are open intellectual property and management systems, which allow work to be copied, distributed and publicly disseminated, and even allow derivative works, provided that the author is recognized, even, in some cases, when they are not made for profit.

Blogs (collective news)

A **web log** *"is a periodically updated Web site with a specific theme or purpose which gathers texts and articles by one or several authors, presented in reverse chronological order, and whose author is always free to publish what he or she considers relevant"[16]*. Today's weblogs have replaced their predecessors, which were personal and biographical in nature, bordering on hobbies. They now include news (texts and articles) of interest to the wider community, organized chronologically or by subject. Somewhere in between the two is <u>Tempus fugit</u>, the blog by Raquel Herrera with the same name as her written piece, winner of the Espais[17] award. Weblogs basically consist of two different sections: a private one, published by its creator, and a public one, comprising posts about various news items, arranged in chronological order. Their popularity is due to the use of free, simple tools which allow anyone to build an information/communication platform, and require no prior knowledge; in addition, some servers offer free maintenance[18]. Weblogs have also evolved as audiovisual formats have replaced texts.

Although many people still think that the blogosphere[19] phenomenon is only a passing fad, the fact is that previously existing platforms have adopted that format. This is true of <u>Sinapsis</u>, originally a Yahoo discussion group called Ade*e*e/ Sinapsis, which aimed to fill the gap left after the closing of Aleph and Nettime-latino. <u>Mediateletipos,</u> the web site of the artesonoro.org sound cluster, is, with Sinapsis, an essential reference point in electronic art in Spain. <u>Elastico,</u> a portal related to arts and culture in the digital era, is also of related interest, although it focuses more on movements in connection with free software. Also worthy of mention in the audiovisual area is the weblog by the <u>Zemos 98</u> collective, hosted by Espacio Fílmica, which collects news about Festival Zemos98. This group of artists is one of Spain's foremost collectives working in that area. In addition to Zemos98, it includes several blogs by indicvidual members of the collective: abrelatas, incongruent, and comcinco.

Wikis (collective encyclopedia)

Wikis are collaborative documents where visitors can participate by sending in their descriptions or editing those of other users. In general, wikis comprise a section called "article" which contains the text resulting from various contributions; in addition, there is a discussion section for subjects where disagreement exists, and a history which conveniently allows for the recovery of previous drafts. Wikipedia[20], the best known example, aims to become a free encyclopedia, accessible to everyone. Wikis are free of the problem that plagued e-lists in the past and weblogs at present: moderating[21]. Many people, instead of considering that a generational accomplishment of Web 2.0, argue that the lack of filters favours the deliberate inclusion of erroneous data, or intentional erasing. The fact is that these self-organizing tools, in addition to offering a larger scale and being faster, provide the ideal breeding ground for the aberrations Foucault has called for.

Wikis, as educational models, have been widely accepted in university circles. Since they allow for the creation and editing of contents, their use by research groups has grown in recent years. The TAG, Taller d'intangibles group, formed by David Gómez and Jaume Ferrer, has explored the limits of wikis. Their results are Germinador, a project that aims to find the keys through experimenting with collective creation in networks; and various collective notebooks about net.art, such as: Net.art wiki, Aproximación al net.art, and taller de creación colectiva en la red.

3. ARCHIVES AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

We would like to highlight those projects conceived as art works, with the same tools and objectives as the works cited in the previous paragraphs. They are mostly initiatives by artists interested in the creative aspects of communication. Antoni Muntadas, Antoni Abad and Daniel Andujar share an interest in access to technology and information. Antoni Muntadas' File Room, which comes closest to the concept of a collaborative archive, is a community based on the idea of censorship, and is considered as a pioneering project in net.art in Spain. The structure of its databases is like those projects.

A piece of *software.art*, Z.exe, is the artifice of Comunidad Z.exe, a group of flies that inhabit the desktops of its members when they go online. Canal Z opens a communicaton channel (instant messaging) for this community: "*The ultimate goal of Z is to create a distributed communication network that is independent of any central server. Each fly is simultaneously a customer and a server, and Z's users will soon be able to create their own networks*"[22]. In 2003, Abad added a second part to the

work which aims to transfer the digital network to an analogical one; coins, mailings, or press are some of the objects marked with a yellow sticker that links to Z.exe. Several years later, along these lines, he developed <u>Canal accesible</u> *(Accessible channel),* winner of the Golden Nica Award at the 2006 Prix Ars Electronica, in the Digital Communities[23] category. This project, carried out in various cities, consists of creating communication channels among marginal groups that have no voice in the media. On Canal accesible, 40 handicapped persons mapped out the architectural barriers they came across on their way around Barcelona. Provided with a multimedia mobile phone, they took snapshots and sent them to an Internet portal, where they were immediately published. This initial experience was followed by others including: Canal Sitio Taxi (Taxi Site Channel) with the taxi driver collective of Mexico City; Canal Gitano (Gypsy Channel), for the Gypsy community of Lleida and León; Canal Invisible (Invisible Channel), narrated by prostitutes in Madrid; and Canal Central (Central Channel) run by Nicaraguan immigrants in San José (Costa Rica). One of its accomplishments, as explained by Abad[24], is that this project has allowed these groups to get organized.

We would also like to point out <u>e-valencia.org,</u> a project by Daniel Andujar, a member of irational.org, presented at the exhibit *The Power of Security,* a work forming part of the legendary corporative type of organization, <u>Technologies to the People</u>. This work adopted the blog format to build a platform offering a critical voice in the Valencia area, and was joined by others in Spain, such as <u>e-barcelona</u> and <u>e-sevilla</u>[25].

FINAL REFLECTIONS

These two reflections are offered as a sort of epilogue. Firstly, the new models of communities conceive of the Internet as a huge collective mind, where its components, like neurons in the brain, are governed by a non-hierarchical model that reinforces connections according to their interests, through their interaction and communication. Secondly, taxonomies and folksonomies should be considered as complementary tools. Stabilizing and destabilizing forces are equally necessary, given that, to cite Foucault once again, the former maintain continuity (fossils) and the latter leave room for evolution (monsters).

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LIST OF PROJECTS (CHRONOLOGY)

Consciously or unconsciously, I have forgotten to mention many "fossils" and "monsters", but time and the space for this text are running out. Here are 25,000 characters of efforts in art and communication…

Fossils (1ˢᵗ stage): predominantly archives, e-zines and directories

1994: *Antoni Muntadas*. The File Room: An archive of censored objects.

http://www.thefileroom.org

1997(abr) -2002: *Ricardo Etxeverría* and *Jose Luis Brea*. Aleph: Plataforma de análisis de net.art.

http://www.aleph-arts.org

1997: *Ana Martínez-Collado.* Estudiosonline: Feminist discourse about the Web. http://estudiosonline.net

2000: *Laura Baigorri*. El transmisor: Directory of alternative information. http://www.interzona.org/transmisor.htm

2000: *R. Bosco / S. Caldana*. Arte.red. History of net.art. http://www.elpais.es/especiales/2003/netart/2000.html

Monsters (2ⁿᵈ stage): predominantly blogs and wikis

2001-02: *Antoni Abad*. Zexe.net: Distributed communication network http://www.zexe.net/Z/

2001 (nov): *Daniel G. Andujar.* E-valencia.org: Platform offering a critical voice in the Valencia area.

http://www.e-valencia.org

2002: *Pau Alsina*. Artnodes: Intersections of the arts, sciences, and technologies. http://www.uoc.edu/artnodes/esp/

2003 (May): *M. Peirano, J. L. de Vicente, I. Escolar, El Quinto Elástico.* Elastico.net: Platform for generating content about emerging cultures. http://www.elastico.net

2004 (Feb): *Colectivo Zemos.* Zemos 98: Weblog of the Audiovisual Festival Zemos 98

http://www.filmica.com/zemos98/

2004 (Mar): *Antoni Abad:* Canal accesible. Communication platform for various marginal groups. http://www.zexe.net

2004 (abr): *C. Longina, P. Jiménez, P. Sanz Almoguera, J. A. Sarmiento, J. Gil and J. Gómez* media·teletipos: System of teletypes [news] about sound art, video art, experimental cinema, and electronic art.

http://www.mediateletipos.net

2004 (Oct): *José Vicente Araujo.* Sinapsis: Collaborative bulletin about digital art in Spanish.

http://dunadigital.com/sinapsis/

2004 (Dec): *José Luís Brea*. Salon kritik: http://salonkritik.net

2005 (Mar): *Raquel Herrera*. Tempus Fugit: Personal weblog about digital art and new technologies.

http://www.raquelherrera.blogspot.com

2005 (April): *TAG. Taller d´intangibles* (Jaume Ferrer and David Gómez) Net.art wiki:

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https://listas.sindominio.net/mailman/listinfo/copyleft-arte

NOTES

1 For more information about the creative aspects of communication, see: Lourdes Cilleruelo: "Arte y comunidades virtuales: el aspecto creativo de la comunicación". In Laura Baigorri and Lourdes Cilleruelo: *Net.art. Prácticas estéticas y políticas en la Red.* Brumaria 6, Madrid, Spring 2006.

2 For more information *see:* http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/canal-local/

3 Nettime. http://www.nettime.org

4 Rhizome online platform for the global community of art using new technologies. http://www.rhizome.org.

5 For more information *see:* Jesús Carrillo: "La web como espacio de acción paralela"**,** *Desacuerdos*, Arteleku-Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona-MACBA and la Universidad Internacional de Andalucía-UNIA arteypensamiento. Complete version at: http://www.arteleku.net/4.0/pdfs/aleph.pdf

6 Mass mailings.

7 Although there are other services of this type, the most famous one is Yahoo Groups http://es.groups.yahoo.com/

8 Although several are mentioned here, Jose Luis Brea has begun other Web initiatives in addition to Aleph and SalonKritik including: arts.zin online criticism of new artistic practices; W3C, converted into a company engaged in cultural mailings, currently in blog format; agencia crítica, a critical blog about cultural and artistic policies.

9 http://www.interzona.org/transmisor/sobre.htm

10 D. Calvin Andrus: "The wiki and the Blog: Toward a Complex Adaptive Intelligence Community". *Studies in Intelligence,* Vol 49, No 3, September 2005. Available *on-line* at:

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=755904

11 Metadata is data that describes other data. Generally, a group of metadata refers to a group of data, called a *resource*. The concept of metadata is analogous to the use of indexes to find things instead of data. Source: wikipedia http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metadatos

12 http://www.youtube.com

13 http://www.dailymotion.com

14 http://del.icio.us

15 Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that offers a flexible intellectual property system for creative work. http://es.creativecommons.org

16 Source: wikipedia http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weblog

17 http://www.fundacioespais.com/principal.php?seleccio=1&any_actual=9&idio=2&plana=premi

18 Examples include la Coctelera, "*a community in Spanish made so that you, your friends and relatives can create your own blog or personal Web page, share your experiences and build a dynamic space for dialogue and meeting each other. It's easy, fast and completely free.*" http://www.lacoctelera.com

19 Terms like blogosphere focus interesting places on the Internet and designate a set of the blogs populating the Internet today.

20 Wikipedia is a free multilingual encyclopedia based on wiki technology. Definition taken from the Spanish edition http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia

21 The problem of moderating has existed since the beginning of communities such as Nettime.

22 Roberta Bosco and Stefano Caldana: "Antoni Abad suelta 10 millones de moscas en Nueva York". *El País*, October 2, 2003.

http://www.elpais.es/articulo/elpciboci/20031002elpciboci_2/Tes/Antoni/Abad/suelta/millones/moscas/Nueva/York

23 http://www.aec.at/es/prix/communities/communities.asp

24 Roberta Bosco: "Entrevista a Antoni Abad". *Babelia*, September 23, 2006.

http://salonkritik.net/06-07/2006/09/entrevista_antoni_abad_roberta.php

25 e-barcelona http://www.e-barcelona.org; e-sevilla http://alojamientos.us.es/e-sevilla/index.php

TEMPUS FUGIT

Raquel Herrera

O. INTRODUCTION: THE ORIGIN OF THE TEMPUS FUGIT BLOG

The Tempus Fugit Blog began in March 2005 as a personal writing project in which the blog structure would be used to publish, with (relative) frequency, events or opinions on the confluence between narrative and digital media. My interest in this subject dates back to *Tempus fugit, el relato interactivo* (Fundación Espais d'Art Contemporani, Girona, 2004), an essay in which I analysed the changes which the traditional narrative will undergo with the use of computers and the creative perspectives which CD-ROMS and the Internet can generate.

The initial object of this blog was therefore to publish brief comments and notes on the subject of *digital narrative,* which I am currently working on in connection with my doctoral thesis. Shortly after I began to write online, I realised that there were very few freely accessible publications on the Internet where opinions rather than just information where offered about what was happening with the intersection between art and technical-scientific culture.

I began to write about the events I attended and the texts I read and realised that I needed to expand the scope of my comments to encompass an ensemble of creations, not only *the narrative ones,* where multiple changes are taking place due to the *direct* intervention of technical-scientific aspects which I believe are stimulating to reflect upon.

The blog format was the obvious choice for practical reasons. Not only did it allow me to publish without the need for specialised technical knowledge but it also allowed me to do it immediately. I could therefore publish my writing digitally before it was published on paper and in the academically reviewed publications which are checked by several professors/professionals in a process which can take months.

After spending the first few months *playing* with the *digital narrative* category and other entries referring to digital culture in more general terms, I decided to classify my interests in different sections, which included:

• References to events focusing on art and technology.

• Readings on the subject (on paper and on a digital medium).

• Contents focusing specifically on the changes affecting the narrative (which have a value of their own but could also end up becoming the *draft* of a future academic research project).

• And more general allusions to digital art in contemporary culture.

Likewise, in my eagerness to document everything and to contextualise the entries as much as possible, to emphasise my opinions and not to confine myself to reiterating announcements or information already covered by mailing lists or thematic pages, I began to gather information on questions relative to contemporary art which, in principle, seems to be unaffected by the technological changes having an impact on *digital art*.

It did not take me long to realize that people tend to talk about two cultural or professional spheres circulating parallel to one another but which rarely converge, something like *contemporary art versus digital art.* The topic caught my interest in a way that opposes to how it is approached by many theorists: coming from a degree in audiovisual communications, I trained first in images and technology, only later to discover images without any technological mediation, *images anyway*. In this presentation, I look at the need to address this confluence, thus this new category about the opposition between two artistic worlds (?) has been adding to the preexisting ones.

Tempus Fugit has therefore been taking shape as a work tool which expands upon the initial idea of acting as a simple and compartmentalised platform for a future doctoral thesis to offer an immediate *public usefulness* based on a personal desire: the construction of a blog that focuses on art criticism related to technological media. My intention in the presentation that follows is to break down the different aspects of my blog to propose a way in which criticism and technology can be combined.

1. IT CAN'T GET ANY HARDER: THE BLOG AS AN ART CRITICISM PLATFORM

In recent years, blogs have become enormously popular as alternative communication tools:

• Transmuting personal diaries in paper, which now are published online and

in view of all readers of the net, as an alternative to traditional journalism.

• Offering opinions and contents which consolidated media have just recently started to incorporate, in their case by way of subsections written by new experts or *amateur* journalists.

• *…* and also as a substitute for the websites common in the nineties, with constantly updated news and projects, even where artists or cultural platforms are concerned.

The reason is very simple: anyone with a user's expertise of the Internet can create a blog through the multiple platforms available, generating an ongoing archive of her interests which can be updated regularly and quickly.

In the specific case of art linked to technological questions, a blog facilitates the visibility of projects which, until a short while ago, were basically spread using mailing lists. Now, in addition to consolidated discussion lists like Nettime or Empyre or websites focusing on works of art and events like Rhizome, we have blogs which offer new information on future events and publications on a daily basis but also direct access to works through hyperlinks or tools like YouTube. The information (and the access to it) has multiplied.

• But what happens with the opinions?

• Can blogs transcend their journalistic function to offer contrasted opinions?

• Can blogs become the new tool for art criticism?

• What type of criticism can be done with blogs?

• Does it make sense to separate the spheres of contemporary art and the so called *digital art* when it comes to art criticism?

I'd like to start out by talking about the professions that relate writing and art in order to make it clear what I *would not like* the Temps Fugit blog to be.

1.1. MEDIATION MODELS
In the field of cultural mediation professions linked to writing (I am purposely

excluding the curator because in this profession writing is contingent upon the execution of a particular expositive project), the roles one usually finds are those of the critic, the journalist and the professor.

The Art Critic

Art critics usually have a background in art history, and to date, at least in Spain's case, they have not been particularly inclined to use digital tools or to address the relations between art and technology beyond the traditional gallery circuit. Critics are often accused of intellectual inscrutability, but whether we like it or not they are the mediators between the institutions and the curated projects.

• But what happens when new labels such as *generative art, sound art or net art* appear?

• What happens when the predominant critical models such as institutional critique (i.e., art and its agents in relation to institutions) or relational aesthetics (i.e., the aesthetic theory that judges works of art according to the social model they inspire) seem to come up short in the face of new artistic praxis and new ways of approaching the social and intellectual relationship with the technical-scientific context.

• What happens when the sphere of contemporary art tends to be synonymous with shows, museums and collections, while a separate sphere exists that devotes it time to talking about dialogue between artists and scientists, curating immateriality or *copyleft*, to cite some recurring examples in recent times?[1]

The Journalist

The journalist is considered an information professional who has recently been (even more) spurred on by the need to respond to a dynamic of hypervelocity in which today's news is due yesterday and is obliged to cover

various fronts at the same time (paper editions, digital versions, monographs, etc.).

The journalist (and also the critic) frequently have to defend themselves against accusations of responding to corporate interests which oblige them to systematically laud certain cultural works or productions. Strange bedfellows: when they're not being accused of being partisans, they're accused of being half-hearted. Often, the complaint is based on the fact that a press release is repeated *ad infinitum* with statistical data that says nothing about the contents offered[2].

• How can journalism respond to the schizophrenia of having to work in an unthinking present while at the same time having to transcend the press release on that same present about which it is so necessary to speak?

The University Professor

The professor is in a different situation. The European university model is in the process of changing. Some wonder whether the Bologna reform will end up converting universities into businesses and students into clients. According to this pessimistic belief, critical thinking in universities would disappear from syllabi. But this conception is equivalent, to a certain extent, to believing in a Golden Age of academic thinking. And the University has never been an easy universe: financing difficulties, oversized structures... and a one-directional communication model that divides between students and (professors) experts.

In the case which concerns us here, peer reviewed publications are one of the most controversial elements. What is questioned in other professions for its excessive celerity is called into question in this case for its slowness and for the difficulties of external projection beyond academic circles.

• Why does the academic validation system tend to exclude publications in

areas such as those of the critic and those of the journalist?[3]

• Why are academic publications not projected (more) toward the society they are supposed to be serving?[4]

• Will the national university system be capable of offering training programmes that understand what many have learned through *streamings*, *podcasts*, *wikis* and attending events outside of academic circles (i.e., the possibility of generating new communities of experts outside of the traditional academic career)?[5]

When I started to write the Tempus Fugit blog, all of these questions did not come up at once. As happens with most blogs, there were several failed attempts before I came up with the recurring themes that would allow me to cover a manageable range. Writing uninterruptedly for two years has enabled me to structure topics of interest and reflect on the writing format itself which I will try to detail in the next two sections (the relationship between the format and subjectivity and the relationship between the format and the proposed subject), and a possible conclusion to end.

1. 2. THE BLOG AND I

The possibility of writing about whatever one wants is extremely appealing but in much the same way as occurs with literary writing, if you publish, for whom are you writing? I have always considered the blog to be a tool that allows me to channel my subjectivity through writing but which also obliges me to ask myself about the purpose of the publication and to discipline myself to achieve more precise, direct and relevant writing. In other words, assuming that one is not seeking objectivity, but also that the blog should not turn into a sort of "online confessions" appealing to the *voyeur* instinct inside us all[6], what are the most common questions?

• How can I express my opinion?

On paper, on a website or in a blog?

Using quotes, aphorisms, journalistic style columns?

What is the most relevant way to insert hyperlinks and which hyperlinks

should be inserted?

What are the most pertinent labels for classifying the contents I am writing?

• What do I write about?

What level of knowledge makes it legitimate for me to express an opinion on a particular question?

How reasonable is it to talk about technology without dominating technology?

How pertinent is it to talk about contemporary art on a blog focused on art and technology?

How sensible is it to engage in that eventual dichotomy that possesses resonances of the "art autonomy" formula?

• Does it make sense to inform about something that others are reporting on?

Is there life beyond the reiteration of Teletypes?

• Does it make sense to talk about what everyone else is talking about?

Can one talk about current events without falling into the reiterated coverage of a certain event?

How can one avoid the clichés that are associated with certain types of contents, such as multitudinous equals massified and minority equals interesting, etc.?

I like to quote Wittgenstein's linguistic maxim "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent", considering that certain criticism can be unnecessary due to its repetitiveness. And yet I repeat myself. The blog is an exercise in style where, as in literary writing, one tries to convince others of the appropriateness of repeating that which one repeats. In the process, and trying to be demanding with oneself, formal questions arise such as how to adapt to a certain extension, publish with recognisable regularity, improve the quality of one's writing and try to offer new visions of sometimes old topics.

In the exercise of this subjectivity, I do not mention topics such as publishing my favourites from delicio.us, establishing *"must see" events* as such and always using the same information sources. While I have no doubt that public writing is, by default, *demiurgic*, I am quite reluctant to play the role of the *advertising prescriber* which online mediators tend to assume although, as

subjectivity is weak, these good intentions often operate more as *desiderati* than as unquestionable facts.

In the exercise of this subjectivity, I advocate connecting topics as serendipitously as possible and seeking a link which, no mater how one looks at it, may seem unpopular: that which should exist between the so-called *contemporary art* and *digital art*.

1.3. CRITICISM OF WHAT?

In November 2005 I published my first post on art criticism on the occasion of the annual symposium of the Catalán Critics Association[7]. As a result of that post, and the comments it drew, I began to look at the separations that exist between the world of art considered *contemporary* and the so-called digital or electronic art. To put it simply, I discovered that whenever I attended an event, conference or inauguration of the first type I never met anyone there from the second and vice versa. The suspicion that there was a gap separating the two fields led me to reflect on the subject.

I'm not going to address the hackneyed question of whether or not intangible art is profitable, but rather the observation that there is only one official type of critical writing: that of contemporary art. At the risk of being called a reductionist and that contemplating art that makes a more or less explicit use of technology is like placing a certain type of art in a limbo where the means obscure the end, in the blog I always reiterate the following:

• Why not talk about it?

• Why not ask why this separation exists?

• Why not analyse whether there is a space through which the two *worlds* can connect?[8]

• Why can't we speak of specialised criticism to the extent that one is capable of understanding the device before her and, more importantly, exercising her role as a mediator between the works and the public who have access to them?

As I have already discussed in relation to the abovementioned professional roles, it is necessary to reflect upon what it means to be a cultural mediator at this time. And to do so, in the hopes that art criticism will not be wary of robots, that journalists can do more than cut and paste press dossiers and that the professors can educate beyond the physical classroom, I believe that the blog is an excellent starting point, albeit not an ending point, for a critical exercise based on something as necessary as *trial and error.*

1.4. WHAT, THEN, WOULD AN ART CRITICISM BLOG BE LIKE?

• I propose an interstitial space between traditional art criticism, paper or web-based journalism and academic writing linked to its own publication system.

• I advocate an interdisciplinary documentation process that encompasses references from all possible intellectual circles, i.e., that neither looks upon museums with disdain nor extols the virtues of software, but rather looks at what is happening between one and the other. Neither apocalyptic nor integrated but merely integrating.

• I support the need to cut, paste, eliminate and re-edit all personal contents until we find the formulas that are best adapted to accommodate both the blogger's convenience and readers' interest.

• I understand that everyone performs his or her task using the structure with which he or she is most comfortable: individually or collectively, striving at all times to write the best texts through a rigorous subjectivity that respects the opinions of others.

• I propose that online art criticism should end up establishing itself as an officially recognised professional practice and that those who do it should not have to wait until it is printed on paper to have their work as mediators recognised (and the remuneration that it might imply).

There are appearing online professions still without specific names in which the required skills must also be remunerated, such as knowing how to search, knowing how to find and knowing how to discern what is relevant and what is not. The term *cognitive capitalism* should not be used only as a prelude to begin (once again) a debate on the precariousness of cultural professions.

• All that's been said might and should be the object of clarification, discussion and even lively controversy. I think that the stimulating sessions of some debate forums, whether in person or virtual, can be naturally and dynamically extended using these tools called blogs.

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SOKAL, Alan y BRICMONT, Jean, *Imposturas intelectuales*, Paidós, Barcelona, 1999.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Artkrush issue # 57 Art and Design Blogs

http://www.artkrush.com/mailer/issue57/#top

-empyre- soft_skinned_space

http://www.subtle.net/empyre

nettime mailing list

http://www.nettime.org

NEW-MEDIA-CURATING

http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/new-media-curating.html

Rhizome. Connecting Art & Technology

http://www.rhizome.org

Tempus Fugit. Cuando arte y tecnología encuentran a la persona equivocada

http://www.raquelherrera.blogspot.com

YouTube. Broacast Yourself

http://www.youtube.com

(All of the above were last consulted on 15/05/07)

NOTES

1 There are some interesting Spanish exceptions such as the *closed* artszin (http://www.artszin.net/), Acción Paralela (http://www.accpar.org/) or aleph-arts (http://aleph-arts.org/), and the still open salonKritik (http://www.salonkritik.com/), agenciacritica (http://agenciacritica.net/) and a-desk (http://www.a-desk.org), but their relationship to technological aspects has been variable.

Despite the fact that aleph-arts accumulated texts and generated opinions on artistic practices and technological pervasiveness, artszin basically addressed the world of contemporary art while Acción Paralela did this in a tangential way. The only one that publishes critiques directly in a *stricto senso* fashion is a-desk (but only on museums and galleries).

SalonKritik acts as a repository of information and art criticism that focuses on the print press (regardless of the subject matter) and agenciacritica seems to be oriented more towards the criticism of cultural management (last consulted on 12/05/06).

2 A recent example would be the inauguration of the Centro de Arte Laboral de Gijón, devoted to the relationship between art and technology. A search of the first two or three pages of Google mainly gives back information on the number of visitors during the opening weekend and practical information on the titles of the exhibitions and the topics addressed.

Only the interview with the organiser of the *Feedback* exhibition in El País newspaper and the information prepared by the journalists from the ABC newspaper on the two main exhibitions seem to escape from the tendency to reproduce the most recent press releases (last consulted on 12/05/06).

3 The prestige that is usually attributed to a specialised art publication is not normally shared when one is trying to earn points on an academic curriculum vitae (and vice versa, I fear), not to mention when the publications come from the world of journalism…

4 The question of the "modernisation" of university teaching in relation to the new context of digital media has many ramifications which can be perceived at the international level. Jon Ippolito has collected them in his article *New Criteria for New Media* (http://newmedia.umaine.edu/interarchive/new_criteria_for_new_media@m.html), (last consulted on 12/05/06).

5 By way of example, one can review the videos of Refresh! The First International Conference on the Histories of Media Art, Science and Technology (http://www.mediaarthistory.org/) or access the presentations of the guest speakers on art and technology from the Digital Media Center at Columbia School of Arts (http://arts.columbia.edu/dmc/docs/lectureseries.html), (last consulted on 12/05/06).

6 In this regard, web 2.0 tools such as Twitter, http://www.twitter.com (where the users send in e-mail or text messages about what they are doing at that time of the day) are another social example of "everything is publishable, therefore everything becomes *important*". Interesting as a future sociological experiment to analyse leisure time on the Internet, or as an artistic experiment that combined the multitude of irrelevancies published, but not as a theoretical reflection (last consulted on 12/05/06).

7 See SIMPOSIO DE LA ASOCIACIÓN CATALANA DE CRÍTICOS, ¿CRÍTICA DE QUÉ? (http://raquelherrera.blogspot.com/2005/11/simposio-de-la-asociacin-catalana-de.html), (last consulted on 12/05/06).

8 Some theorists like Edward Shanken or Gunalan Nadarajan have addressed this question specifically. The first has alluded to the lack of "theoretical apparatus" of certain current digital works (see SOBRE LO INGENTE Y LO INABARCABLE: LÍNEAS MAESTRAS DE DEFINICIÓN DE ACT, http://raquelherrera.blogspot.com/2006/08/sobre-lo-ingente-y-lo-inabarcable.html, last consulted on: 15/05/07). The second has referred to the lack of understanding on the part of contemporary art structures as exhibitions and

fairs when contemplating the technological needs of the works (see II SIMPOSIO DE LA ASOCIACIÓN CATALANA DE CRÍTICOS DE ARTE: BIENALES MEDIALES,

http://raquelherrera.blogspot.com/2006/11/ii-simposio-de-la-asociacin-catalana.html, last consulted on: 15/05/07).

One possible "unifying" proposal could be that suggested by theorists of "media archaeology" like Siegfried Zielinski or Erkki Huhtamo. Their historical perspective does not seem to reject either one of the two *models* but rather to look for their complementarity.

THE IMPACT OF WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGIES ON CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Javier Celaya

The inrush of new technologies on the Internet derived from the so-called *Web 2.0* (blogs, content syndication, the downloading of podcast audio files, the creation of social networks, etc.) is transforming our cultural consumption habits: we read all kinds of digital media, we browse and recommend books in virtual libraries, we visit exhibits virtually and we create and divulge all kinds of work on wikis, blogs, etc.

All of these icons point to external web services that facilitate the management of text, files, links, Etc. These services allow users to vote on, share, comment or store cultural contents they find on the Internet. The use of these tools in civil society is taking place at a frantic speed. In recent months, Youtube users have posted more than 170 million videos on Youtube and more than 150 million photographs have been published on the photo exchange network Flickr. In addition, more than 71 million blogs have been created and nearly 6 million articles have been published in *Wikipedia.*

The social web specialising in culture, www.culturizame.net

Social networks have generated a high degree of interconnectivity among citizens, enabling them to exchange all kinds of text, audio and video files, links and images to share their tastes and hobbies with communities of friends, family members, professional contacts, etc. Cultural entities should be aware of the fact that these technological innovations are immediately and naturally incorporated by new generations not only as channels of communications but as a means of building communities with the same tastes and cultural interests.

These Web 2.0 services help to democratise the consumption of culture so that everyone has access to thousands of documents that illustrate and explain the topics they may be interested in from a wide variety of viewpoints. There is no doubt that this new channel of cultural distribution is truly enriching for society.

However, not all that glitters is gold on the Internet. Many of these new social sites and services lack the necessary rigor to covert them into cultural references. A proliferation of informative sources is not necessarily equivalent to an increase in the quality of the information or the quality of the reception of the information.

This proliferation of new media also brings with it difficulties in terms of organising, selecting and establishing differentiating criteria. The multiplicity of information sources also makes it difficult for the reader to be able to manage them coherently. This initial effervescence will lead to a stabilisation period which will result in the disappearance of some of them. In time, a natural selection will be made by the users themselves.

CHALLENGE: VISIBILITY OF ENTITIES ON THE INTERNET

There are currently more than 8,000,000,000 web pages. The enormous amount of contents means that certain cultural entities have low visibility on the Internet. Because of this, securing a better position in the principal search engines (Google, Technorati, Live, Exalead, Yahoo, etc.) is becoming one of the areas of online marketing of greatest interest to all kinds of cultural entities (museums, art centres, galleries, publishing companies, etc.). Appearing among the top 10 results in these search engines is very important if you want to generate traffic to your website, since search engines can generate more than 60% of the visits to certain cultural websites.

According to a report by Majestic Research, 50% of the users of these search engines use only 2 or 3 words, while 20% use just one. If we consider these searching habits, it becomes essential for publishing companies to make a greater effort to properly index the contents of their websites in order to improve the level of visibility of their books and authors on the Internet. We are not talking here about the graphic design (colours, design, etc.) of the websites, but rather the need to create more semantic websites, which is much more important in order to enable the search engines to find the content related to the key words entered by the potential reader.

Above and beyond the traditional generation gap, one must also consider the existence of a new digital gap between professionals in the cultural sector. The majority of them - publishers, booksellers, librarians, professors, etc. - are not very comfortable with the incorporation of tools such as blogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, forums, etc. into their cultural promotion plans. There is, without a doubt, an initial distrust, a fear which I consider to human and understandable. Cultural entities have worked until now with the marketing and promotional model that works for them and they prefer to maintain it. But this model is losing its effectiveness, giving way to a new form of publicising and recommending exhibits, visiting museums and art galleries and buying books, i.e., staying on top of the cultural offering.

The reasons for this initial "rejection" are due to a combination of personal and professional motives. The digital experience of many of those who handle cultural contents is limited to using email and browsing the Internet from time to time. Many professionals in this sector do not have the proper training required to understand the advantages which new Web 2.0 technologies offer for the promotion of culture. But, first and foremost, many of them do not dare to try these tools because they do not even know where to begin or how to evaluate their effectiveness.

WEB 2.0 IN CULTURAL ENTITIES

Within this context of inexorable transformation, the Internet represents the principal challenge to Spanish cultural entities when defining their cultural marketing strategies.

In order to help the cultural sector better understand the implications of new technologies for its marketing strategies, we conducted a study of trends with the intention of analysing how cultural entities are incorporating new technologies into their communication strategies and into the promotion of their exhibits and cultural activities.

The study, *"New Web 2.0 technologies in the promotion of museums and art centres*", published by Dosdoce.com and NV Asesores in September 2006, analyses how cultural entities are incorporating new technologies into their communication strategies and into the promotion of their exhibits and cultural activities.

This study notes that most of the entities analysed are using one-directional communication strategies whose main objective is to achieve media coverage in the culture and society sections of the leading traditional media sources (print press, radio and TV) and in their culture supplements. The marketing managers of these museums and cultural centres are very comfortable with this model since it has worked more or less efficiently for the last two decades.

The study reflects this linear communication model, since only 23% of the cultural entities analysed offer collaborative communication channels (forums, blogs, virtual communities, etc.).

LOW POSITIONING ON THE INTERNET

Internet is becoming the main source of information for potential visitors planning a trip to a museum, foundation and/or cultural centre. With such a vast cultural and entertainment offering, besides the millions of websites and blogs on the network, the main challenge faced by Spanish cultural entities is how to be more visible on the Internet.

The study indicates that 72% of the entities analysed do not appear among the top 10 results on the Internet's main search engine. With regard to the existence of internal search engines, the study reveals that only 42% of these entities offer visitors a search

engine on their websites to facilitate their content searches (current exhibits and files of previous ones, key word searches, by activity, agenda, etc.).

Tabla Resumen: Grado de utilización de tecnologías web 2.0

FUNDACIÓN TÁPIES. BARCELONA	71%
ARTIUM DE VITORIA	64%
PATIO HERRERIANO. VALLADOLID	57%
MONTENMEDIO DE CÁDIZ	57%
MNCARS DE MADRID	57%
MUSEO THYSSEN-BORNEMISZA	50%
MUSEO PICASSO MÁLAGA	50%
MARCO DE VIGO	50%
MACBA DE BARCELONA	50%
CENTRO JOSÉ GUERRERO. GRANADA	50%
CCCB DE BARCELONA	43%
CAAM DE GRAN CANARIA	43%
MUSEO ESTEBÁN VICENTE	36%
ART NOUVEAU Y ART DECÓ. SALAMANCA	36%
MUSAC DE LEÓN	36%
IVAM DE VALENCIA	36%
MUSEO NACIONAL DEL PRADO	29%
CONDE DUQUE. MADRID	29%
CAC DE MÁLAGA	29%
FUNDACIÓN JUAN MARCH. CUENCA	29%
MUSEO BBAA SEVILLA	21%
GUGGENHEIM. BILBAO	21%
DOMUS ARTIUM 2002. SALAMANCA	21%
CENTRO CULTURAL ANDRATX. MALLORCA	21%
CAAC DE SEVILLA	21%
MUSEO OTEIZA. NAVARRA	14%
MEIAC DE BADAJOZ	14%
MACUF DE LA CORUÑA	14%
FUNDACIÓN MIRÓ. BARCELONA	14%
BELLAS ARTES DE VALENCIA	14%
MN DE ESCULTURA DE VALLADOLID	7%
CBA DE MADRID	7%
CAB DE BURGOS	7%
BELLAS ARTES DE ASTURIAS	7%
BBAA SAN FERNANDO. MADRID	7%

RSS CONTENT SYNDICATION

This study shows that fewer than 8% of the cultural entities analysed offer their news/press releases using content syndication applications (RSS, Atom, etc.).

If a journalist, art critic or gallery owner wants to stay up to date on the press releases and information published by a cultural entity, all he or she has to do is add the RSS of the desired entity to his or her web feed aggregator. For publications without a fixed publication frequency, like blogs, the use of RSS is very useful since it saves the reader from having to enter the different blogs and/or digital media every day to see if the contents have been updated. In just a few years, most Internet users will surf the Network using web feed aggregators.

SCARCE PRESENCE OF VIRTUAL PRESS ROOMS

According to the answers received from the cultural entities surveyed (see the section on the individual surveys of directors and press managers), it was observed that their press departments dedicate a great deal of economic and human resources to organising press conferences, giving interviews and sending dossiers and catalogues on new exhibits to the press, etc.

It is surprising to note that in coordination with these distribution and communication efforts, these entities do not have a virtual press room to facilitate the work of the media (for downloading images, contacting the press staff, filing press releases, lists of advertising clips published in the media, etc.).

In this regard, the study showed that 51% of the entities surveyed have virtual press rooms to facilitate their informational efforts and, of these, fewer than 46% have files containing the published press releases. While the main purpose of a press release is to provide current information to the media, it is likewise true that filed press releases often come in handy when preparing in-depth articles on previous exhibits, reports on organisers or artists, comparisons of different museums, etc.

While most of the cultural entities analysed have their own press managers for handling media relations, surprisingly only 54% of these entities provide exact data (names, telephone numbers or email addresses) for the person in charge of this area to provide quick contact with the institution to the media when they need it.

It is noteworthy that, despite dedicating a great deal of effort to the organisation of press conferences and sending press dossiers and catalogues to the media for each new exhibit, only 11% of the entities analysed publish the media reviews in order to offer more information and qualified opinions on the exhibits and their potential visitors.

DOWNLOADING MP3/MP4 AUDIO AND VIDEO FILES

Podcasting is an extremely effective method of offering audio content to the target public of cultural entities and, as such, could become an important cultural communication tool. However, the study indicates that only 9% of the entities surveyed allow audio and visual files to be downloaded from their exhibits, interviews with organisers/artists, guided tours in MP3 format, etc.

The technology trends consulting firm Gartner forecasts that podcasting subscriptions will grow (more than 10 million users in the US) due to the continuing fragmentation of the contents market and the transformation of traditional media sources (print press, radio and TV).

On the other hand, the study indicates that only 26% of the entities analysed offer potential visitors and the media virtual tours of their institutions, temporary exhibits, collections, etc.

MORE TRANSPARENCY IN SPONSORSHIP POLICIES

Most Spanish cultural institutions are very distrustful when it comes to building bridges between culture and markets. Only 46% of these entities provide information on their websites on their sponsorship policies, while 66% of the entities analysed publish a list of the entity's patrons. In most cases, there are no hyperlinks to the patrons' websites but merely a list with their logotypes.

At no other time in our history have companies earmarked as much money each year as they do now to cultural patronage and social action. We do not understand why most of the cultural institutions in Spain do not publish their patronage policies on the Internet, or allow their patrons to advertise on their websites, or establish direct links to the websites of their patrons or publish the leasing conditions of their halls, etc.

Without the support of business sponsorship and patronage, many exhibits, scholarships and cultural centres would not be possible in our country. Museums and cultural institutions should be more aware of the need to implement more transparent sponsorship policies to guarantee their own future growth and development.

CONCLUSION: MORE INTERACTION WITH THE PUBLIC

There is no doubt that new technologies are changing the relations between cultural entities and their target publics but many cultural institutions continue to ignore them in their communication strategies.

Most cultural institutions manage their Internet presence using very traditional websites with virtually no visitor interaction, very static formats, very few links to other websites, low updating levels, etc. In our opinion, they should add some of the applications offered by new Web 2.0 technologies to their cultural communication model in order to

convert their websites into information exchange points between visitors, professionals and the public at large. (see graph).

Concepts such as fostering conversation, hypertextuality, the exchange of opinions and links, participative communication and content syndication should be keys in the development of cultural communication strategies.
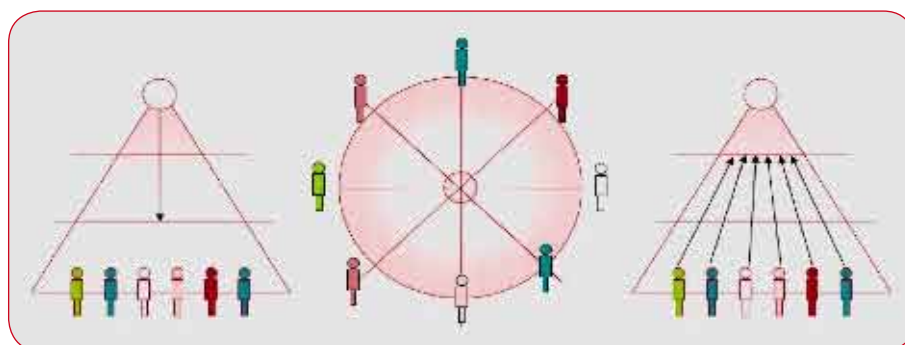
Communication Models (Source: E.Rosales)

In the new age of participation, the visitors to museums and cultural centres do not want to be limited to receiving information on a new exhibit. They also want to interact in the new communication media to become part of the information process. from Boston College.

"NO LIST AVAILABLE"

Web 2.0 for Rescuing Libyan Museums from Institutional Oblivion
Prototype for the Jamahiriya Museum in Tripoli

lamusediffuse

http://lamusediffuse.com

Blanca García
Pilar Gonzalo
Bassam Nory
Nawar Nouri
Carlo Parente
Jesús Sánchez
…and other collaborators of lamusediffuse on the social web

1. INTRODUCTION

lamusediffuse is a collaborative team exploring the forms, impact, and possibilities of electronic technologies in contemporary culture. We started as a group of Fulbright Scholars from different parts of the World, sharing a common interest in improving lives for individuals by improving access to culture through digital technologies and their creations. Now, some other collaborators are joining us improving our potential and outreach.

We are interested in the Social Web's possibilities for cultural dissemination and understanding among different areas of the world. We believe that social software has a huge potential for making culture accessible in and about developing countries and areas under conflict. That is why we are fully committed to implement initiatives on those cultural spheres of the world and using different languages to spread a diverse idea of culture on the web.

We at *lamusediffuse* understand culture as a deglobalising space that brings together, displays and interweaves the planet's diversity in a flexible, dynamic and open way. Therefore, far from wishing to present a countercultural attitude, *lamusediffuse* support culture, cultural networks and institutions. Not only do we not wish to be outside of those cultural networks, but our goal is to include in such networks those which, for a variety of reasons, are at risk of being excluded. To achieve this, we strive to have the aims of our research recognised on a global scale, connecting with other cultural environments, thereby enabling as many people as possible to enjoy, improve and be enriched by their contents. Obviously, the natural environment for our research team is necessarily the social web since it is flexible,

diverse, interactive, alternative and therefore overcomes many of the physical and institutional limitations associated with Web 1.0.

1.1. AIM OF THE PROJECT

lamusediffuse proposes the use of Social Web tools for the inclusion of not-dominant cultural expressions in the scopes of culture diffusion on the Internet. Accordingly with this objective, the project "Museums in Libya" is focused on two starting facts, the first is the lack of information about Libyan museums available in the website of the International Council of African Museums (AFRICOM) and the second is the apparent lack of museum websites in this country. As a consequence of this, the objective of our project has been overcoming both realities through the following actions:

- overcoming the gaps of Web1.0 by using a methodology based on (Web 2.0) tools as a flexible, interactive and participative alternative option of information exchange.
- proving Social Web academic usefulness and its tools as a valid and effective research tool,

- palliating the lack of contents on Libyan museums on AFRICOM website by compiling, contrasting and structuring the information available on the Internet about the subject,

- elaborating a reference map where gathering and locating the museums of Libya,

- raising awareness about the online institutional forgetfulness situation of Libyan Museums at the present time in comparison with others in the rest of the world,

- creating a methodological model for small museums and museums of developing countries or under conflict situations, reasonable in economic and maintenance terms,

- encouraging museum professionals to Web 2.0 tools use as an economic, simple and effective solution to overcome any lack of computer science personnel or tools and digital technology,

- emphasizing the importance and role of the Jamahiriya Museum of Tripoli and improving its online visibility for both international and local audiences,

- finally, creating a reference document on the Libyan museums that will be published under a Creative Commons license of attribution and for non-commercial use.

The ultimate aim of our research was therefore to create an Internet-based

environment on museums in Libya focusing on the specific case of the Jamahiriya Museum in Tripoli. This portal attempts to be a reference for the study of Libyan museums and a model for museums with difficult socio-economic situations or those located in parts of the world where creating and maintain a website is an extremely difficult feat. We hope that with our project, the message "No List Available" that currently appears on the AFRICOM website, will become an outdated portrayal of the information available on the Internet on Libyan museums.

1.1. CONTEXT

1.2.1. INTERNET IN AFRICA

It can truly be said that Africa is the forgotten continent. Despite its enormous size, the presence of Africa in the media outside the continent is overwhelmingly insignificant. While this fact might first appear to be harmless or, at the very worst, impolite, it is nonetheless having an effect on all aspects of daily life in Africa, particularly in those areas where hunger, war and disease prevent inhabitants from living a minimally dignified life. However, we don't give it much thought because it is the fruit of a passive attitude, oversight and laziness.

Within the context of African famine, disease and war, the discourse on Internet, digital technologies and museums might seem unnecessary and even superficial. However, at *lamusediffuse* we firmly believe that one way of improving life in Africa is to improve the professionalism of African museums.

The considerable lack of Internet technical infrastructure in Africa exacerbates the already low levels of international recognition since due to these limitations it seems that even the Africans themselves are unable to do anything to improve their own presence on the Internet. According to Ken Feingold[1], the principal obstacles to Internet access in most of Africa can be summarised as follows:

- Internet service is served and measured using the local telephone service and most providers charge for the time of the data transferred, so the problem of Internet is not only the cost in terms of time but in terms of money as well;

- Broadband service is severely limited;

- There is an urgent need for search engines and equipment especially configured for the technical circumstances.

Internet access must therefore be considered a luxury in Africa, not to mention the existence of museums with updated websites. Consequently, and regardless of their budgets, African museums do not appear to have sufficient tools to develop and Internet presence.

Furthermore, any hypothetical Internet audience inside Africa shares the same accessibility problems as the museums themselves. Hence, the commonly held and extremely optimistic belief that the web is "universally" accessible is clearly a very partial vision of the world, at least inasmuch as Africa is concerned. In this regard, it is no wonder that African museums are less than highly motivated to start their own websites, let alone create an Internet audience. However, at *lamusediffuse* we believe that Internet is one of the best tools that could be implemented in Africa since it eliminates the need for other, more costly physical infrastructure and allows the information to be sent and received all over the world in real time. And this is why we want to contribute to Africa's presence on the Internet.

But this has not prevented the complicated situation of Internet in Africa, and particularly in Libya, from having an impact not only on the object of our study (the presence of Libyan museums on the Internet) but also on the investigation itself. This is because our research has been based primarily on the information published on the Internet to collect the necessary data as our scope was fundamentally the social web. Despite this, all of these technical difficulties have further reinforced our commitment and conviction about the need for this type of research.

1.2.2. INTERNET IN LIBYA AND LIBYA ON THE INTERNET

As in the rest of Africa, Internet is a serious problem in Libya. This is explained in the article entitled "Libya, the Internet in a Conflict Zone"[2] which, despite having been published in 2004, continues to accurately portray the current state of the Internet in that country.

The text underscores the close connection between the development of Internet in Libya and the political situation of the country ruled by the dictator, colonel Mohammad Muammar al-Qadafi, who has maintained a dictatorial Islamic regime since 1969. The article reveals that despite the political situation, the control over Internet access has been less repressive than in other Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, where censorship is common practice, including the prohibition and blocking of websites that oppose the government:

> *It is difficult for the Libyan government to roll back the privileges it granted its information society and to do what other Arab governments have done: grant a single company a monopoly over Internet service provision so as to limit the availability of oppositional websites and their impact on Libyan citizens.*[3]

In fact, the latest report by Reporters without Borders on the freedom of Internet

expression removed Libya from the list of "Internet enemy" countries because "Internet is not censored there"[4]. In addition, in the year 2005 Libya signed a cooperation agreement with UNESCO to develop information technologies entitled the "National ITC Project for Capacity Building", thanks to which the "Libian Higher Education & Research Network" (LHERN)[5] was be established.

Hence, the political situation in Libya does not appear to the reason why museum website doe not exist in Libya. In fact, we were not even able to find any reason why the hypothetical presence of Libyan museums on the Internet could be considered counterproductive to the interests of the Libyan government. On the contrary, it would contribute to a greater understanding of Libyan history and culture and would foster increased recognition and tourism.

However, our experience with Libya on the Internet has been truly discouraging. To date we have been unable to establish any direct contact with any professional currently working for a Libyan museum or anyone who could act as an intermediary. It is our belief that this situation causes a position of isolation which is totally counterproductive to professionals and the culture of Libya and is also a serious impediment to the projection of its culture on an international scale.

1.2.3. LIBYA AND AFRICOM

90% of Libya's surface area is located in the Sahara desert. Despite this and with a population of only 6,000,000 inhabitants, its currency is stronger than the euro. In this regard, the situation in Libya is notably different than that of the rest of the countries of Northern Africa, characterised by a situation of low economic development. On the other hand, owing to its location on the Mediterranean coast, Libya shares certain common characteristics with the countries of northern Africa such as acting a link between Africa, Europe and Asia and having an eminently Arabic and Muslim socio-cultural context. This geographical circumstance has made Libya a diverse country with a rich historical-artistic past. However, despite this cultural wealth, there is no information on any Libyan museum on the website of the International Council of African Museums (AFRICOM).

In addition to Djibouti, Sao Tome, Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea and Somalia, Libya is one of six countries with no list of museums available on the AFRICOM website. We chose to focus on Libya because as a Mediterranean country with similarities to Spain it was easier for use to understand the socio-cultural context as compared to

the rest of the countries without lists on the African museum organisation's website. This helped to make the research more feasible in terms of scope and time. AFRICOM was established in the year 2000 as the result of a programme for Africa of the same name initiated by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). Its main objective is to contribute to the development and improvement of museums in Africa. Libya falls, without a doubt, within the scope of AFRICOM's activities, as indicated in Article 19.1 of Chapter IV of its bylaws where, along with Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Egypt, Libya is listed as part of the "North Africa" region.

It is our understanding that overcoming the barriers currently affecting African museums, including Libyan museums, is one of the objectives of AFRICOM and, by extension, is also the responsibility of the International Council of Museums[6]. That is why we are concerned that two of the most important institutions which should be advocating for the interest of Libyan museums are not doing so.

In an effort to avoid speculation regarding the absence of Libyan museums on the AFRICOM website, in November 2006 we sent an email to the Executive Director of AFRICOM at the time, Lorna Abungu. Our goal was to obtain information on the Internet situation in Libya and how it might affect the presence of Libyan museums on the Internet. We also wanted to know the specific reasons why there was no information on this country's museums on the AFRICOM website. Unfortunately, our email was never answered, despite the fact that the director obviously had active access to Internet, as attested to by her rapid, frequent and effective responses to the questions raised on the AFRICOM mailing list. We therefore attributed her silence to a possible lack of relations between the AFRICOM administration and Libyan officials.

However, months later we decided to try again and in May of 2007 we sent an email on the subject to the Internet mailing list. This time, we did receive an answer from Ms. Abungu, who was no longer the executive director of AFRICOM. In her response, available on the Internet along with our email message to the list[7], Lorna Abungu told us that AFRICOM had also tried, without success, to learn something about museums in Libya. She stated that she had also tried to contact Libyan representatives in Kenya but received no answer.
As Lorna Abungu explained it, AFRICOM provides website hosting and construction free of charge to any African museum that requests it. Therefore, the main

reason why Libyan museums do not have websites would appear to be a lack of communication or interest on the part of Libyan authorities.

However, the absence of Libyan museums on the Internet is not limited to the AFRICOM website. We were also unable to find information on Libyan museums on the websites of the following important institutions on African culture:

- Africalia: http://www.africalia.be
- Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa: http://ocpa.irmo.hr/index-en.html
- Africa Union: http://www.africa-union.org

It seems clear that the absence of Libyan museums on the Internet is notorious and that, sadly, none of the institutions that should be in charge of doing so are gathering information about them on their websites. Our research tries to demonstrate that thanks to Web 2.0 tools and a little bit of commitment and imagination, these information barriers can be overcome.

1.2.4. WEB 2.0 AS AN ALTERNATIVE
To research a country like Libya, deeply marked by its dictatorship and its Arab-African condition and location, is to research a subject that seems to spark very little interest. Consequently, the information sources – which are ultimately the distribution sources – are limited. On the other hand and, as described in the article, "Libya, the Internet in a Conflict Zone"[8], Internet is a magnificent vehicle for sidestepping the official information sources in that country. Hence, numerous websites in opposition to the political situation in Libya raise their voices from the outside. Within this context, the blogs, wikis and all of the network establishment software in the Web 2.0 spectrum are being used with increasing frequency.

Web 2.0 tools are based on exchange and collaboration and this is precisely the reason why they are becoming a very useful resource for the academic investigation of both the hottest current topes and the less popular ones. The different individual expressions which the social web accommodates provide space for less monopolised and hierarchical visions and opinions than those found in the traditional media.

In the case of Libyan museums, they are nowhere to be found on the website of the organisations who claim to advocate for the development and visibility of African

culture and museums. This is a powerful reason for turning to the use of social web tools as an alternative to the limited informative effectiveness of the said institutions and thereby palliating the deficiencies of official sources.

1.2.5. THE IMPACT ON MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS

We believe that our research could be an important research tool for museum professionals given the shortage of organised and updated information on Libyan museums. A document like this one will provide professionals from other parts of the work with access to information on Libyan museums while reinforcing the sentiment of collective identity among the professionals in that country.

Furthermore, providing a reference tool on Libyan museums will help to fight the serious problem of the illegal trade of works of art in this area of the world. On this subject, Kamal Shtewi, the person responsible for the Jamahiriya Museum in Tripoli, has already denounced the serious security breaches in the international media[9]. Apparently, this risk is not exclusive to the Jamahiriya Museum. In fact, the Sabratha Museum has had to send its most valuable pieces to other museums in Egypt. All of this led to Kamal Shtewi's denouncement of the situation and the demand for better security in Libyan museums.

1.1.METHODOLOGY

Our project was structured in four basic phases (Identification, Cartography, Standardisation and Dissemination). The basic steps involved were as follows:

- Identification of Libyan museums and their location. We have explored nomenclature differences by using different languages in our searches both on and off the Internet.
- Searches for websites on the identified museums.
- Location of the museums on a map of Libya.
- Standardisation of the contents obtained on each one of the museums and specifically the Jamahiriya Museum in Tripoli. To do so, we used a basic screen that imitated the structure of a standard museum web page to provide the museum contents available on the Internet.
- Conclusions
- Dissemination of the research

Our approach used social web tools as a flexible, interactive and participative option. This methodology is unlike other traditional research tools and information sources

which, in the particular case of Libyan museums, did not appear to be effective enough. The idea was to overcome the weaknesses of Web 1.0 – as revealed by the apparent non-existence of websites on Libyan museums and the lack of available information on the AFRICOM website – and be able to offer other information sources on Libyan museums on the Internet. In order to achieve this objective we decided to use the social web's most popular and effective tools:

- Blogger: a tool for publishing and sharing contents in blog format

- Flickr: a web environment for publishing and sharing photos with the possibility of publishing comments, tags and links; creating and forming part of special interest groups and establishing social relationships between participants

- Wikipedia: a collaborative encyclopaedia based on wiki technology

- YouTube: a web environment for publishing and sharing videos with the possibility of publishing comments, tags and links; creating and forming part of special interest group sand establishing social relationships between participants

- Technorati: an information tool on content syndication in relation to blog contents

- del.icio.us: Internet environment for sharing links with the possibility of tagging, publishing comments and distributing the information selectively.

One of the basic reasons why we chose these web environments was the fact that they allow you to share information and services created in a collaborative, which in turn provides the potential for more diversity in terms of opinions and information using a more personal approach than is possible with the habitual Web 1.0 services. Another advantage we discovered were the syndication options available for obtaining information on content publication and updating. This saved us from having to do complicated searches on the increasingly vast World Wide Web. In addition, the specific search tools could also be syndicated, thereby enabling us, within the scope of our possibilities, to "comb" the social tagging network with regard to Libyan museums.

The popularity of these web environments among Internet users was another key factor in our choice. This guaranteed a wide range in our searches in addition to a broad and diverse potential range of information.

But in addition to these social web tools, we also used other Internet resources such as search engines (Google and Google Scholar) and Internet databases (Art Index, Art Full Text, Lexis Nexis and Groove Art Online.)

Finally, we also made use of other, non-Internet resources such as books, magazine and journal articles to supplement and contrast the information obtained.

2. IDENTIFICATION: DETECTING AND LISTING LIBYAN MUSEUMS

The research process was characterised by being very long and tedious since there was no previous point of reference from which to begin our investigation. Our work was based primarily on the search for increasingly specific terms in the different social web environments enumerated above.

While the Web 2.0 tools have been crucial for finding information on some of them, social tagging converted our search process into a compendium of different languages, possibility and imagination. The linguistic diversity in Libya and on the social web made this research project even longer and more vast and complex. In this regard, we would especially like to mention the characteristics of social tagging[10] and folksonomy as one of the principal utilities of the social web. According to the Spanish Wikipedia, folksonomy is:

> *Folcsonomía, a calque of the English folksonomy, is a neologism for the process of collaborative categorising using simple tags in a flat name space, without hierarchies or predetermined family relationships. It is a practice that takes place in social software environments, the best exponents of which are the shared sites such as del.icio.us (favourite links), Flickr (photos), Tagzania (places), flof (places) or 43 Things (wishes).* [11]

Based on our experience, while folksonomy is useful and accurate for offering different perspective and ways of understanding a reality that is not unique, it is nonetheless an inexact searching/cataloguing method. Hence, the complex search process we have had to conduct in a multilingual and multicultural environment. However, it is also true that thanks to social tagging we have been able to find information which otherwise would have remained hidden in the sea of web contents. In any case, our perception is that the promises pursued by the Semantic Web or Web 3.0 of transforming contents into knowledge are, at least right now, an illusion:

> *The Semantic Web is about two things. It is about common formats for interchange of data, where on the original Web we only had interchange of documents. Also it is about language for recording how the data relates to real world objects. That allows a person, or a machine, to start off in one database, and then move through an unending set of databases which are connected not by wires but by being about the same thing.*[12]

Despite the limitations of social labelling - which might well be defined as an extensive rather than intensive source – it is our belief that the imagination is probably one of the researcher's principal tools, especially in cases such as this one of primary studies. Therefore, despite the laboriousness of the process, the search for museums has been a true adventure.

Throughout the process, we have learned to understand the world from a more diverse point of view and we have been surprised by the generosity of the marvellous individuals and organisations we have had the chance to deal with over the months.
Furthermore, every time we found a museum that was "hidden" to Google and to academic sources, we realised that our research was making a positive contribution to changing things in favour of Libyan museums and museum professionals.

We are therefore truly satisfied with the results because they are a humble yet significant first step in area of Libyan museums and provide additional information to that existing on the Internet and a model for institutions with socio-economic difficulties.

Following an intense and meticulous search using the Web 2.0 tools mentioned above, we found indications of the existence of the following museums in Libya:

1. Al Khums, Leptis Magna Museum
2. Al Marj, Ptolemais Museum
3. Awbari, German Museum
4. Benghazi, Islamic Art Museum
5. Beni Walid, Beni Walid Museum
6. Ghadames (old city), Ghadames Museum
7. Jadu, Al Baruni Museum
8. Janzür, Janzür Museum
9. Qasr Libia, Qasr Libia Museum
10. Sabratha, Sabratha Museum
11. Sahhat, Cyrene Museum
12. Susah, Al Jabal al Akhdar, Apollonia Museum
13. Tocra, Tocra Museum
14. Tripoli, Archegological Museum
15. Tripoli, Islamic Art Museum

16. Tripoli, Natural History Museum

17. Tripoli, Epigraph Museum

18. Tripoli, La Medina Museum

19. Tripoli, Prehistorical Museum

20. Tripoli, Ethnographic Museum

21. Tripoli, Jamahiriya Museum

3. CARTOGRAPHY: Geographical Location of Museums in Libya

Once we realised how many museums there are in Libya and how important
their collections are, we understood the need to project a professional image of
the whole on the Internet. To do so, the next step consisted of drawing a map of
museums in Libya, indicating the names and the most accurate locations possible
of the museums we found. The result was an interactive map which also shows the
information that is available on the Internet on each one of them. This map, along
with the rest of the documents created during this research project, are available on

our website (lamusediffuse.com) under a Creative Commons attribution licence for
non-commercial use.

4. STANDARDISATION: ORGANISING THE INFORMATION ON THE JAMAHIRIYA MUSEUM IN TRIPOLI ON THE INTERNET

From among the 20 museums found to date, we have selected the Jamahiriya
Museum in Tripoli to develop a website prototype created using the contents
obtained primarily using Web 2.0. tools.

Jamahiriya is a museum of exceptional quality which, unfortunately, does not have

its own website. As indicated above, there is a lamentable lack of information on the museum on the part of the most important organisations in charge of African culture and museums. Because of this, the creation of a website for this museum based on the collaborative structure of the contents available on the Internet constitutes a necessary endeavour within the context of our research.

There is ample documental evidence of the importance of this museum. UNESCO, the principal promoter of the museum, has made some of the documents surrounding its creation available on the Internet. One of these is the preparatory study written in 1977 entitle "National Museum of the Republic of Libya" by Jan Jelikek, Ivan Ruller and Peter Sewell at the request of UNESCO[13]. In addition, the study entitled "Agricultural Galleries Planned for the Libyan National Museum: an interview with Dr. Jan Jelinek"[14], describes the specific plans for these galleries and their importance. The UNESCO has also posted on the Internet the keynote address of Federico Mayor Zaragoza, the Director General of UNESCO, on the occasion of the inauguration of the National Museum of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in Tripoli on 10 September 1988.[15]

There are other articles which underscore the significant role played by Jamrihiya and the importance of its collection, such as the one entitled "The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya Museum: A first in the Arab World" written by Mounir Bouchenaki in the *Museum* magazine published by UNESCO.[16]

These are some examples of how conventional academic sources can demonstrate the importance of this museum, in addition to underscoring the seriousness of its absence on the leading international museum portals. But academic sources are not the only ones attesting to the importance of the Jamahiriya Museum's collection. According to *Wikipedia English*, "The Jamahiriya Museum, built in consultation with UNESCO, may be the country's most famous museum. It houses one of the finest collections of classical art in the Mediterranean"[17]. Some tourism companies also describe the quality of the Jamahiriya Museum. The following is an excerpt from the *Lonely Planet Online Guide "Libyan Eclipse 2006"*

> *One of the finest collections of classical art in the Mediterranean is housed in Tripoli's Jamahiriya Museum (Phone: 3330292; Martyrs Sq; adult/child 3/1LD, camera/video 5/10LD; h9am-1pm Tue-Sun). Built in consultation with Unesco, it's extremely well designed and provides a comprehensive overview of all periods of Libyan history. If time is limited, you may want to restrict yourself to those galleries that provide context to the places*

you're most likely to visit. Most of the galleries are located on the ground floor, which covers, among other subjects: Saharan rock art (Gallery 4); the Garamantian empire of Wadi al-Hayat (Gallery 5); artefacts from Cyrene and Greek Libya (Galleries 7 and 8); and the exceptional displays covering Roman Leptis Magna and Sabratha (Gallery 9). On the 2nd floor, the sections on Islamic architecture (Galleries 15 to 19) and the Libyan ethnographic exhibits (Gallery 20), with some fine sections on Ghadames, are also excellent. The museum once formed part of the 13,000-sq-metre Al-Saraya al-Hamra (Tripoli Castle or Red Castle; Phone: 3330292; Martyrs Sq; adult/child 3/1LD, camera/video 5/10LD; h. 9am-1pm Tue-Sun), which represented the seat of power in Tripolitania from the 7th until the 20th centuries. Tripoli Castle has a separate entrance. [18]

Our conclusion is that if tour guides can provide information on this museum, there is no logical explanation why there is no information on this museum on the Internet portals specifically dedicated to such dissemination. To palliate this deficiency, we complied all meaningful information on the museum in the form of a website that imitates the typical structure of the contents of a museum website.

With this document, which is available on the "Projects" page of http://lamusediffuse.com, we attempt to demonstrate not only that information does exist on the Internet about this museum but also that in some cases, like this one, the initiatives of everyday people and the importance of their contributions on the social web are more practical and worthwhile than those of some of the organisations presumably in charge of Libyan museums.

This document also attempts to effectively identify the Jamahiriya Museum in Tripoli, since one of the aspects we noted in our specific research of this museum was the variety of names used to identify it. By way of example, below are some of names most frequently used:

- Al-Saray Al-Hambra
- Al-Saray Museum
- Assaray Elhamra Museum
- Jamahiriya Museum
- Museum of Tripoli
- National Museum of Tripoli

- Red Castle

- Tarabulus Museum

The lack of a consensus on the name of this museum is due not only to the multilingual landscape of the city but also to the specific history of the building in relation to its different uses and applications over time. As if that were not enough, Web 2.0 tools usually offer a diverse approach to the topics due to the variety of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the different users. Our document attempts to agglutinate the different names, opting for the one used by Kamal Shtewi, the person responsible for the Jamahiriya Museum in Tripoli.[19]

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main conclusion we have reached following our investigation is that it is possible to create an Internet reference for the academic world and the general public interested in Libyan museums thanks to the contributions of the social web. Some of our other conclusions and recommendations are listed below:

- The reality of museums in Africa in general and in Libya in particular is rich, diverse and multilingual and is directly affected by the need for a better technological infrastructure.
- There are a number of important museums in Libya which are internationally competitive in terms of their collections.
- The shortage of accessible information on the Internet is not directly related to the size or quality of the collections in Libyan museums.
- Libyan museums need to project a professional group image. The creation of a map which agglutinates, identifies and locates them is a useful step in the right direction.
- The Jamahiriya Museum deserves a higher position in the international museum panorama. A first step to achieve this must be the creation of its own website.
- Web 2.0 tools are a proven way of obtaining and offering information on the Internet when the access to and distribution of information from official sources is blocked for some reason.
- Web 2.0 tools can make a significant contribution to improving museum content distribution. Small museums and/or those with small budgets can overcome the limitations on access to costly technologies if they approach their presence on the Internet using Web 2.0 tools. Furthermore, the use of these technologies will surely project a much more attractive image to their audiences by making them feel that

the museums are concerned with including them and interested in their participation, viewpoints and reactions.

- Web 2.0 can be a useful source of academic information. In fact, we can now safely say that we have transformed all of the individual initiatives existing on the Internet on Libyan museums, converting them into what we hope will be an academic reference document.

6. DISTRIBUTION: DISTRIBUTION OF OUR RESEARCH ON THE INTERNET

With the aim of disseminating the contents of our research and contributing to its objectives, we have published the map, the information on Libyan museums and the web page for the Jamahiriya Museum of Tripoli in different areas of the social web. One of those places is the wiki space created specifically for this research called "Museums in Libya" which is available on the Internet at: http://www.seedwiki.com/wiki/museums_in_libya

We have also issued calls for help and distributed the contents of this project to different *e-artcasting resources: Sociable Technologies in Art Museums*, a non-profit project managed by *lamusediffuse* for sharing experiences, exchanging information and developing resources on social technologies in art museums all over the world. We have also included information on our blog (http://e-artcasting.blogspot.com); images on Flickr, in both the lamusadiffuse account (http://www.flickr.com/photos/lamusediffuse) and that of our group *e-artcasting: Sociable Technologies in Art Museums* (http://www.flickr.com/groups/e-artcasting); and we have called upon different groups related to this topic to ask their users to share their photos and information on Libyan museums with use.

We have also posted information on the Museums in Libya project on other blogs:
- lamusediffuse. "Map of Museums in Libya." *Ly-Hub*. December 10, 2006. (http://libyans.blogspot.com/2006/12/map-of-museums-in-libya.html)
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All of these calls for help have been distributed to numerous specialised lists, including Yasmin, AFRICOM or Museum-L and in private emails to archaeologists, museum professionals, researchers, members of heritage defence organisations, journalists and government representatives.

Finally, we have included all of the documentation generated in our account with del.icio.us (http://del.icio.us/e_artcasting) under the tags "Libia" and "Libya"

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ARCHITECTUREPUBLIC:
Multiplayer Interactive Architecture Competitions

Maria Prieto

With the advent of the Web 2.0, architectural competitions can be challenged as a new space for interactive design as well as a new space for interactive publication. Architecture is being practiced more and more together with public networking in the same way that the Net is becoming the most frequented space for making architecture public. What kind of architectural production is being enacted by the introduction of collaborative networks through the Net? What kind of software is making architectural design an increasingly interactive process? Three case studies provide alternative design processes produced by different interactions between multiple players with digital and networked technologies. The emphasis of this paper is on architectural competition, looking at the interplay between public imagination and Web 2.0.

As information and communication technologies became involved with corporate organizations during the Cold War, the process of architectural production entered a new era. In 1962, the first Computer Aided Design software (CAD) was launched. In the same year, MIT introduced the first computer game *Space War!* (restored by the Computer History Museum in March of 2005). Each invention was developed for the first computer designed for interaction with the user, Programmed Data Processor-1 or PDP-1 (1959). Accordingly, new experimental conditions were introduced in the architectural project by the interactive applications of both digital initiatives.

Over the last fifty years, architecture has become increasingly more involved with the speculative project of the interaction between the real and the virtual. Today our way of thinking about creating architecture still mediates between both domains, as a relentless experimentation between sketching and visualizing, in order to computerize the first ideas in a faster way, as well as humanize the required services in a more gradual manner.

> "[A]rchitects first and foremost deal with abstractions and representations (virtualities) that make significant building possible. It is these artifacts that constitute the body of knowledge and the possibility for speculation and demonstration of an idea that in turn leads to a meaningful negotiation of the gap between the virtual and the concrete."[1]

Game spaces also affect the architectural imagination in an important way. First, video games are multiplayer spaces through which virtual architecture is managed, while unfolding one's real and virtual perceptions on the screen.[2] Second, by doing this, they drive one's every day sensing of the city as a highly intense living, in other words, a hyper-real experience of an ever expanded space.

In 1989, a video game called "Sim City" was created, focusing on city building. Since then, five versions have been developed.[3] Also known as "The City Simulator", the game provides an alternative space to envision varieties of cityscapes. Actually, this video game does not only allow for the visualization of the most futuristic city, but it also helps to extend one's imagination beyond the practice of urban planning. Sim City "allows players to create their own kinds of cities, shape their cultures, social behaviors and environments."[4] Therefore, the interactive space of the video game also enables one to experiment and mediate different sets of urban conditions, while others are waiting to be discovered.

Sim City initiates a space for the speculative process of architecture and urban design. As Antonio Latini puts it: "It would be interesting to introduce a similar video game into the first two years of a university degree course, particularly in the Faculty of Architecture."[5] As an endless material of design exploration, playing Sim City can also further current urban diagnosis by improving planner's techniques for "dealing with real community needs":

> "The combining of an effective model for estimating and distributing population with tools that can graphically represent distribution scenarios and portray their impacts on urban systems ought to be a key objective for urban planners. With such a tool, we could represent alternative futures for the interested public and ourselves, as well as assess their full implications and at least be able to define the ideal framework for decision-making."[6]

What is the current space of architectural production like? Since the beginning of the digital era in 2001,[7] the design processes of architecture are increasingly at the interplay of digital technologies and film techniques:

> "Design mediums will cease to be simple, reduced, abstracted sketches of reality, and become parallel, overlapping versions of it. Beginning with a 3D model of the site, architects will be able to develop their script for the building,

evaluating various speeds, approaches and lighting conditions. Before thinking about architecture per se, they can focus on movement into and up through the building, blocking out the basic geometry and pathway. With advanced game engines, architects will explore the building on-site through a visor, tuning the interior and exterior as an assistant makes real-time adjustments. Transfers between real and digital modes will continue throughout the design process, educating and surprising the designer at each step."[8]

Actually, "when the procedures of design change, the scope of the design expands, too."[9] As well as of the designer. The role of the architect is radically challenged. S/he has to perform both as an architect pursuing new media while pursuing real architecture as a digital designer.

On the other hand, the growing access to Open Source programs can optimize the management of architectural information and communication channels as well as the innovation of architectural design processes. Thus, what is the current state of the interactive creation of the architectural project like? How could that interaction best be managed for the participatory design of the architectural project? And finally, how are we to design interaction for architectural design?

The current dynamics of architectural research demand new modes of observation according to the design potentials of the digital tools. The evaluation of the interactive architectural project has still not been studied sufficiently as well as the interactive evaluation of architecture. In this paper, explorations of architectural production within the Web 2.0 are presented through case studies on competition, cooperation, and publication. The first part will be a sequence of innovative, interactive practices in architecture, and finally, the conclusion, will be a recapitulation of the new design techniques in a feedback loop, problematizing the institution of architectural competition.

COMPETITION

Architectural competition is the most effective innovating device to advance architectural intelligence. In the last few years, the practice of architectural competition has increased surprisingly, as well as the number of conventions and convening institutions. In a certain sense, this evidences the extended fascination with the inclusive intelligence of architectural competition of new technologies and the latest post-media imagery for the evolution of architecture.
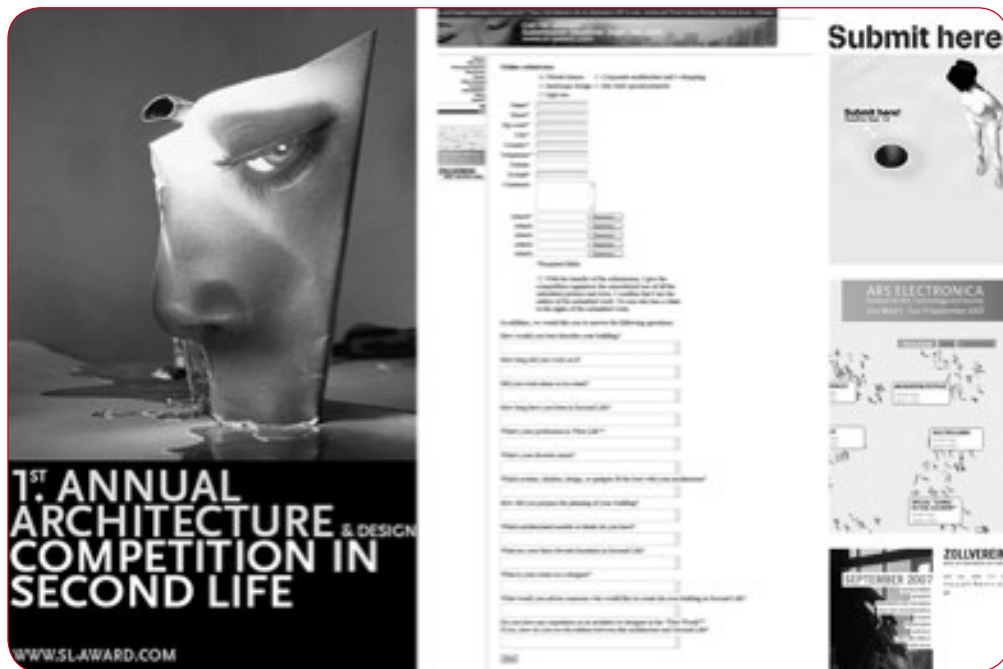
Left: Flyer of the First Annual Architecture and Design Competition in *Second Life*, designed by the organizer, conceptual artist and architect Stephan Doesinger. Center: Web page with the submission table to attach the project. Top right: Link image for the sending page. Center right: Website of *Ars Electronica* International Festival. Bottom right: September program of Zollverein complex. Source: *SL Award's* website.

In March of 2007, the SL Award organized the First Annual Architecture and Design Competition in Second Life, with a September 1st deadline. The goal of the competition was "to create a large public forum in the real world for all architects and designers who have made exceptionally innovative and artistic creations in Second Life."[10] Everybody could participate. Munich-based conceptual artist and architect Stephan Doesinger was the Director of the Competition. The creator of Second Life Californian Company Linden Lab did not take part in the convention nor the evaluation. The members of the jury were architects, artists, theorists and curators with positions in diverse European institutions devoted to architecture, art, and information and communication technologies.

The theme of the competition was to design, on varying scales, "spaceships, underwater constructions, villas, fully landscaped and designed islands, complex high rises."[11] Five project categories were set up, ranging from private dwellings, landscape designs, skyscrapers and corporate and commercial architecture, to free-style special projects. Basic quality pre-conditions were "creativity, innovation, features, style, and spatial qualities."[12]

To upload the design project to the Competition's website, five online entries were displayed in the submission layout to attach the documents. In addition, thirteen questions were listed in order to measure the achievement of the interactive skill of each participant within Second Life, which somehow demonstrates the quality and credibility of his/her project. The last question was especially intriguing and, in a certain way, summarized the rest: "Do you have any experience as an architect or designer in the 'First World'? If so, how do you see the relationship between this architecture and Second Life?"[13] In fact, this idea was followed as the leading criterion for the selection of the winning projects: "The experts concentrated on those projects that, in terms of form, were for the most part abstract, were conducive to other users engaging in playful activities, or were just more interesting than the reality."[14] Voting for the winner was open to any website visitor up until the deadline of October 23, 2007.

The one hundred and twenty-six projects submitted to the SL competition were installed as a real exhibition at the Ars Electronica International Festival from September 5-11, 2007, Linz (Austria), where a Second Life event was also celebrated in the form of an intervention in one of the main streets of the city center. On October 25th, a ceremony included the prizes, debates and a party at the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Zollverein complex in Essen (Germany). As an anecdotal matter, a design team built (or digitized) a museum island in Second Life for the Hall of Fame that hosted the proposals of all of the participants, which was open to the general interactive public. The team in charge was a group of students directed by Regine Keller, from the Department of Landscape Architecture of the Technical University of Munich. All the final projects were shown at the SL Award[15] website and are to be published by Prestel in the Spring of 2008, in the book titled, *Cross Reality Architecture: The Worlds Best Designs in Second Life*, with contributions by renowned architects and architectural thinkers.
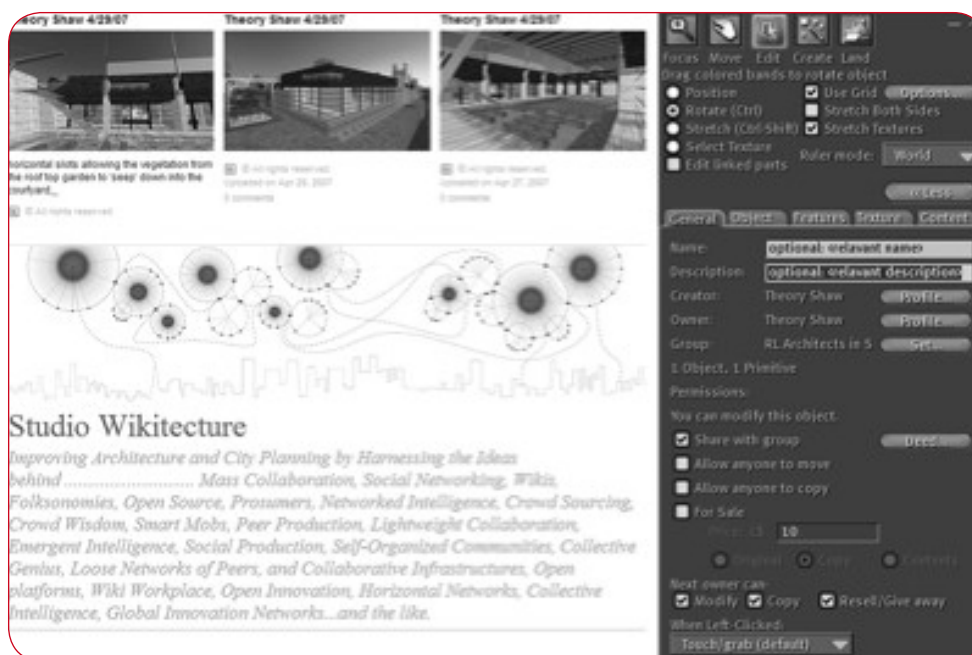
Left: Winners of the First Annual Architecture and Design Competition in *Second Life*. Right: Flyer of the October 25th event at Zollverein complex. Source: *SL Award's* website.

Looking at the SL Award competition from the interactive design point of view, the set-up of the participants' projects in the cyber city can provoke unsuspected effects on the imagination and construction of the best architecture possible in the real city. From the perspective of interactive publication, both real and virtual, the format of the SL Award can turn architectural competition into an institution beyond the exclusivist demand of brilliant originality and closer to a more participatory project for the design and evaluation of the common real-virtual world.

COOPERATION

Studio Wikitecture can be an example of designing an architectural (conceptual) frame for the collective design of the architectural project. First founded in 2006, in April 2007, Wikitecture promoted an initiative in collaboration with Wiki for the experimentation of new design processes, a project called "Wikitecture 2.0: Designing the Architecture of Architectural Design Collaboration." Derived from the applications of Web 2.0, this networking initiative opens up a new challenge: "Can a field so subjective as architecture or design be benefited by this collective intelligence paradigm?"[16]

Wikitecture 2.0 explores how new design co-agents can be extended to the field of architecture. The goal is to foster and promote the feasibility of participation in the design of the architectural project within the professional practice. For the creators of Wikitecture, every design is worthy, and the more diverse, the better. Likewise, reaching a creative dialogue between the practice of architecture and digital interactivity is what Wikitecture attempts by attaching to the field an experimental model of design methodology, which is always open and renewed.

Within the studio, a group of architects are competing for a project of an Architecture Island in Second Life. The Real Life Architects in Second Life (RLASL) study interactive design methods proceeding from the program called Wikibuild. The RLASL have a Wikitecture Flicker account with photos and comments on the design process.[17] The most voted project by all the collaborators will be the one selected for building on the island.

Series of photos of the Architecture Island from *Wikitecture 2.0* and *Wikibuild* in *Flicker* account.

Wiki partners do not try to subvert the traditional design mechanisms of architecture, but they prefer to find an alternative way to enforce them. Architects and non-architects integrate simple geometry elements or Prims (e.g., cubes, spheres, tori…) in the virtual drafting space of the project. While they are interplaying, they can modify anything they dislike or think is still unadjusted in relation to the design work of the rest. The scarcity of Prims obliges one to limit his/her operations in the cooperative design process. Designers have to invent strategies to produce a strong design input in spite of the reduced availability of means. To facilitate a certain managerial control, Wikitecture 2.0 displays different kinds of specializations. Aided by a specific template for commands, each author can allow or not allow another agent to share, move, copy or even sell elements s/he has introduced in the previous design.

Although Wikitecture 2.0 endeavors to go one step further in architectural quality, in terms of the design process, the participative project of Wikitecture follows rules which are still considered controversial. As an Open Source system, it implies an open democracy but regulated, somehow, in a conservative way because of the need to control the distinct elements of the architectural assemblage. Therefore, there are still doubts as to whether Wikitecture's mode of consensus can guarantee the quality of the architectural work or if the bits-modulation of each design input contributes to facilitating interactive participation as well as productive feedback in the architectural project.

PUBLICATION

What will be the architecture of the global school of architecture?[18] Tracing current modes of architectural competitions and of cooperation finds the most creative scope by observing the experimental laboratories of the main schools of architecture on each continent. The Archinect Website launched the initiative Archinect School Blog Project[19] to bring out a window to see, almost in real time, the incubators of ideas in the design studio curricula worldwide. It gathers blogs of students that register the state of architectural thinking and experimentation, as well as publish online all the new digital ecologies of design.

Screenshot of *The Archinect's School Blog Project*.

The triple simultaneity of the blog —that of archives, communication media and publication— moves the design of the architectural project to the information space, which in turn distributes new media techniques to the process of architectural production. Along this line, digital publication represents the next challenge to advanced architecture, according to Hilary Ballon, "because new tools of research and new forms of knowledge are being developed in digital formats that we need to understand, learn from, and evaluate."[20]

The Archinect blog links schools, competition venues, and a multiplicity of initiatives. It allows networks of users to share concerns and evaluate strategies to engage innovation within architectural education and practice worldwide. As "growing up with networked digital media is a fact of life,"[21] Architecture students relentlessly look for links between the current thoughts and the rapid spreading of global information. The blog serves as a cultural platform to share and update architectural concerns as well as design qualities, while students are busy building back and forth their cybernetic assemblies of architectures. The ongoing user's collection of architectural paradigms and networks through the blog becomes both a presentation card as well as a demonstration space of a still unexplored but not underestimated info-technological community of architects.

CONCLUSION

Web 2.0 is turning inside out the experimental space of architectural production. Architects are becoming increasingly specialized in processing information. They visualize their latest architectures and translate their latest architectural concerns into articulated solutions in a way never seen before, although, in the end, they become very similar because of the pervasiveness of the Net. The three case studies shown throughout this paper illuminate some changes in the design process of the architectural project dealing with the Net, as interactive modes of imagination, evaluation, and knowledge of architecture.

An instrument to innovate architecture, architectural competition can improve architectural production not only by competing but also by collaborating and publishing. The classical definition of architectural competition as an institution designed for an exclusivist distinction no longer stands unchallenged. Nevertheless, because of the Web 2.0, should architectural competition become totally open?

And, if we accept it as open, what would be the conditions for establishing such a competition? As we see in the First Competition in Second Life, organizers, participants and website visitors behave as info-technological citizens, who are able to design, compete, compare, evaluate and decide the best for their "second" environment, working back and forth between the real and the virtual world. The advancement of the architectural field is being supported more and more by a collective awareness because the Net could be the reason for promoting this open initiative. Undoubtedly, the networked public can be more talented and consistent

with what architecture should be in relation to the contemporary, every day life conditions in which practice is involved.

The space of architectural innovation develops simultaneously with the every day interactions of the users with each other and with digital technologies. Both personal and interpersonal actions are being transformed by "the Net's despatialization of interaction"[22] (that is, of face-to-face interaction), and channeled through "the networking of space and the spatiality of the network."[23] Digital natives practice architecture with the support of cyberspace in the same way that they choose, gather and compose their information. That is, they develop both cognitive and functional aspects in their mental frame that in turn are transmitted to and can be detected from the Net (persuasive architecture). Actually, those very cognitive assemblages hold the complex methodology through which they address the design of their architecture. To what extent does Wikitecture allow for open public participation in the architectural project? In that case, the template for co-design is still far from being a medium to bring together sophisticated architectural concepts and models. The software is still precarious, although it is a first step that opens up a fascinating field of research on online architectural design collaboration.

And finally, do people really want to participate and share their architectural visions? The Net becomes the space where society seems to be living the new future, which in turn seems to be updated with the networking of continuously innovating intelligences. On the Net, networking means publishing. And online publishing leads architects (and non-architects) to deal with new media. Thus, the contemporary city calls for an updated recognition of the public, as a necessary collaborative response for the designing and evaluating of urban spaces and architectures. In order to engage building technologies with the emerging network of architectural collaborations and, thus, the interactive imagination of architectural competitions, architecture should undergo a real-virtual re-organization, which would mean the designing of the online public space of architectural production, that is, the cybernetic parliament of architecture.

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LABORATORIO LIVE MEDIA, WEB2.0 AND THE NECESSITY OF STRATEGIC TRANSMISSIONS AND LIVE IMAGE FLOWS

Andrew Colquhoun and María de Marías

(Laboratorio Live Media)

ANTECEDENTS TO LABORATORIO LIVE MEDIA

We started working together in London in 1998 as Dogon Efff with the idea of exploring "live video on the Internet", or more correctly "livestream video". And just to elaborate on our name: The Dogon are a group of people from Mali in Africa, made famous through the work of the French anthropologist Marcel Griaule[1] and the ethnological filmmaker Jean Rouch; whereas the "Efff" is an acronym for Electronic freedom, freedom, freedom.

In 2000, we made the installation Protocols of Experience, *a livestream video installation* for the gallery La Capella in Barcelona.[2] In 2001 we produced Teatro Virtual for the Municipal Theatre of Barcelona the Mercat de les Flors.[3] In 2003 we conceptualized and directed Transversal Telematic: *Surfing the Informatic Bomb*.[4] Transversal Telematic was an Extranet that put together eleven municipal councils from Catalunya in the northeast of Spain, six theatres and 170 artists – musicians, poets, dancers, visual artists, television personnel, theatre companies, architects, performance artists, actors, designers, video artists, psychologists, sociologists – all communicating and receiving live audio and video via an "extranet of livestream media".

Here we should make it clear that the concept of an Extranet is nothing new, they are just something more normally associated with business than culture. For instance, a bank's network of ATM machines can be described as an Extranet, as can a network linking together a group of libraries.

In addition to Transversal Telematic, in 2003 we started a second cycle of Teatro Virtual titled "Online Laboratory" this time in co-production with France's CICV- Pierre Schaeffer, International Centre of Video Creation, Montbéliard, renamed as Ars Numerica in 2004.[5]

In 2005 and in collaboration with the Centro Multimedia of the Centre of National Arts (CENART) in Mexico City, we began researching the possibilities of an *Extranet for digital culture*. In short, the research we made for this *Extranet for digital culture* has led to the establishment of Laboratorio Live Media.

WHERE IS LABORATORIO LIVE MEDIA?

Our website is http://www.lab-livemedia.net

http://www.lab-livemedia.net (page access 21.07.2007).

In August 2007 we will be in the Centro Historico of México City working with the Espacio Intermedia of the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana at the Casa de la Primera Imprenta de América (House of the First Printing Press of the America's). And from October 2007 we will be situated in the Council of Sitges's, "Sitges Centre de Disseny". Sitges is a popular coastal town approximately 30 kilometers south of Barcelona.

LABORATORY LIVE MEDIA ASSUMES THE PRESENCE OF THREE INTERNET TRENDS

The first is a new generation of web applications transforming the way we access and use the Internet. By "Web applications" we are referring to the likes of blogs, Skype, IPTV, AJAX[6] and technologies based on Flash such as Adobe Flex,[7] Adobe Integrated Runtime (AIR)[8] and Microsoft's Silverlight.[9]

An example of Silverlight is the British Libraries Turning Pages

http://ttpdownload.bl.uk/browserapp.xbap. This "Rich Internet Application" gives us the opportunity to navigate through the British Libraries most famous books such as William Blakes notebook or the 8th century illuminated manuscript Lindisfarne Gospels.

The second trend is the convergence between the contemporary Internet and telecommunication devices for the creation of an Extended Internet of many devices.

The third trend is the development of the Semantic Web, where information, data feeds and streams find their correct destinations via networks of intelligent software agents. The main goals of the Semantic Web were first expressed by Tim Berners Lee in September 1998. These include the need "to express real life" and, "to be a global database" where "machines are able to participate and help".

Within the contexts of these trends, evolutions and new maturities of the Internet, the aim of Laboratory Live Media is to investigate new kinds of live confrontations, collisions and confluences between "online" and "offline" milieus.

By "online" we mean acts of communication and transmission. By "offline" we mean the zone of telepresence in a physical space or environment.

These three trends aside, our overall assumption is that the Internet is perpetually a transformative space, the underlying evolution being (so far): "HTML" to "XHTML Strict" to "XHTML1.1" and "XHTML Mobile Profile", to "XHTML2.0"[10]... or will it be "HTML5"?[11]

TO ENCOMPASS THESE INTERNET TRENDS:
We want to offer free access to a livestreaming video infrastructure and to offer this platform in both Windows Media and Flash Video.

So why livestream video?

To upload video files to the Web is one thing, and it is something we all know where to do and how to do, whereas to produce robust and professional standard livestream video transmissions is still an exclusive mode of communication.

We want to couple this online video infrastructure to the development of a live

noticeboard. Basically, by incorporating a feed parser and aggregator[12] within an ATOM or RSS syndication system, a series of feed "channels" can be created.

An example for such a notice board is Newsmap (http://www.marumushi.com/apps/newsmap/newsmap.cfm). This "treemap" is conceptualised as a visual reflection on the Google News "landscape". Notice the different colours of the interface demarcating the different news sections such as, "world", "technology", "health".

We should also make reference to one or two projects that show the potential creative lines of Laboratorio Live Media.

The first is the online documentation at Tate Online (http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/nauman/) of Bruce Nauman's sound installation "Raw Materials" made for the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in 2004. Via a combination of Flash, Streaming media and a reframing of Nauman's original proposed dynamic "walking through bands of sound", to "surfing through bands of sound", we are able to follow, explore and find juxtaposions of voices and texts in a new online environment.

"D-Toren" (http://www.d-toren.nl/site), by Q.S. Serafijn and Lars Spuybroek's NOX studio for the town of Doetinchem in the Netherlands: consists of a 12 metre high interactive tower, a website (accessible to everybody), and a questionnaire (accessible to 100 people each year):

D-Toren.

For NOX, *D-Toren is a complex alloy of different media, where architecture is part of a larger system of interactive relationships. It is a project in which the intensive (feelings, qualia) and the extensive (space, quantities) change places, where human action, colour, money, value and feelings all become networked entities.*[13]

Also worthy of mention is Rafael Lozano Hemmer's interactive installation for "self-representation and anti-modularity", *Amodal Suspension* (http://www.amodal.net/precedents.html). This project enabled anyone to send a short text message using a mobile phone or web browser. However, rather than being sent directly, the message was first encoded as a unique sequence of flashes and sent to a network of 20 robotically-controlled searchlights.

The constant within all these projects is a play between online and offline.

Earlier we suggested that the Internet is a transformative space. Within the research made for Laboratorio Live Media:
We see the emergence of Web2.0 as the moment when the Web established itself as a live communication environment.

Lou Reed at the Web2.0 Summit shows his wrath at the tech-geeks and their non-stop blogging, messaging and chatting[14]

Web2.0 expresses a frequency of transition from a web of HTML pages, to a live and Extended Internet of many devices. This emergence was recorded by Google's Vice President of Engineering Adam Bosworth in 2005. Bosworth wrote,

"*Presence is in the air. The web because of mobile and broadband and Instant Messaging is becoming real-time. Real time presence changes everything and rapidly leads to thinking about much richer ways of communicating within communities. […] It is going to be fascinating and exciting to watch how these tensions play out, namely the rising trend of people working together and collaborating and communicating over the web in increasingly real time ways.*" [15]

BOSWORTH'S ANNOUNCEMENT "PRESENCE IS IN THE AIR", BRINGS US TO AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION: HOW IN ITS NEW ROLE AS A LIVE COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT IS THE WEB BEING CONSTRUCTED, AND, HOW ARE THE SUBSEQUENT NEW KINDS OF TELEMATIC PRESENCE BEING DISTRIBUTED?

**WITHIN WEB2.0 WE SEE TWO FORMATIONS OF LIVE COMMUNICATION:**
The first formation of live communication is the determination by corporate "old media" to absorb Web2.0 models of "user generated content". Examples here are News Corporations purchase of MySpace, or CBS Digital Media's model of a broadband/broadcast convergence, that enables uploaded "non-disruptive user content" to be incorporated seamlessly into live news broadcasts.

The second formation of live communication is the organisation of a "networked multitude" via Social Network Sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Flickr and Stickam.[16]

As a way to explain the Networked Multitude: "Multitude" is a term of Spinoza developed in a political form by Michael Hardt and Tony Negri for their books *Empire* (2001) and *Multitude* (2004). In short, "multitude" refers to the population of the world within a network. Our reference for "Networked multitude" is taken from the book *Network Culture* by the Italian sociologist of media and culture Tiziana Terranova.[17] In *Network Culture*, Terrranova formulates an active, uncoordinated and unstable networked multitude; simultaneously seeking differenciation and a majority consensus within an online milieu subject to, "advanced techniques and strategies of manipulation and control".[18]

Of the previously mentioned Social Network Sites, perhaps Stickam best shows the relation between Web2.0 and its "networked multitude".

In the words of the Web2.0 technology blog Techcrunch (http://www.techcrunch.com), "Stickam aims to provide a rich media service to professional bloggers and is promoted as "the all in one multimedia communication tool"[19]. Stickam tiene como lema: "express yourself"; es "full technology", 100% Flash video, 15 frames por segundo, audio, interactividad completa.
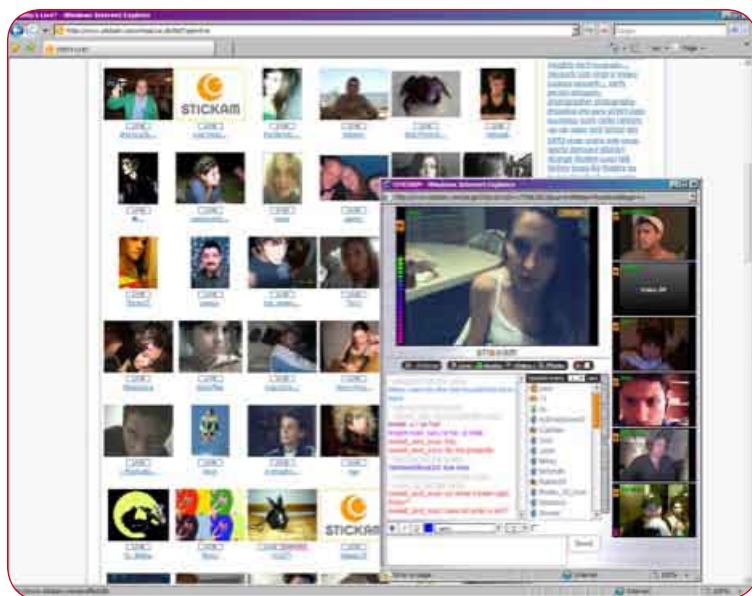
http://www.stickam.com (page access 3.01.2007)

However, as shown in fig.4, given the overall "at home and relaxed" appearance of its users, it is neither apparent that any professional blogger uses the "all in one multimedia communication tool", nor that the determination to communicate by those who do use its service, is elaborated beyond an expression fluctuating between *passive presence* to one of *collective narcissism*.

This cumulative experience of Stickam's "networked multitude" is indirectly summarised by Terranova. In *Network Culture* she writes:

"*A multitude of simple bodies in an open system is by definition acentred and leaderless. There is no single control structure that can be manipulated or attacked: the sheer multitude of non-linear interactions, feedback loops, and mutations make the behaviour of such of such systems very hard to analyse […] (even the simple activity of observing them alters them)*.[20]

Other examples of Web2.0 applications creating new communication and distributive networks include the "micro-blogging" application Twitter (http://twitter.com). Twitter allows the sending of a text messages of up to 140 characters via Instant Messenging, SMS, email or the web, and to access "Your Twitters" however and wherever needed.

http://twitter.com/jfreire (page access 11.07.2007)

Jaiku (http://www.jaiku.com) is another micro-blogging application, but with more complexity than Twitter.

For video, photo and chat messaging there is Kyte (http://www.kyte.tv). Here the network effect creates interactive video streams or video channels of short messages.

With these new "Social Media" web applications, we perceive the ability to send and receive information via the Internet from anywhere, at any moment, and specifically via any intelligent device. Now we are always online.

But what is generated, organised and constructed from these "always on" communication streams? Do we experience "meaning" or just a "media effect"? Within the communication schema of Web2.0, the only rationale is to experience images, sound and text to the point where it is impossible to escape images, sound and text. Communication becomes noise, noise corrupts communication and our primary vectors, life and vision, are overwhelmed. Now streams of communication follow, forming kinds of bioweapons. You are tracked, positioned, indexed and then a second stream of communication begins to enter and contaminate the sensas: Google Ads.

How do we escape? Soon the potential question will not just be "How am I offline? ", but "How am I "off" offline?"

If Laboratorio Live Media is to investigate "new kinds of live confrontations, collisions and confluences" between online and offline environments, we ask: Is the notion of communication sufficient, or do we need another strategy that goes beyond? In the book "Transmitting Culture" (1997) by the French writer Régis Debray, a comparison is made between communication and transmission. And Debray's differenciation is significant.

For Debray: "[A]*Transmission takes its course through time (diachronically), developing and changing as it goes […] As far as communications are concerned, time is external … But with transmission, time is appreciable internal. Communication excels by cutting short; transmission by prolonging. Human beings communicate, more rarely do they transmit lasting meaning. The contrast is thus stark between the warmer and fuzzier notion of communication and the militant, suffering nature of the struggle to transmit.*"[21]

Debray asks, "*How does the mediated object of study transmit itself and its meaning, and how, by transmitting itself, is it constituted?* " and concludes,

"*In sum, the art of transmission, or making culture, consists of adding a strategy to logistics, a praxis to a techne, or establishing an institutional home and engineering a lexicon of signs and symbols. What persists over time is the art of composition.*"[22]

Additionally, if we return Debray's thinking on communication and transmission to the earlier philosophy of Henri Bergson, we can say the act of communication causes a linear vector from position "A" to position "B", whereas transmission (given a diachronic nature), evokes both an emergent duration and a qualitative transformation of virtual space.[23]

Given the consideration of Bergson and Debray: Does Web2.0's activation of the "networked multitude" create transmissions or durations of lasting meaning, or is the "always-on-Web2.0-bioweapon" hacking, seducing and de-politicising Hardt and Negri's multitude?

If seduction and a certain de-politicisation is the reality of the Web2.0 frequency of transition to the extended web of many devices, how can "meaning" and a strategic use of "transmission" override or transgress the force of the Web2.0 communication effect?

If we think back to the example of Nox's D-Toren, we can say that the great strength or strategy of that project lay within a complex arrangement of spaces: urban and virtual, sculptural and actual. Within this spacial complexity different levels of communication are enabled and reflected in time and duration. Likewise, it must be said that Web2.0 has also established a strategic space. As such, the element that will most enable Laboratorio Live Media to construct *strategic transmissions of live image flows*, is the elaboration of a complex space.

For this purpose, Laboratory Live Media wants to invoke a multiplicity of spaces both online and offline. These spaces are recognised as:

An anthropological space — an intensive and distributive space for creation (or Intensive *Spatium*) — a space for resources and formation — a space for cultural and artistic events.

Socially we refer to the anthropological space. Philosophically we refer to the space of the Intensive *Spatium*.

For the French philosopher Pierre Levy, the anthropological space is made up of four spaces: the earth, the territory, commodity and the emergent knowledge. [24] They are coexisting living worlds. They constitute the outside space enveloping the operative field of Laboratory Live Media.

The Intensive *Spatium* is the term assigned to the creative zone of the Extranet. Irreducible to concepts and open to ideas, the Intensive *Spatium* "actualises connections" and initiates appearances, in the sense of productions or emergences from the total field (schema, magnitude, matter, designation).

But why are we not discussing the complexities of the rhizome as most famously theorised by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their book "Mille Plateaus" in 1980?

Substantially, the rhizome is a perfect description of the World Wide Web, whereas the Intensive *Spatium* refers to experience and to the intensity of experience, bringing a positive characteristic of depth for the determination of ideal connections and differential relations.
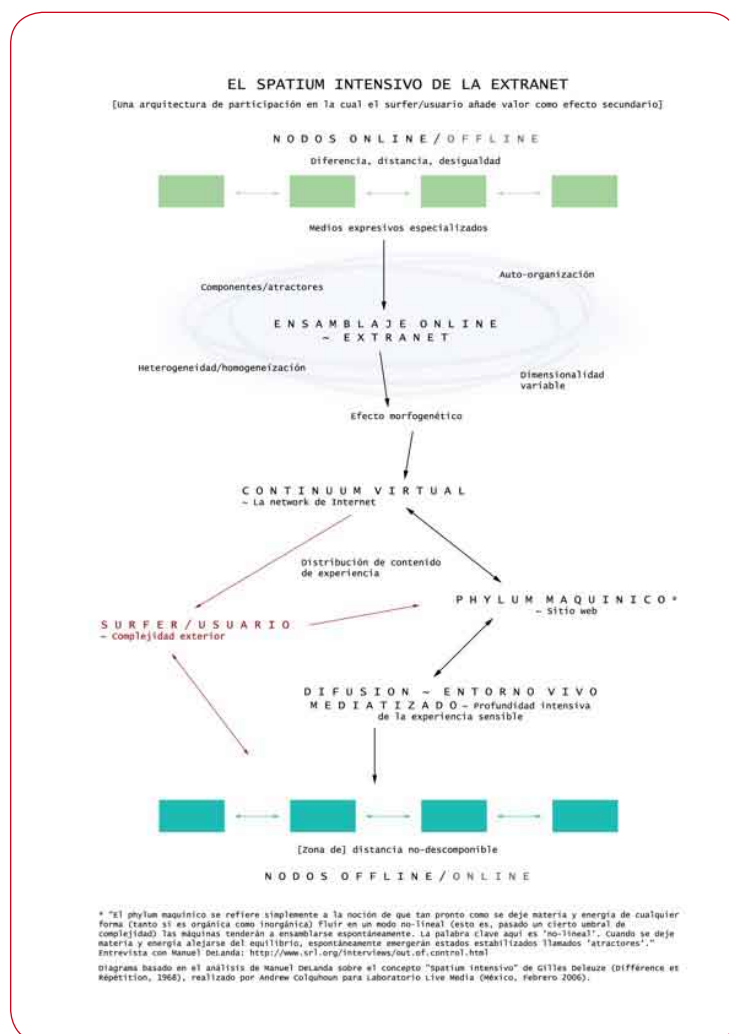
The diagram of *The Intensive Spatium of the Extranet*, is drawn up from Manuel DeLanda's book *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* [25] and specifically his notes on the Deleuzian Intensive *Spatium*.[26]

Although it is possible to think of the Intensive *Spatium* in the singular as the "intensive depth of sensible experience", as with the majority of Deleuze's concepts, the Intensive *Spatium* has many names including *machinic phylum*, *virtual continuum*, *body without organs* and *plane of immanence* – each name being

dependant on the process at hand. Our intention has been to use these different moments or kinds of processes to construct an operativity for the *Intensive Spatium of the Extranet*: online/offline, assemblage, transmission, distribution, diffusion and so on. The significant addition to the concept of Intensive *Spatium* is the "surfer/user as exterior complexity".

With Laboratory Live Media we want to implicate a new kind of dimension *that envelops the multiple durations of disparate cultural formations and milieus.*[27] This duration needs to be "hackable", "viral" and open to micro-ecologies, material forces, velocities, tactilities and fluxes of intensive interconnections.

Laboratory Live Media should aim to be a kind of *third force*, one that generates *strategic transmissions* and *live image flows*, which on the one hand compete with Old Media's adoption of practices emanating from Web2.0, while on the other hand, re-contaminates the different micro-ecologies belonging to the networked multitude.

NOTES

1 See Griaule's *Dieu d'Eau:entretiens avec Ogotemmêli*, 1948 and *Le Renard Pâle*, l'Institute d'Ethnologie, Paris, 1965

2 http://www.dogonefff.org/main_protocols_es.html

3 http://www.teatrevirtual-mercatflors.net

4 http://www.dogonefff.org/transversaltelematic/index.html

5 http://www.teatrevirtual.net y http://www.ars-numerica.net

6 AJAX is the widely used acronym for "Asynchronous JavaScript and XML".

7 http://www.adobe.com/products/flex

8 http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/air

9 http://silverlight.net

10 See http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml2

11 See http://www.whatwg.org/specs/web-apps/current-work

12 See http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agregador y http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feed_reader, " An aggregator or news aggregator or feed reader is client software that uses a web feed to retrieve syndicated web content such as weblogs, podcasts, vlogs, and mainstream mass media websites, or in the case of a search aggregator, a customized set of search results."

13 Lars Spuybroek, *NOX Machining Architecture*, p.158, Thames and Hudson, London, 2004.

14 Image accessed from http://www.flickr.com/photos/daveforrest/293570921. Lou Reed's concert at the Web2.0 Summit is reviewed at http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/sfgate/detail?blogid=19&entry_id=10782

15 http://www.adambosworth.net/archives/2005_03.html

16 http://www.myspace.com, http://www.facebook.com, http://www.flickr.com, http://www.stickam.com.

17 Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture*, Pluto Press, 2004.

18 *Ibid* p.154

19 http://www.techcrunch.com/2006/02/14/pimp-my-blog

20 Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture*, p.104, Pluto Press, 2004.

21 See Regis Debray,*Transmitting Culture*, pp.3-5, Columbia University, New York, 2000.

22 *Ibid* p.13

23 See Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Zone Books, 1988, and Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture*, pp.50-52, Pluto Press, 2004.

24 See, Pierre Lévy, *Collective Intelligence: Mankind's emerging world in cyberspace*. Perseus Books: Cambridge, Massachussets, 1997.

25 Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science & Virtual Philosophy*, Continuum: NewYork & London, 2002.

26 *Ibid* pp.158-159

27 Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture*, p.135, Pluto Press, 2004.

TRANSNATIONAL TEMPS PRESENTS:
Eco-scope

Andy Deck, Fred Adam and Verónica Perales

http://terranode.org /ecoscope

EcoScope is a telematic forum concerning environmental issues. It is one of a series of projects by the international art collective Transnational Temps involving the environment, public participation, and tactical media.

It stands to reason that solutions to the various contemporary ecological challenges are more likely to emerge when the public is both well informed and practiced in articulating ideas about the environment. So EcoScope is designed to combine information with discussion. Its structure indicates the importance of participation in any meaningful solutions that can be imagined.

Although EcoScope resembles some existing graphical chat software, what separates it from others is the context it provides. EcoScope leverages scientific visualization, time-lapse satellite photography, landscape photography, and environmental journalism to provide a framework for conversation and discovery. Since its formation in 2001, Transnational Temps has developed diverse media art relating to the environment, extinction, public awareness, and the limits of

technological progress. Members of Transnational Temps are artists without borders, culture workers dedicated to imagining new maps and finding alternative routes to the future.

EARTH ART FOR THE 21st CENTURY
Making art that addresses the contemporary environmental situation is challenging. Attempts to bridge art and activism often fall short. Vague abstraction tends to arouse suspicion among activists, while connoisseurs find fault with almost any art that assumes a didactic or informative tone.

Despite theoretical pronouncements by Theodor Adorno, among others, that the merger of art and social purpose is doomed to failure, Transnational Temps estimates that environmental sustainability is not beyond the scope of aesthetic experience. Art is ever-changing, and the warming world of the 21st century needs a vigorous multi-disciplinary movement to invent a new ecological common sense. While most cultural and media institutions continue to neglect the deterioration of the environment, Transnational Temps has resisted this flight from ecology and reaffirmed the ground-breaking work of the 1970s. Like Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty, which disappeared beneath the surface of the Great Salt Lake for thirty years, Earth Art has re-emerged in the new millennium.

Transnational Temps exists because global environmental problems now require human cooperation more than ever before. The lessons of environmental science are not just for school children. A hopeful future for the world's environment in the decades to come will depend on making consciousness about environmental problems far more widespread. The technical means of educating and informing people about global conditions have never been more abundant.

But efforts to advance international cooperation continue to be overshadowed by the commercial exploitation of the media. Myriad corporations drive a spectacular agenda that encourages distraction rather than action.

Standing in the way of a transformation of consciousness are various industries and a commodity culture whose priorities conflict with the best interests of life on Earth. The failure of the prevailing economic system to account for the value of the environment has led to a situation in which the planet is being destroyed so that short-term profits can be maintained. This is insanity!

Transnational Temps operates, therefore, at the crossroads of inter-related crises. "Art at its most significant," wrote Marshall McLuhan, "is a Distant Early Warning System that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen to it." One of the artist's greatest challenges is finding ways to sound an alarm that people don't necessarily want to hear. Crisis forms a disturbing basis for aesthetic experience, especially when it's personal. Because ultimately the sustainability of the environment is not someone else's problem, it is a theme that can be overwhelming if it is not offset by humor, inspiration, curiosity, and hope. It's not easy to open public dialogue about such matters. But it may help to begin somewhere.

Somewhat arbitrarily, Transnational Temps employs the postcard as a means to invite people to participate. Users of EcoScope can easily produce electronic postcards to invite others to visit the site. Making printed postcards is also an option. Each postcard is, in effect, a snapshot of the present state of the discussion. So the postcards give an indication of what to expect when visiting EcoScope. The cards are also an outlet for creative expression.

EXTREME HOME ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS
EcoScope inaugurates a series of Extreme Home Entertainment Systems which abandon the superficial "realism" of video gaming in favor of the topical realism of extreme weather, melting glaciers, and endangered species. Extreme Home Entertainment Systems embrace play, but they reject the passive configuration of the conventional home entertainment system. Active engagement should not mean extreme boredom. Transnational Temps aims to address critical social issues without boring people or overwhelming them with depressing statistics.

If the familiar commerciality and escapism of interactive media products establish certain expectations among audiences, such as that online experiences must be entertaining, so be it. EcoScope entertains. Despite the seriousness of the proposed subject matter, EcoScope injects a dose of fun. Users can adopt graphical avatars such as monkeys, dolphins, and tigers; or channel surf from Mount Kilimanjaro to the tropics; or organize a sit-in on the edge of a stratospheric ozone hole.

Unlike the highly individualistic feats of extreme sports, Extreme Home Entertainment Systems explore the potential of collaboration. In the interactive, online media of EcoScope, spectators are challenged to communicate. The coercive control

permeating typical corporate media offerings may lead to more predictable results, but young people, especially, are eager to find ways to subvert and circumvent this dull regularity. Web 2.0 participation is rendering "reality television" obsolete for a generation that prefers to do more than just watch and listen.

Extreme Home Entertainment Systems differ from games in that there are no artificial victories to be found. In many respects, the goals are undefined. EcoScope advances a writerly textual condition in which participants provide most of the site's content. This openness is offset by a framework that is by turns documentary and journalistic. As both avatars and scenery draw attention to a physical world at risk, the user-directed discourse is tilted subtly towards analysis rather than fantasy. The entertainment system is thereby re-conceived as a mechanism for collaborative resistance, a tool for escaping the virtualization of the real.

SUPERPOWER vs INDIFFERENCE

EcoScope is the the latest in a series of media art projects begun in 2001. Inspired by New York Times correspondent Patrick Tyler's observation that there remain two superpowers – the United States and world public opinion – Transnational Temps began to focus attention on public opinions about the environment. Leveraging workshops, residencies, and exhibitions, the collective has developed both a body of recordings, and strategies for presenting and distributing them. From events in Portugal, Uruguay, Greece, and the United States, to Terranode 2005 in France, and Aquanode 2006 in Turkey, Transnational Temps has recorded many statements and incorporated them into both installations and online media. These activities have brought digital media art into the landscape and into the public sphere. Because each event has incorporated site-specific nuances, topics have varied from place to place. Rather than conducting interviews, people have been asked to discuss what, if anything, concerns them about the environment. The recordings can be heard via streaming media at Terranode Radio (radio.terranode.org).

EcoScope continues this interest in the superpower of public opinion, and like Terranode and Aquanode it encourages people to express their views about the environment. To advance the general project of representing global attitudes toward the environment, EcoScope also maintains a public archive of all the discussions that occur.

In some respects EcoScope resembles an open microphone because anyone can use the platform to say anything about anything, anonymously. Experience with similarly open online interfaces suggests, however, that a compelling interactive context will lead many people to make thoughtful contributions. Thematic channels were therefore designed to suggest relevant topics for analysis and debate.

DEFORESTATION CHANNEL

In the Deforestation Channel the dynamic background imagery represents successive levels of deforestation in Bolivia from 1984 to 2000, as recorded by NASA satellite photography. The time-lapse visualization reveals the limitations of casually observing environmental changes. The ease with which humans grow accustomed to changes, like the disappearance of forests, underscores the value of photographs and databases as aids to memory. How well can a person know a forest from seeing aerial photographs, though? The metaphor of the "scope" suggests an instrument that will enhance vision. But a satellite-assisted way of seeing forests is no substitute for knowing a forest by being in it, or living near it.

Most citizens of the advanced industrialized nations, lacking direct sensory experience, have lost contact with both flora and fauna in a prolonged estrangement from nature. In this age of genetic engineering, it's increasingly difficult to differentiate natural and synthetic. For most people, direct experiences of nature and wildlife are as brief as they are limited. Even the word "nature" evokes little more than nostalgia for unexplored land, a wilderness free of the centuries of human domination and remodeling. Contact with other forms of life has been reduced to a mediated experience, an optical re-run, a demographically targeted event sandwiched between commercial messages. While television is an unlikely route back to nature, reliance on technology to help understand the complexities of habitats and ecology is almost universal.

The Deforestation Channel and the Ozone Channel feature satellite imagery (smaller option)

FIX NEWS CHANNEL

Since global warming and other atmospheric conditions, such as acid rain, are difficult to perceive, journalism could do a lot to direct attention to critical problems. Yet too often journalism about environmental affairs in the mainstream media has lacked persistence and urgency. In place of investigative reporting, there has been a rise of ultra-sensationalistic news programming. Spotty environmental news coverage has been ineffective in mobilizing behavioral and policy changes equal to the challenge of global warming.

At the same time, the Internet has made access to environmental news easier. The Fix News Channel brings together a wide variety of news sources, and it offers a hyper-linked headline for each article. It connects visitors to resources they can use to educate themselves about climate change, environmental policies, endangered species, renewable energy, and scientific research. The Fix News Channel reflects current events and gives a timely and adaptive quality to EcoScope. While it is no match for the production qualities of real television newscasts, it does sketch an up-to-date alternative newscast in which environmental news is always the lead story.

The Fix News Channel is two way: readers can add news items to the Fix News database and comment on existing articles

OZONE CHANNEL

For decades the scientific community has been publishing findings on a variety of troublesome trends, such as global warming, ozone holes, rising sea levels, deforestation, extinction, and receding glaciers. Some important actions have resulted, such as the Montreal Protocol, an international ban on ozone-damaging chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Each day EcoScope automatically produces maps using new ozone data so that discussions in the Ozone Channel can be superimposed over the most current visualization of ozone levels in the atmosphere. Artistic forays like this into scientific visualization can play a role in communicating research findings. The ozone images are a reminder of the vulnerability of the Earth's atmosphere to human activities.

Unfortunately when scientists sound a note of alarm, it does not necessarily translate into political action. Consequently, it has become increasingly important to bridge the gap between specialized knowledge and public awareness.

The Ozone Channel addresses a perceptual problem associated with issues like global warming and ozone depletion. Since direct experience of atmospheric ozone is impossible, scientists use advanced instruments and computer models to understand these matters. For non-scientists the problem of perception is compounded by the mediation – and outright distortion – of scientific findings. Public understanding of climatic conditions is influenced by many unscientific things, such as industry efforts to downplay the risks of fossil fuel dependency. This perceptual gap has been exploited for decades.
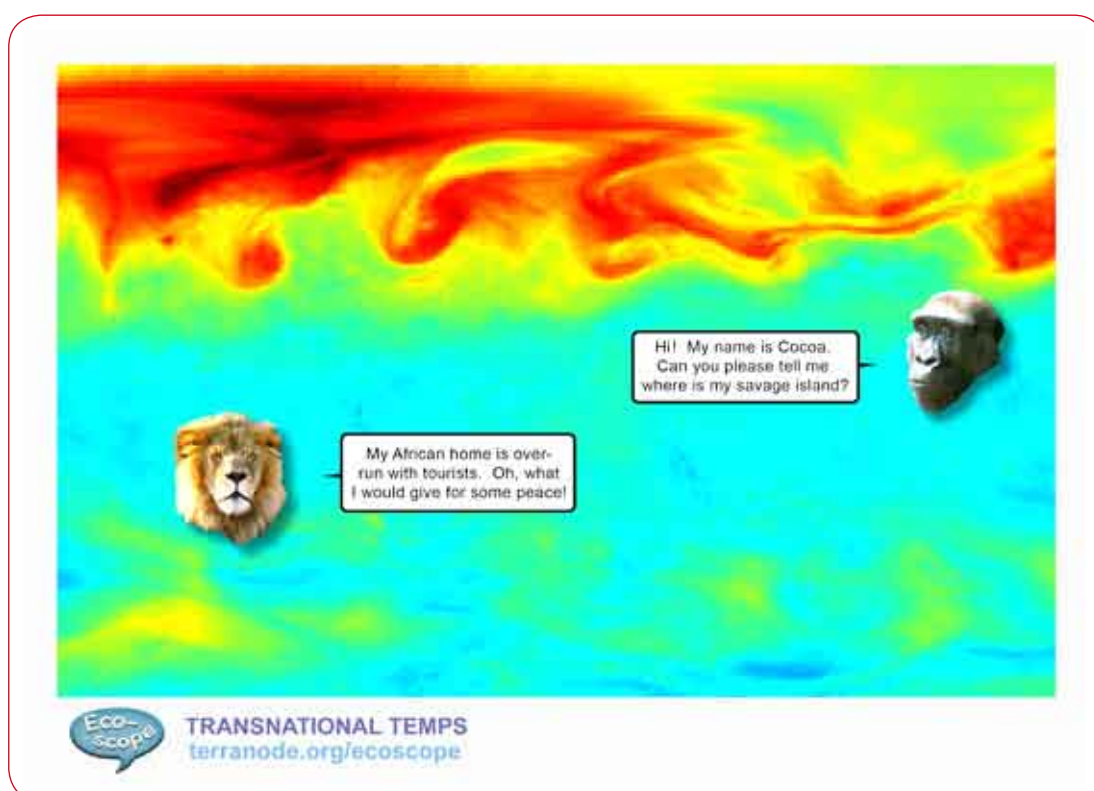
The Ozone Channel: blue and purple values indicate what is often called a 'hole' in the ozone layer

Transnational Temps respects the work that concerned scientists are doing, but when repeated warnings by scientists about global warming prove largely ineffectual, a tactical media strategy is needed that will complement the conventional approach of the science community and inspire more passion for environmental affairs. Building enthusiasm for more sustainable lifestyles is a daunting task that may require new priorities and new approaches to communication. Without denigrating the value of

research and statistics, it appears there are limits to the effectiveness of an endless parade of reports, conferences, and bulleted presentations. Filling databases is probably not the best ways to win the hearts and minds of non-scientists.

Paradoxically modern technology and science have enabled unprecedented access to everything from outer space to subatomic space. From satellites to nano-sensors, perceptual prostheses have never been so sophisticated. And yet most citizens are far from taking part in the scientific explorations occurring beyond the fences and firewalls of research universities and private laboratories. The privatization and commercialization of information have introduced a more closed scientific world. Still, the passion of the 18th-century Encyclopedists to share knowledge has not been entirely extinguished. Climate science deserves credit for its openness. The Ozone Channel is made possible by free atmospheric ozone data from the U.S. National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service.

GREETINGS FROM ECOSCOPE

There is a world to be gained. But sometimes it seems everything related to environmentalism is marked by division and dithering. The time to move decisively has already passed. Polar ice-shelves are slipping into the seas.

While efforts to date have failed to persuade enough politicians to act rationally to preserve the environment and slow climate change, developments like Ecomedia suggest that some of the discursive ice in the cultural sphere is beginning to break up. As troubles like drought, displacement, arable land, and extreme weather threaten to radically alter the human condition, it is becoming obvious that environmental issues must be addressed. Transnational Temps aims to stimulate discussion, break down stubborn boundaries, and develop new ways to share perceptions and act collectively.

Have you seen with your own eyes the emerging crisis of the environment? A new "coalition of the willing" is needed – an alliance of the millions of people who see beyond the myopic priorities of SUV marketing. Join scientists, artists, activists, and ecologists. Participate in this new platform and lend insight to the ongoing discussions. Have a look through the EcoScope!

TRANSNATIONAL TEMPS

FOR THE OCCUPATION OF SCIENTIFIC MODELS ON THE WEB!
"shared eco-cartography"

In 2004, the New York art group S.W.A.M.P. created the *Spore Project 1.1*, a work we consider very interesting as far as its allusion to the devastating effect which the world economy can have on the planet's natural resources. The idea is simple: the automated irrigation of a plant is directly connected to the stock market value of the company that sells it. If the company's financial activity is positive - growing - the plant gets watered; if the company loses value, the plant does not receive water. This ironic creation puts its finger on one of the biggest problems faced by humanity today: the incompatibility between the economic interests of world markets and the preservation of the plant. The imbalance between the use and renewal of natural resources must be visualised; both actions must be contemplated as inseparable parts of a single element. *Spore Project 1.1* gives us some interesting clues regarding the measures that are within our reach that we can take. The meeting between the use of communication technologies combined with environmental data and the representation of the flow of the world economy can help us to understand the arithmetic relationship between the parts and aid us in seeking a balance between them. We have to use the numerical technologies that help to visualise this type of complex relationship so that they help to increase our perception rather than decrease it, as sometimes happens. It is necessary to reconnect man to the (limited) natural resources of his survival space, the space inscribed within the limits of the Milky Way.

Most of humanity has nothing more than a superficial perception of the environment. As westerners, we must admit that we lack direct sensory experience, that we've lost all contact with fauna and flora and are moving farther away all the time from what we call nature. The very name "nature" conjures up a longing for that virgin space untouched by the human hand which is today practically non-existent, given the fact that for centuries man has continuously tried to dominate and remodel the environment, long viewed as a hostile place. Obviously, in the age of molecular contamination, it is tricky to talk about the "environment" since most of us have very

limited experience with the elements and ways of life, experience that is reduced to the information that is fed to us by the media, the vague generalist culture and the "superficial information" sources.

Paradoxically, technology and science can provide us with a subatomic and cosmic exploration of our environment. From nanocaptors to satellites, man's perceptive prostheses have never been so sophisticated. And despite this, we are still far from taking advantage of even part of the knowledge stored in the files of university theses, research projects or private laboratory databases. Why are we not in a position to use that knowledge and what role do scientists play in its dissemination? What format could the irradiation of knowledge take and what circuits of distribution could be used? Surely if we want to supervise the fair use of natural resources and ensure a proper balance, we must inevitably strengthen our physical and intellectual links to the environment.

Works such as the Diderot and d´Alembert encyclopaedia pursue not only a rational analysis of the environment but also the deployment of technology to pave the way toward the industrial age. Each cog, each tool, each procedure was described in the most minute detail to ensure the effective transmission of knowledge. Knowledge of the resources available during that age was the key to progress toward a better future. Today, the objects that characterise progress are opaque, incomprehensible and compiled under an impenetrable carcass; manufactured products and services are disassociated with the environment. We live in a world where products have apparently lost their connection to the raw materials, to the resources in their original state (and not only the products, but we ourselves….).
During the emergence of modernity, the encyclopaedias of the eighteenth century were notable for their desire to share knowledge without restriction, but today privatisation and the mercantilism of information have compartmentalised the world of knowledge. The Diderot and d´Alembert encyclopaedia excelled due to fusion of creativity and science in an attempt to transmit knowledge. It is that fusion which we need to recover.

Encyclopédie Diderot, genealogical distribution of science and art (detail, 1769)

At the end of the nineties we started to hear about transversal practices between Art-Science-Technology. Some experiences, such as the Cibervisión festival organised by MedialabMadrid under the direction of Karin Ohlenschlager and Luis Rico in 2002, tried to bring together in the same dialogue space the sphere of contemporary artistic practices and scientists with a markedly innovative slant to their proposals, both coming from domestic and international arenas. The virtue of this attempt at transversal dialogue lies in the fact that it rises above the habitual media image that reduces the artist to a "pseudo scentist" or the scientist to a "biocreator", a maker of manipulated living beings. Cibervisión was an exemplary project where we witnessed the renovating synergies that can be expected from this type of proposal. But this type of transversal concern does not often accompany the general trajectory of art, which insists on exploiting the image of the artist and which needs to satisfy market needs with the production of marketable works of art.

We need to recognise a new mode of transdisciplinary creation outside of the traditional art circuit and within the diffuse areas of hybrid artistic practices inherited from the social art of the sixties, Fluxus, Arte Póvera and continuing down to a sector of contemporary artists who, encouraged by the spirit of their predecessors, control telecommunications tools. Far from the model of the auratic artist, they are the groups that make up the *avant garde* of creation on the borders between art-science-technology-activism and ecology. What other role could these groups play than that of developing the tools that enable us to access and understand the knowledge that

belongs to all of us? The contemporary networked artistic practices that dominate telecommunications technologies are a platform of actions intended to open up this coveted transdisciplinariety to a very broad public.

FOR THE OCCUPATION OF SCIENTIFIC MODELS ON THE WEB!
In the midst of this convergence of art, communication technology and science, in 2001 Transnational Temps formulated the proposal of occupying the website that offers information on the status of the ozone layer in the south pole, data from the N.A.S.A. T.O.M. satellite which are openly available. The idea was to "inhabit" or to "sit in" on the graphical representations - data models - cohabitating on the interactive maps with other Internet users in order to debate the causes and measures and look for solutions.

WANT DATA INSTEAD?
Select from the dates below to go to the FTP site for that information.

| Spacecraft	Ozone	Aerosol	Erythemal UV	Reflectivity
Earth Probe	1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005	1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005	1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005	1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005
Meteor 3	1991 1992 1993 1994	**	**	1991 1992 1993 1994
Nimbus 7	1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993	1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993	1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993	1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993

Access to the databases of different NASA satellites.
http://toms.gsfc.nasa.gov

Numerous public databases containing the information sent by satellites and other types of information compilers form a *corpus* of data about our environment which is updated regularly. In the case of the T.O.M. satellite, the public data on the condition of the ozone layer enables us to model an updated graphic representation of the depression in the ozone layer in the south pole. The information is public (always has been) but the interpretation of the data is not easy for neophytes on the subject. A simple graphic interpretation of these data is a step in the right direction.
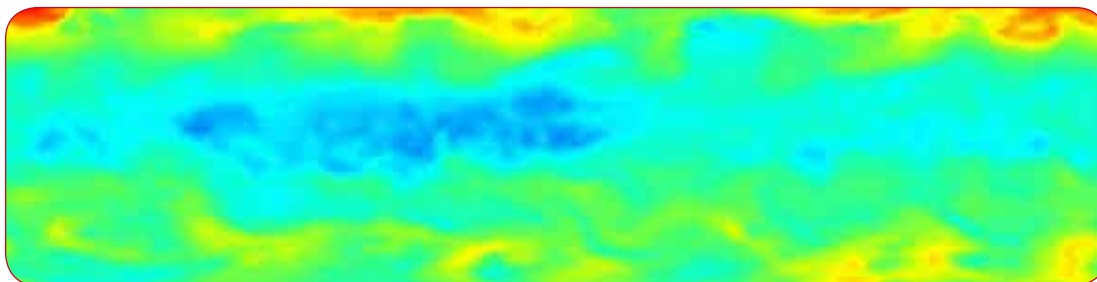
An example of modelling the ozone layer from FTP data.

We need to inhabit these data for various reasons. The first reason is because they are the context for the discussion we wish to open. The users position themselves on the problem which is the subject of the debate, in a space where neophytes and specialists converge, all on the same level, all on a democratic dialogue platform. Another advantage is the ability to convert these cartographic spaces into educational archives since there is a memory involved (one can review the discussions over a period of time). People interested in the subject can visit the links and read the information which others have provided in the past. A third aspect that reinforces the need to inhabit these new spaces is the unusual possibility of a community of Internet users massively and simultaneously occupying certain data that are worthy of public debate. In this regard, the proposal to occupy graphic interpretations, satellite images and other representations in the Internet space offers some very interesting possibilities. And let's not forget the time factor; not only can we occupy the two dimensions of a plane but we can also add time elements that enable us to include "phenomena" or processes. A meeting about the concentration of CO_2 that pollutes the air in the industrialised world's metropolises or on the dumping of millions of tons of toxic waste into the mouth of a river is to stand and demand, through the media, that more attention be paid to these sensitive issues.

We have agreed to refer to this type of on-line event as a "virtual sit-in" in reference to the massive encounters of groups in public spaces. This type of collective initiative should take form both in the public space and the numerical space, where it constitutes a new model of resistance favourable to the formation of organised networks of Internet users. These new networks could arise out of the confluence of different entries of public data on the permanent process of deterioration of our planet. The urgency of the matter is indisputable.

Example of a "discussion circle" on a satellite image of the mouth of the Mississippi. The interface can be situation on Google Earth or another specific application

We need to rethink the definition of numerical architecture and space to consolidate an ecological vision of virtual architecture built on real environmental data. Shared digital spaces should not be built - at least not exclusively - on empty metaphors (which are even inappropriate and inconsistent at times) that reproduce superfluous appearances and draw our attention away from the real state of affairs by falsifying our perception of the world (Sims, Second Life). Rather, it must be based on tangible and specific data such as global warming or molecular water pollution. The object is not to depress the population with alarming information but rather to build tools of understanding, analysis and intervention on questions that jeopardise the survival of species (including our own) and make us aware of the repercussions which our activities have on the earth that we are "consuming". We believe that the application of metaphors in the creation of shared digital interfaces is the cornerstone to the creative renovation of shared digital spaces. Today, technology allows us to inhabit

the representation of different contemporary models of universes or the graphic interpretation of phenomena or processes such as the progressive deforestation of the Amazon. Are these not good "places" to build virtuality?
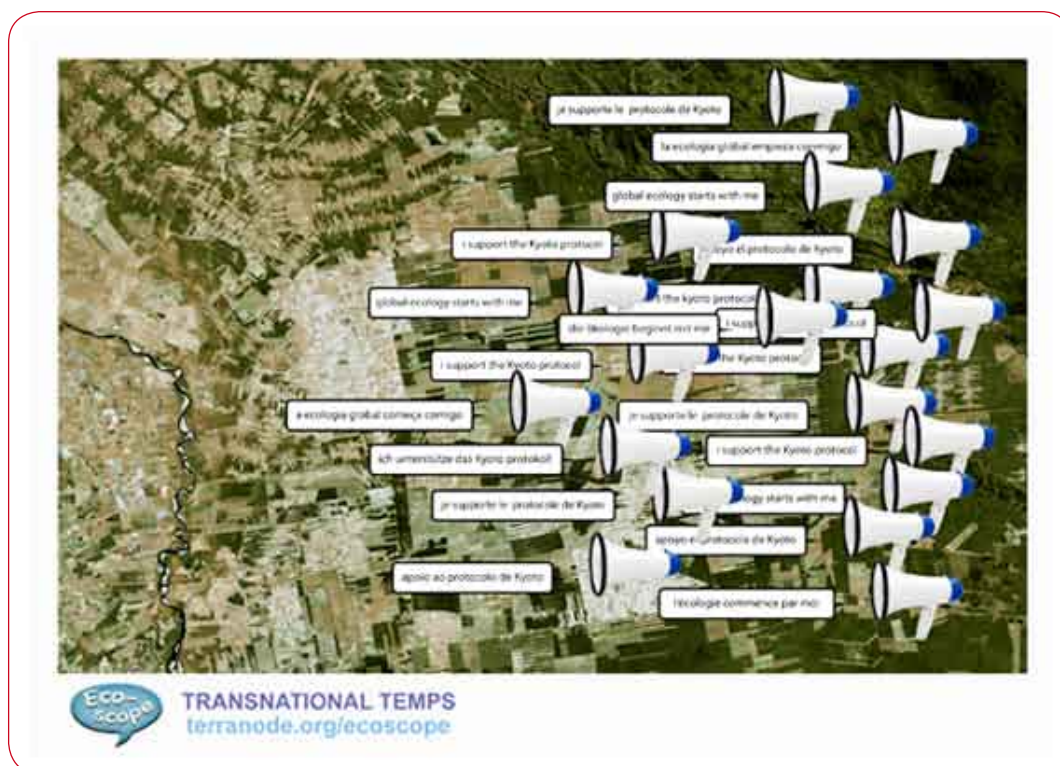
Example of a "sit-in" against the deforestation of the Amazon jungle. Ecoscope "Earth Art Software for the 21st Century"

Our most recent creation, Ecoscope, offers the possibility of Internet users taking control of this type of data for the first time. Ecoscope invites the scientific world to reflect on the reconfiguration of the protocols for communicating, transmitting and distributing knowledge. An understanding of the evolutionary mechanisms of the biosphere along with the integration of technological advances as tools to facilitate such an understanding and which bring us closer to the physical environment just may allow us to short-circuit the apparently inexorable process of deterioration of the natural environment and our relations with it.

Ecoscope Forum

At a time when the millions of Internet users from industrial countries are monopolising the emerging Web 2.0 telecommunication tools such as blogs, shared image and video servers, syndication tools, etc., it is crucial to develop a critical sense and an approach of intervention and social action by developing shared tools that contextualise the information on the subject of globalisation and the digital divide, the abyss that separates industrialised countries from poor countries enslaved by unscrupulous market economies. This attempt to keep the planet from sinking by occupying data, i.e., through our physical manifestation in the virtual representation of all that occurs, is a way of supporting, as citizens of the world, an initiative for change in favour of the preservation of biodiversity and a more intelligent and democratic use of the data and technologies within our reach.

FOR THE OCCUPATION OF SCIENTIFIC MODELS ON THE WEB!

ABOUT TRANSNATIONAL TEMPS
Transnational Temps is an arts collective concerned primarily with environmental sustainability. Using electronic media, aesthetic contexts, and events in the public sphere, Transnational Temps seeks public participation in addressing environmental issues. Founded in 2001 by Fred Adam, Andy Deck, and Verónica Perales, Transnational Temps has welcomed contributions from 'temp workers' on five continents. While each new collaboration has had a regional dimension, online media has been used extensively to invite participation and to project the activity of the collective across borders. Consequently, several Transnational Temps projects can be seen online.

With Terranode and Aquanode, Transnational Temps has sought out diverse opinions on climate conditions in an effort to represent the common sense views of the public. In both cases the recording and presentation of these opinions bridges public space with the global sphere of networked media. All the audio recordings gathered in various countries are now available via Internet streaming at Terranode Radio.

Two earlier works address pollution and extinction, respectively. Responding to the superabundant garbage that washes ashore on many beaches, Iconsfactory uses trashy icons to pollute the idyllic background imagery provided by popular operating systems.

Iconsfactory
siempre vuelven a la costa

NOVUS EXTINCTUS

iconsfactory.com   **artcontext.org/novus**

Novus Extinctus offers a critical look at the ideology of technical progress that pervaded the dot boom. It compares the scarcity of domain names with the growing abundance of taxonomic names falling into disuse because of extinction.

EcoScope is the product of years of dialogue and design by members of Transnational Temps, especially Fred Adam, Andy Deck and Verónica Perales. Andrea Parthemore contributed to production.   Alex Spyropoulos and Stewart Ziff contributed to discussions. Ecoscope production coordinated in 2007 by Andy Deck.

FEA Y REBELDE

Fran Ilich

One spring afternoon, like many others, I decided it was time to abandon Mexico City because not much could be done given the current political situation. In fact, most of my colleagues and interlocutors had either already left, taking their projects to smaller cities and towns, or they were living the typical "double life": working 8 hours at something they weren't interested in to earn some money for projects they do find of interest. But that's always seemed too high a price to pay and doesn't really make any sense to me. You only live once and if you do that, instead of getting twice as much out of life, you cut it in half. That's if we look at it realistically. If we take it a step further, one could say it is precisely that double life that makes certain liberties possible: the famous post-structuralist cracks where post-human cockroaches build their post-nuclear civilization. "Well, it makes perfect sense, Scully.**"** And then the days passed and I was just waiting for Shakira to come to the city before saying good-bye. And after her concert, a rumor spread through the streets of the city and through cyberspace: the Caribbean mega-diva was going to wrap up her 2-year "Oral Fixation Tour" at the Zócalo in Mexico City, the largest public square in the whole country, that is, in the public sphere. And that was it. I had to come up with a plan. I had two weeks until the day came and not even her official Web site confirmed the rumor. That's how things work in Mexico City, though, and it's very usual for that type of mass appeal performer to reach an agreement with the government to deduct taxes by offering a free concert at the end of their tour around the country.

Subcommander Marcos and the Zapatistas arrived at the Zócalo in 2001 and over 200,000 people were there, keeping them company. And less than a year ago, there were huge demonstrations about the presidential elections where two presidents were ratified: the official one and the legitimate one: Felipe Calderón Hinojosa and Andrés Manuel López Obrador. And now, it was time for Shakira, the girl who once and for all took Latin pop music to the hit parade on the World White Web. How many people could we expect? And I certainly was not going to miss the opportunity to see her again, especially performing on the city streets. So we cooked up a plan: if we were going to be there for two more weeks, we weren't going to waste them: we launched an old idea: Adry la Fea (a free version of Betty la Fea (*Ugly Betty*) where we would touch on a non-physical type of ugliness) and then, playing with the words, we thought that if the Mexican version was called Lety la Fea or La fea Mas

Bella, we'd call it la Fea más Rebelde (the most rebellious ugly woman), but then we thought there could also be another one called La Rebelde más Fea (the ugliest rebellious woman). And then we thought it would be better to do 2 soap operas that would be published on youtube and that at some point, the plot lines would intersect. The whole "Fea" (Ugly) series started in Colombia and reached U.S. television as "Ugly Betty", thanks to Mexican actress, Salma Hayek. The second one started in Argentina as "Rebelde's Way" and reached Mexico as RBD. It was then exported to many other countries, including Brazil and Spain. And well, if these are the stories of today's society, the myths of the globalized post-industrial culture we live in, then we thought responding and disseminating free versions through a network like Youtube would be appropriate. Firstly, because of everything people say about Web 2.0, that the user is the content, and corporations provide the infrastructure. And secondly, because we've never believed that the Internet was a free, democratic, horizontal medium but rather a corporative social space. And yet, we were interested in playing with popular figures and myths to try to establish a dialogue. Adry la Fea is an unsuccessful actress who never does well at auditions. Tired of watching all the other actresses succeed, she decides to take her revenge on the society that won't let her play her part. How? By murdering Shakira at the closing concert of her Oral Fixation tour. And Rebelde is the story of a journalist on free media on the Internet, an activist in the Zapatista National Liberation Army's "Other Campaign" who spends her life at demonstrations, meetings with her collective, conversations with her friends where she encourages them to move their cause and their struggle forward in their private lives. In the end, she comes to the conclusion that it wouldn't be a bad idea to contact Shakira at her concert in the Zócalo and have her show some support for the Zapatista people. That's where the two stories come together.

Up to that point, the story was published daily on Youtube's social space, using key words such as RBD REBELDE SALMA HAYEK ZAPATISTA UGLY BETTY FEA DULCE MARIA SHAKIRA, which helped the clips from the soap operas to link up to those uploaded by fans of the official soap operas. Meanwhile, the rumors kept growing that Shakira was going to give a free concert in the city, and afterward, a few people thought that the videos revealed the plans of a few "crazy women" who wanted to kill Sony Records' mega-diva. One of the ideas we worked with inside the production, that we found pretty interesting, was the option people have of freely mixing Sony's divas' music, or, in general, big hits by transnational recording labels. Remixing them because let's say that's a more up-to-date way of making covers. And we saw precisely in the act of generating an inter-textual fiction with people who

are not only "celebrities" but are also real, where they just do what they always do, unaware of everything going on around them.

Another point is that these free versions of Fea y Rebelde (which, if we go back further in time, are reinterpretations of fairy tales like the danish "The Ugly Duckling" are not parodies. They just use one of the words from the soap operas as a leit motif, given that we were interested in developing concepts from an idiomatic standpoint: using key words on Web 2.0. And yet, with all that, on the day that Televisa celebrated the 50th anniversary of soap operas, we received a message from Youtube informing us that our clips had been blocked because, according to Televisa, we had infringed their copyright. It was like finding yourself involved with Ministry of Truth, as if they owned the dictionary published by the Spanish Royal Academy of Language and concepts like Fea (Ugly) and Rebelde (Rebel) could be considered intellectual property in the brave new world of the Internet. Fortunately, we were soon contacted by a lawyer from the Electronic Frontier Foundation, who advised us on the case, and who ended up telling us it was better to desist because the best outcome would be if we won and could then reestablish our files on the Youtube system but the worst case scenario would be getting sued by several corporations. Not only had we used those words and themes, and even sampled a few seconds of the Rebelde soundtrack for non-profit purposes, but we had also filmed a few excerpts of Shakira's concert at the Zócalo in Mexico City. While we were not alone in doing so, and while the Zócalo is considered the largest plaza in the country (in all the Aztec grandiloquence, actually-- sometimes it's called the largest plaza in the Americas and compared to Moscow's Red Square), the fact was that the Government of the Federal District, headed by members of the Democratic Revolution Party (the electoral Left) had ceded the Zócalo to the entertainment company OCESA (Operadora de Centro de Espectáculos, S.A.) in some kind of commercial agreement and so they could also sue us. The only person who would not sue us, according to the Electronic Frontier Foundation, was Shakira. And curiously enough, so far, the only surviving episode of the 17 is the one that is exclusively about her, which also includes an incidental cameo out of focus where the zoom is as close as possible.

Since that time, we have received numerous proposals, some sent in good faith and others saying just about anything, for us to upload our videos onto other video services instead of Youtube. But as Mark Tribe so accurately noted, one of the things we considered important was to contrast the public and the private, the popular and

the corporative. Therefore, while we could have published our soap opera for Web 2.0 entirely on the independent cooperative server possibleworlds.org, it only made sense to do so as a site-specific intervention on Youtube: that leisure space where millions of people intersect each day, for the benefit of Google, Inc.'s investors.

Moral of the story: During Televisa's reign of terror, it was common knowledge that soap operas were the opiate of the Mexican people, that melodrama was used by the French to advance the causes of the Revolution by making common citizens into the main characters (see Victor Hugo and Les Miserables), and after the appearance of a second Mexican television company (TV Azteca), the contents of soap operas changed greatly: women no longer had to be self-sacrificing and even had a perfect right to take on younger lovers, which would have been unthinkable on Televisa: divorce (see Mirada de Mujer by Argos Producciones), and now with the arrival of the Internet, "anybody with a modem" (see fea y rebelde, possibleworlds.org) can make a soap opera and the genre is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in Mexico, we are celebrating it with censorship, lawsuits, and silence, in the grand tradition of Televisa (see monica mayer, el universal: http://www.el-universal.com.mx/columnas/67185.html).

MEMORYFRAMES

Silvia Laura Carli
Andrea Wolf Yadlin
www.memoryframes.org

memoryFrames is a visual file of intimate and recent memory created using home videos which are exchanged and adapted to four fictional stories to create the intimate and recent memory of each one.

It is a virtual staging of the memory-forming process built from the audio-visual registers we make in our daily lives. The formation of memory is like making a film: by joining frames, we create a film of our identity. Internet as the convergence space where the information is connected and reorganised enables this to be an open process, converting the user into the editor of the memories of four characters in conflict with one another for different reasons tied to their past.

> *"The present and the past coexist,*
> *but the past shouldn't be in flashback".*
> Alain Resnais

When we say who we are, we create a story of our lives. The construction of this story involves a selection and recounting process. We choose certain milestones from among an endless set of elements (selective memory) and we connect them through nexuses of causality. This operation is called narrating a story and when we narrate a story what we are trying to do is to make sense of the events. The selection is therefore intentional since we choose elements from the past to project them into the future (double movement in the story: retrospection and prospection).

By assuming this manner of constructing memory, we enter into the world of narrative knowledge where the story is representative and reconstructive: it represents what has been, reconstructing it with the help of a series of conventions, to bring back what is no longer.

Our approach is based on two assumptions:

- If we understand the construction of intimate memory as a narrative construction, we can recognise in this process the elements inherent to dramatic structure. Hence, these moments of narrative inflection correspond to stages which, except for the different contexts, are repeated in each one of the stories and are thus common to all of them.

- As a consequence of the long range of images, thanks to the media and particularly to the cinema, the visual representation devices associated with these systems not only influence/determine how we see the world but also how we position ourselves in it. The oral tradition as a vehicle for creating and transmitting memory gives way to an audio-visual code that conditions the construction of our memory.

NARRATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND STORY STRUCTURE

"A story is not, as one might intuitively think, a faithful image of a fragment of reality, but rather a sensory mechanism that our consciousness must manipulate from that slice of the world, enabling us to obtain certain effects of surprise, pleasure, enjoyment, recognition and finally realism. Stories are not things, they are not in the world; rather, they are constructed using narration"[1].

All stories are composed of a series of structural elements than can be found in different types of accounts. We can see the similarities in the different morphological studies conducted by different thinkers and theorists such as Aristotle, Propp, Levi Strauss, Greimas and Joseph Campbell, among others.

The narrative model used by Aristotle divides the plot into acts, where the first one corresponds to an initial exposition with the presentation of characters and contexts and ends with the first node of the plot which represents a twist in the story, the alteration of normality which leads to action. The second act corresponds to the development, to the actions taken by the main character to overcome the conflict announced at the end of the first act, with the appearance of a series of obstacles that must be overcome in order to achieve the objective. This act terminates with the climax which leads into the third act: the resolution of the story, when we find out whether or not the main character achieves his or her objective.

Algirdas Greimas bases his canonical narrative sequence on a general syntagmatic structure in which there are four fundamental stages: contract, competence,

performance and sanction. In the centre of each story there is a mission which must be carried out, an action that must be performed and an objective that must be met.

The contract presents a mandate in which someone establishes the task to be performed and the reward for doing so. That someone may be an external entity or the main character.

Competence is the moment when the main character acquires the knowledge and skills needed to achieve the objective. In this stage, secondary stories related to the learning process are developed.

Performance refers to the test. It is the moment of greatest tension in which the main character confronts the conflict which he/she must overcome in order to comply with the provisions of the contract.

 Sanction refers to the resolution of the story but is not automatic when the test is successfully completed, but rather when the one that has formulated the contract (the one that "orders" the mission) acknowledges fulfilment.

Joseph Campbell's proposal is based on the study of myth. In his work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell recognises in mythology and particularly in the mythological hero the underlying model in all of the stories which have been told to date. Christopher Vogler picks up on this idea in his book *The Writer's Journey*: "The model of the hero's journey is universal in scope; it occurs in all cultures and all ages. Its variations are as infinite as the human species itself, so in all cases the basic format remains unaltered"[2].

Beyond its infinite variations, the hero's story always involves some kind of journey: the hero leaves his home to embark upon a journey that will lead him into a new world full of challenges. The journey can be understood as a metaphor of the main character's growth.

In his approach to the narrative structure, Vogler draws a parallel with the organisational approach taken by Campbell in which each act is related to one of the stages of the hero's journey. The first act focuses on the departure, the separation. In this act we are introduced to the hero's world, the call to adventure, his rejection, the help of a mentor and the crossing of the first threshold. The second act refers to the

descent, initiation and penetration. Here the hero faces different tests, meets allies and enemies, reaches the depths of the strange world he has entered and faces the most important challenge that must be overcome in order to earn his reward. The third act focuses on the hero's return, the journey home and his resurrection as a demonstration of the changes which the hero has undergone on his journey.

All of these analyses share certain elements in the organisation of the dramatic development, incorporating different stages that demonstrate the hero's transformation. Based on the different semiotic theories on narrative structure, one can reach the conclusion that at the deepest level the different accounts share a common base, while they become more divergent at more superficial levels, varying according to the different contexts out of which they emerge. Aware of the variability of the different contexts, we have situated our project in a western culture setting with similar habits, customs and aesthetics which enables us to play with the concept of interchangeable memories.

These studies have also served as a source for organising one of the first selections to enable the interchange of the memories that completed the story lines of the short films (see production process, chapter on materials, memories)

THE FUNCTION OF MEMORY AND AUDIO-VISUAL CODING

> *"I wonder how people remember things*
> *who don't film, don't photograph, don't tape".*
> Sans Soleil, Chris Marker

An initial definition of memory could be one which describes it as the power that enables human being to retain past experiences. We store information, but to think of memory merely as a container is insufficient. Memory is not only the opposite of forgetting. It would be a simplification to reduce it to a mere method for retaining data, events, people. Memory as text implies creation; it is a means of knowing and situating ourselves in the world. We process these data, connect them and write a story. If we accept the fact that writing conditions our way of thinking, we recognise the method as a way of organising and structuring information (it is important to clarify that when we talk about writing we are not limiting ourselves to a linear narration. We are more interested in the relational activity, the ability to connect the parts in pursuit of a larger construction). These data are obtained through the

senses: we listen, smell, touch and *see*. We then reconstruct the experience based on smells, sounds, sensations and *images*.

History has evolved into the triumph of images. Seeing is believing, seeing is knowing. Visual representation has become an infallible means of owning the world. Hence the image – whether fixed or moving – rises up as the quintessential code for bringing past experiences into the present. Man's attempt to capture time in an image, from the earliest advances in painting in search of realism, to photography, to cinema as the maximum representation of reality[3] has caused the object represented and its representation to fuse, to be confused. So it is that when we are faced with the image of an event, we feel as though we are seeing the event. Absolute trust in the technique is what generates this dissolvence, which overlooks the concept of *aura* described by Walter Benjamin and which refers to the here and now, "a very special intermingling of space and time: the appearance of something far away, despite how close it may be"[4]. This is destroyed by reproduction techniques.

In the age of visibility, we live in a world that has swallowed its double. Plunged into this overpopulated iconic fauna, not only do images determine our present life but also our memories. The notion of the operation of memory as a mechanisms that transcends the distance of time added to the value of the image as a fundamental instrument in this process leads us to the idea that the past is accessible through images. Images produce, or at least create the illusion of producing, a situation in which the past and the present co-exist. We then decide to collect the portrait of everything we wish to remember or do not wish to forget. Images are thus converted into our memory.

Consequently, the audio-visual codes are transferred to the construction of our memories: fixed images, moving images, slow motion, jumpcuts, loops, distant audio of the vacuum of the perishability of the here and now – actually the "there" and "then" – displaced, replaced by one or one thousand photograms. The media and the massification of audio-visual recording technologies, from super8 cameras to mobile phone video cameras, enable this language to become increasingly imbedded in our everyday lives in the most natural way.

In conclusion, there are three elements. The event itself, with its ephemeral nature

and its death while it happens as something unrepeatable. The image of that event: a photo, a film, an external entity arising out of the event but which becomes independent in a new state of autonomy, converted into a new element with its own value that seeks the non-perishability of the perishable (the event). Memory as a personal text which each one of us writes with certain codes and syntax. Hence, if memory as writing consists of rebuilding our experiences, it is impossible not to recognise the weight of the images and its codes in this process. We create our own film of our own lives.

NEW CONSTRUCTIONS OF FEELING

"I will have spent my life trying to understand the function of remembering, which is not the opposite of forgetting, but rather its lining.
We do not remember, we rewrite memory much as history is rewritten".
Sans Soleil, Chris Marker

The idea of constructing memory as a selective, relational and narrative process whose visual code is fundamental leads us to think about the different audio-visual forms that operate in this way and we find that found footage and the cinematic essay are the closest references to our project. The recycling of materials and the collage are two of the basic elements in the conception of our idea. While the former offers an interesting and extensive database, in the latter we find an interesting style of writing as the collage allows the creation of new semantic texts by combining its parts, while at the same time exemplifying its representative nature.

Much of post-modern cinema has been preoccupied with the problem of representation. The Second World War highlight the insufficiency of the image as a historical document and memory appears as a recurring theme. It is within this context that the cinematic essays of Alain Resnais and Chris Marker emerge. In both case, the subject of memory is recurrent: the questioning of the relationship between history and memory and image. Both Goddard and Marker view history as a discourse that can be traced in the history of images.

In a found footage film, we are taught to look dialectically. We are not simply shown a vision of the world but rather the images of it. File footage emblematises images

and allows the discourse to be changed. Through editing, new texts are created by joining and juxtaposing images and audio to generate new sensory relations.

Not only do we consider this to be pertinent to the development of our project above and beyond a visual reference, but it is also pertinent to our approach to understanding the interaction as new creations of feelings and meanings. This consideration involves the following points:

- Recognising the figure of the reader/recipient as an active part of the production process, the part which completes the process. Soviet filmmakers in the twenties created a syntax through visual montage which gave way to reflection and new writing. For example, «Man with a Movie Camera» by Dziga Vertov (1929) operates on diverse discursive levels through a montage which appeals to the viewer to end the work. The view is the one that gives it meaning.

- Investment in the hermeneutic arrow of interpretation: Now it is not only the subject that interprets the image, but the image also interprets the subject and from this point the receiver operates. We are inside the image, inside the speculative world. Man and image are no longer separate; they overlap.

- Recognition of a certain hypocrisy in the interactiveness because the artist continues to be the author and does not really give the rest the chance to become the real co-authors of the work. We believe that this can be inverted when the receptor is recognised as part of the productive process. In our project, this participation consists of the receptor closing the connections between the character in the story and the memories that appear; it is clearly understood that it is the receptor who creates the story from his own experience and context (Barthes' idea of the floating meaning: meaning that can be filled in with different meanings based on the context of the one interpreting it).

- «When we use the concept of «interactive media» exclusively with regard to computer-based media, we run the risk of interpreting «interaction» literally, equating it with the physical interaction between the user and a media object (pressing a button, choosing a links or moving the body) while overlooking the psychological interaction. But the psychological processes of filling in what is missing, of forming hypotheses, of remembering and identifying that we need to understand any type of text or image are erroneously identified with a structure of interactive links with an

objective existence».[5]

According to this way of understanding interaction, perhaps we could do without the user's first actions in our project. However, we have included them in order to set the stage, to demonstrate that memories enter into shorts in a semi-hazardous way without there being any preconceived relationship with the history beforehand. At the same time, and in keeping with this line of thinking, we did not want the user's actions to have a totally explicit relationship to the final results. We also considered the possibility of leaving a second moment of interaction open to enable the user to contribute his own materials to load his own home videos which would become part of the archive of memories. To the extent that the user chooses which videos to upload, he is managing this selection and choosing part of the material for the work. This idea is further reinforced by our view of the project as one big collective memory and therefore we wanted it to be in constant expression.

Internet is the ideal medium for staging the operation of memory thanks to its open and relational nature, which appears like an analogy of the synaptic operator. Furthermore, Internet makes it possible to create a dynamic work, where the final video can only be completed with the participation of the user. The different parts only take on meaning and work synergistically as a result of the user's choices. Moreover, the short film only makes sense when the user gives it meaning. The user is the one who closes the connections between the character in the story and the memories that appear; he is the one who creates the story from his own experience and context. It is here that the idea materialises that our memories or their registers are interchangeable. They are common. By identifying them, having lived through similar experiences and by sharing the same language to build the account, the registers of our lives and the lives of others are similar, recognisable and ultimately interchangeable. It is not only we who interpret the images; rather, the images interpret and question us.

Furthermore, while the spectral nature of the cinematographic image poses problems in terms of its materialness, which resides at least in its photographic encryption in the film, in this case there is no specific finished product. The finished product is generated dynamically as a result of the user's interaction/participation. The final video does not reside anywhere but is potentially present everywhere.

In order to build the virtual set of memory we needed the memories («memories»/ archive material, a device for putting them in context (shorts) and certain elements that would enable us to categorise them (memory clips).

MEMORIES / FILE MATERIAL:

> As *San Soleil tells us*: «*I remember that month of January in Tokyo or rather I remember the images that I filmed of the month of January in Tokyo. They've replaced my memory. They are my memory*».

We wanted to create a memory file understanding it in this sense: the image converted into memory and we've called it "memories".

This file is composed of a collection of home videos from the fifties up to the present in various formats: 8mm, super8, vhs, high8 and minidv, the image technology corresponding to the age when the image was recorded. We have collected more than twenty hours of material, creating a big collective memory of intimate and recent history. The general contents are situations which are easy for us to relate to: birthdays, weddings, trips, family reunions, day to day happenings … Moments that are repeated throughout the ages with different faces and fashions. Their function is therefore to represent the visuality of the language of construction and transmission of memory as a code that is recognised and accepted by all as common symbols with which it is possible to construct a new way of writing our identity.

We have built the file using material from different sources, including our own home videos, super8 videos purchases at Los Encants and materials provided by friends and acquaintances, establishing a word-of-mouth network asking for these types of images. The 8mm and super8 films were more difficult to work with due to the different media support. The solution was to project the material and record the projection with a DVcam camera. The other formats were easier to work with. The procedure was to collect the different formats from the computer. The material was classified and organised according to the source.

Above and beyond the technical procedure, we do not view this process as merely an exercise in gathering material but rather as a way for others to participate in the

project, a means of including them in part of its visual content, either as actors (in those cases where they appear in the videos) or producers (in those cases where they have filmed the material). In a way, it is as though we were all responsible for part of the aesthetics of the project since the aesthetic of the project is that of the home movie. At the same time, we are recycling material that was not directly intended for this and in doing so we are appropriating it and reinterpreting it while maintaining its evocative meaning and its original function: to remember.

When gathering this material together, we observed the existence of a knowledge of audio-visual resources, an awareness of the different shots, the use of zooms, panning. It is even possible to see the dramatic intent in the use of these resources. This confirms the construction of a common and specific language inherent to the home video, a language that has been constructed unconsciously and that has been established, a language that obviously responds to and arises out of the influence of cinema and the media and that is representative of another phenomenon which is the incorporation of the audio-visual code into daily life, generating a new alphabet: that of the image.

SHORTS:

Four fictional stories, four characters. We witness a moment in their lives. They are simple stories about daily life, routine, but also about memory. A girl who finds a postcard when she gets home from work at the end of the day. We do not know the exact contents but we understand that someone is coming to visit. A boy who receives a telephone call in the morning. All we hear is that he is to go and pick up someone's things. It's an uncomfortable situation and the mobile is ringing constantly, upsetting what would otherwise be a normal workday. A train ride, an older man going to be reunited with part of his history. A radio announcer reading the daily news: the advances in studies on the formation of memory; the transmission runs through the city, among the people, each one of them a memory warehouse within the great database of collective memory simulate the network of neuronal circuits characteristics of synapses.

Each history functions as a unit but also as a part of the whole, since there is a spatial continuity between them at certain times marked by the subtle intersections of the characters. In each short, the main character of another story appears on a second - almost third - level. They are parallel stories or stories that run into one another, revealing themselves like the pieces of a puzzle that can be put together in different ways. Each short is shown separately. In each experience, the user has the

option of choosing one of the four so that at first he will not recognise the connection easily. However, if he chooses the others later, he will see the relationships between them and will be able to put the puzzle together the way it makes the most sense to him. The only invariable is that the main unifying element of all of the stories is memory.

MEMORIES:

Before the empire of the image, the empire of the word reigned. The oral tradition has always been the primary means of transmitting knowledge and the vehicle for keeping the memory of past experiences alive.

Perhaps not being quite as aware of this as we should, at one point in the process we decided to collect stories of the memories of different people to include them in our project. With this idea in mind, we began to contact our friends and acquaintances. We asked them to "describe any memory you'd like to share with us". Listening to the different experiences of the different people, and seeing the way they described them, we observed that each one told stories about their lives. This enabled us to establish a framework within which to begin to contextualise and catalogue the file material we had gathered.

While we were aware of the particularity of each experience, our intention was to remove the ownership of the memory by a specific subject, to a certain extent, going back to the idea that more than the specificity of the anecdote we all share similar episodes in our lives. We chose an aesthetic that did not focus entirely on the individual personality. The intention was rather to denature the faces, converting them into anonymous faces, into a multitude of eyes, mouths and skin. To do so we built a set with a black background and used lighting that created a marked chiaroscuro effect, with part of the faces in semidarkness, with close ups and detail shots.
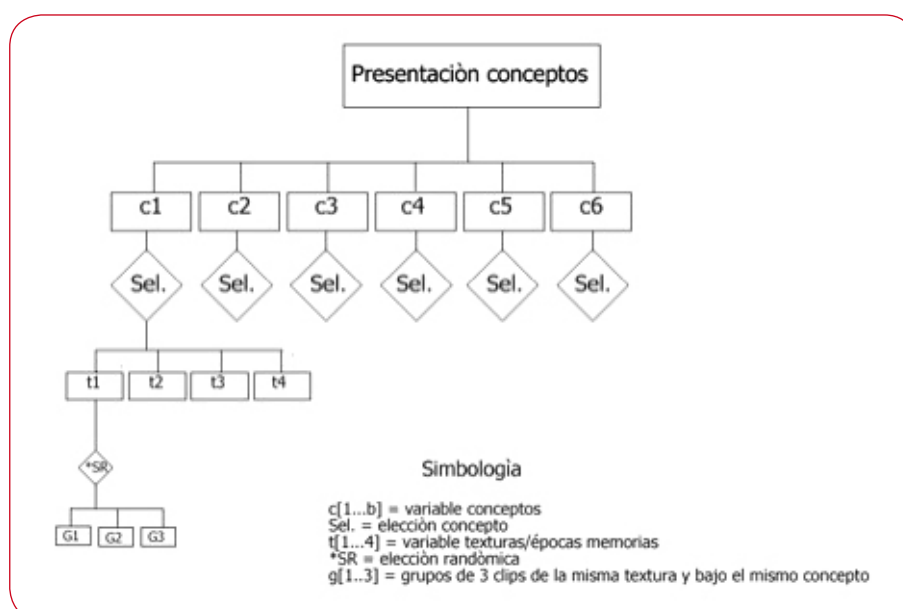
This experience confirmed the conceptual approaches we had been developing regarding the construction of memory and specifically regarding the influence of

narrative structures on the way we create an identity for ourselves in the world. We realised that there were common elements to the different accounts that we could relate to the different stages of the narrative structure, to the hero's journey.

On the basis of these common elements, we established the following classification:

CONCEPT	CORRESPONDENCE WITH ELEMENTS OF THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE	TYPES OF MEMORIES
Me in the world	First act (the ordinary world): presentation of the character is hi context; how and where he is situated in the world.	- Memories that refer to sensorial experiences that act as a references for his position in the world. - Memories that recount a new or strange situation which reaffirm or question his situation in the world.
Ariadne's thread	This element refers to the existence of close ties to certain people who accompany the main character/here during his journey, either as effective allies or as the reason why he pushes forward to overcome the test. The principal theme here is love in all of its forms.	- Memories of the family, particularly of a particular family member with whom he has a very close relationship. The memories involved unconditional love and protection. - Memories of romantic love.
Innocence	Corresponds to the initial state or starting point of the hero, who experiences a transformation at the end of his journey.	- Memories of childhood that reflect an innocent view of the world.
The game	Taking as a reference the theory of Margaret Mead on play as the time when a child begins to create his identity in the world by relating to others, this corresponds to the call to adventure and the crossing of the first threshold. This is the time when the hero leaves his circle and the change begins to take place.	- Memories of childhood and playing games with other children; childish pranks. - Memories of adolescence and first important experiences.

Growth/Test	The time when the hero acquires the knowledge and skills he needs to achieve his objectives. Initiation. Here the hero is confronted with different tests, reaching the depths of the strange new world he has enters, facing different obstacles as they arise. The moment of greatest tension in which the hero deals with conflict; passing the test means he is transformed into a hero.	- Memories of difficult situations. Memories of strange experiences that have confirmed the hostilities in the world. - Memories that talk about times when the teller has had to use his skills to overcome a difficult situation.

Presentación conceptos

Simbología

c[1...b] = variable conceptos
Sel. = elección concepto
t[1...4] = variable texturas/épocas memorias
*SR = elección randòmica
g[1..3] = grupos de 3 clips de la misma textura y bajo el mismo concepto

Loss/disappointment	Difficult moments that sometimes involve a sacrifice or a betrayal and which will affect the hero's actions from then on.	- Memories that talk about the loss of a loved one, either through death or betrayal.

This classification will translate in the concept variable in the programming when structuring the project.

The 25 clips resulting from this stage represent the oral account as a language for constructing and transmitting memory and serve as a means of introducing the user

to a context of reflection on memory in the first interface.

FLOW CHART

Presentación conceptos	Presentation of concepts
Simbología	Symbols
Variable conceptos	Concept variable
Elección concepto	Choice of concept
Variable texturas / épocas memorias	Texture/period variable
Elección randómica	Random selection
Grupos de 3 clips de la misma textura y bajo el mismo concepto	Groups of 3 clips with the same texture and same concept

The choice of the concept variable provides access to the texture variable contained
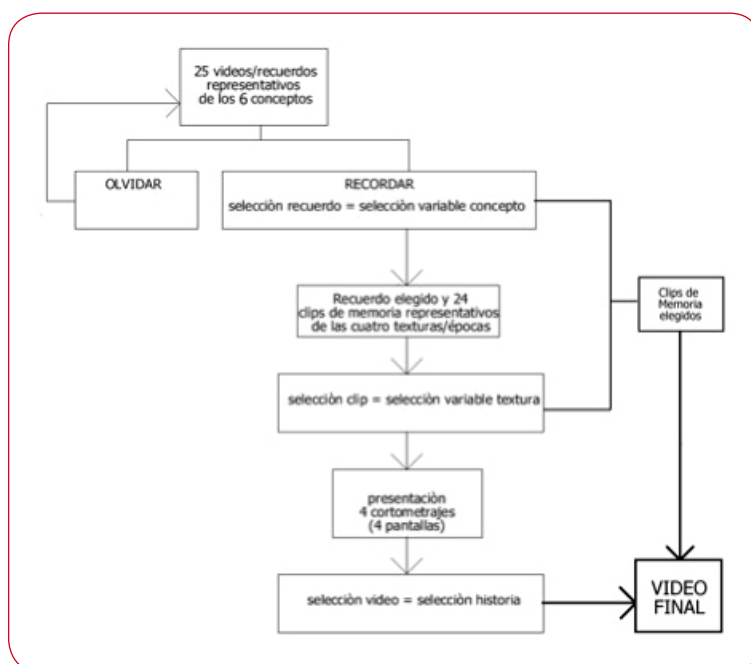
in each concept and which has four possibilities. A combination of these choices results in a group The combination of these choices results in a group of three clips which are the memories that will be included in the shorts (or more, which will therefore be selected randomly).

The final equation is c+t => (c+t)_clip1, (c+t)_clip2, (c+t)_clip3

This is interwoven with the chosen history, which is divided into four modules. For example: h1_1, h1_2, h1_3, h1_4

The final result would then be:

h1_1 + (c+t)_clip1 + h1_2 + (c+t)_clip2 + h1_3 + (c+t)_clip3 + h1_4

There is a function for recording the length of each clip. When that length is exceeded it goes on to the next clip.

INTERACTION DIAGRAM

25 videos/recuerdos representativos de los 6 conceptos	25 videos/memories representing the 6 concepts
Olvidar	Forget
Recordar Selección recuerdo = selección variable concepto	Remember Memory selection = concept variable selection
Recuerdo elegido y 24 clips de memoria representativos de las cuatros texturas/ épocas	Chosen memory and 24 memory clips representing the four textures/periods
Clips de memoria elegidos	Chosen memory clips
Selección clip = selección variable textura	Clip selection = texture variable selection
Presentación 4 cortometrajes (4 pantallas)	Presentation 4 shorts (4 screens)
Selección video = selección historia	Video selection = story selection
Video final	Final video

NOTES

1 Volli, Ugo, *Manuale di semiótica*, Editori Laterza, Roma, 2000, p. 96.

2 Vogler, Christopher, *The writer's journey*, Ediciones Robinbook, Barcelona, 2002, p.42

3 "Compared with imitation, the technical reproduction of the work of art is something new that has been intermittently popular throughout history, at long intervals but with growing intensity". When reviewing this process, Benjamin highlights wood carving, lithography and photography, which ultimately leads to cinema, as the milestones. "With it (photography), the hand was relieved of the principal artistic obligations in the image reproduction process, which then fell exclusively on the eye". Benjamin, Walter, *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*,

Editorial Itaca, México D.F, 2003, p.39-40.

Lev Manovich takes a similar look at the development of the techniques for the creation of images in motion up to the invention of cinema. "…cinema was understood from the time its creation as the art of the moving image, that which finally managed to create a convincing illusion of dynamic reality. If we approach cinema this way (…) we can see how it replaced previous techniques for the creation and presentation of moving images". Manovich, Lev, *Language of the new media*, Editorial Paidós, Barcelona, 2005, p.369

4 Benjamin, Walter, *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction,* Editorial Itaca, México D.F, 2003, p.47
5 Manovich, Lev, *Language of the new media*, Editorial Paidós, Barcelona, 2005, p.369

IMAGINARIO.CC: COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION AND DECENTRALIZED PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Research project "Urbanohumano"

Domenico Di Siena

www.urbanohumano.org

www.imaginario.cc
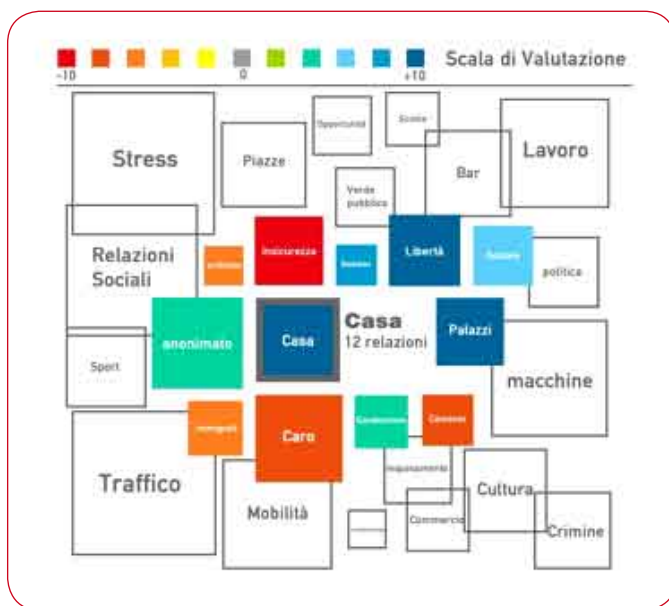
URBANOHUMANO

Urbanohumano is a project that was created in 2004 by cyber-architect Domenico Di Siena.

It started as a Final Project during the degree course at the School of Architecture at the University of Rome "La Sapienza" and has continued to develop in Madrid in association with his current doctoral studies in Urban Planning at the Universidad Politécnica. At present, Urbanohumano is working on research projects developed jointly with these collectives:

Meipi, Algomas, Laboratorio Urbano, Basurama, and the architectural firm [ecosystem urbano]. The purpose is the research and development of innovative tools that can be used in urban participation processes. These experiences aim to serve as a precedent to enhance citizen participation, as far as structure and transparency, and awareness among politicians and citizens alike, in respect of the collective experience of the city.

1. CONSUME, PRODUCE, PARTICIPATE

In our society, information society, professions as traditionally defined are changing. They are mixing together and the differences between daily life, work, and leisure time are increasingly blurred.

This process entails many negative consequences but also some positive ones, most notably, the transformation of the individual into an act. No longer simply consumers, people have become "*prosumers*"[1] (consumers who are also producers). In many fields, professional exclusivity is diminishing, allowing "access" to new "amateurs" who, thanks to new technologies, can be almost as informed and productive as professionals.

Of interest in this process is the opening of systems and worlds that were formerly completely closed and often anything but transparent. The new possibilities available to users make individuals more likely to take part and collaborate, given that they are better informed and able to understand the dynamics of the processes they are being called to take part in. If we apply these dynamics to land management, we could probably enhance citizen participation in processes formerly managed exclusively by specialists and professionals.

To explain this phenomenon, Chris Anderson's concept of the "long tail" (fig. 1) serves as a reference. Anderson explains that the Internet and the digital environment have changed the laws of distribution and the laws of the market. The reduced costs of storage and distribution made possible by new technologies mean that it is no longer necessary to focus business on just a few successful products. It must be realized that there are now two markets: one is based on the high performance of a few products. The other, which is new and still unfamiliar, is based on the sum or the accumulation of small sales of many products, which may be equal
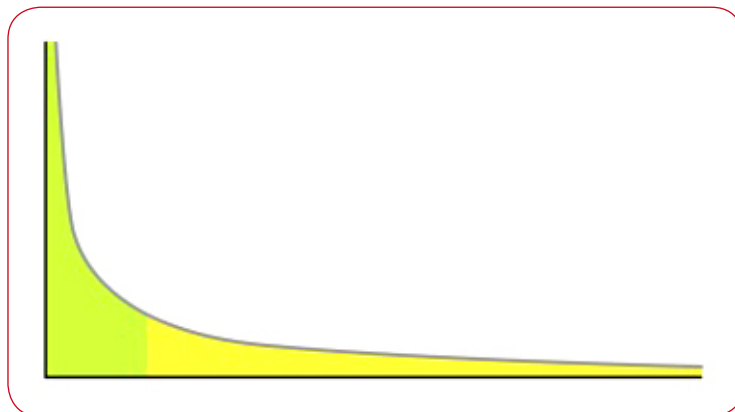
The "long tail"

to or higher than the first market. These are the old *mass market* and the new *market of niches*, represented by the head and tail of the well-known statistical distribution chart.

1.1 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: A SPONTANEOUS OR AN INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS?
Complex processes involving diverse factors and agents form part of the hard-to-define concept of citizen participation. After examining these processes in depth, I have perceived a widespread feeling which tends to consider participation as a purely spontaneous process. This is a very Mediterranean outlook. In northern Europe, citizen participation is fairly common and institutionalized. Those countries' legal and political systems favour those kinds of processes, which is not true of Mediterranean countries.

I am convinced that institutionalized participation can exist, and if it is more structured and transparent, it can be a useful tool for land use planning. Participatory processes often become (or are born as) processes protesting something and can fall into dynamics that exclude those who see things differently. This is another reason why I believe in an institutional process, which includes a broader range of views; where participation offers planners the opportunity to connect with reality and facilitate the application stage.

In the case of an institutionalized process, the problem arises of defining a very precise methodology which allows more maximum transparency and is capable of including everyone's opinions. In my opinion, the definition of this dynamic also

includes the definition and therefore the development of new tools.

Citizen participation always involves many difficulties, and yet, it is worth investigating and experimenting with systems and methodologies that foster it from an institutional standpoint. In this text, I will present a series of reflections to analyze the use of new technologies associated with the search for new forms of citizen participation.

1.2 A HORIZONTAL SYSTEM

In a hierarchical system, everything has to go through a long, rigid selection process. In a horizontal model, the selection process is much faster and able to process much more data. It differs from a hierarchical or pyramid system in that it is necessary to share information instead of protecting it. In the former, a person's prestige is measured by the quality and quantity of information they can offer, whereas in the latter, a person's prestige (and power) are measured by their capacity to gain access to varying degrees of privileged information. In a hierarchical system, there is no doubt that all its components at every level are concerned with hiding information, because that is how they can keep their own power or privilege whereas in a horizontal system, people's real abilities are valued, so the most important thing for any individual is demonstrating them by sharing as much information as possible.

2. SELF-ORGANIZATION

In our times, the difference between daily life, work and leisure time is increasingly blurred and as a result, we find ourselves with multi-functional spaces with the need for management in real time. When these spaces are public, probably the best type of management is participatory. New communication technologies already make it possible to collaborate and organize the management of common (public) goods in new ways. There are self-organization phenomena, described for example by Kevin Nelly in *Out of Control* (1994) and by Howard Rheingold in *Smart Mobs* (2002), as well as the *Open Source* movement's dissemination of development and collaboration methods.

Today the entire territory has an enormous amount of information at

its disposal (GIS, aerial photographs, etc.), which are updated very quickly, enhancing the development of new tools which bring us closer to management and planning in real time. Gradually, the self-organization capacities of informed societies are being discovered. They are capable of causing a revolution in the structures, making use of the phenomenon of the virtual mirror. That makes it possible to associate information about the state of a situation with individual decisions.

2.1 APPROPRIATION AND EXCHANGE

In the 1960s, *Team X (or Team 10)* associated the concepts of relations, links, exchange, randomness, indetermination, openness, contact, connection and also the aesthetics of connection to architecture and urban planning. In sum, they spoke for the first time of flows instead of architectonic forms with more of an interest in how an object related to its surroundings than the object itself. The city changes in response to the daily requests as registered. We find the idea that citizen's actions in real time with regard to the city allow for a very personal, direct appropriation of one's own surroundings.

Dennis Crompton (from the Archigram group) was the author of the project *Computer City* (1964), in which the computer is not only a tool for monitoring and management, but also a device that allows for listening, reception, and exchange between residents and the city.

2.2 SMART MOBS: COLLABORATIVE DYNAMICS

"*Smart Mobs*" are made up of people who are able to act as a group when they have never met. People who comprise *Smart Mobs* are collaborating in a new way under circumstances where collective action was not possible previously, thanks to the use of new communication tools and data processing. In these dynamics, the use of an assessment system by participants has been shown to be essential, as well as one of voluntary or automatic reputation that assure the quality of the contents and participants' trust. There are many examples of this type, especially on the Internet. Probably the most emblematic examples are Ebay (www.ebay.com) and Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org).

Participation with information science tools is not based on a model where

the plurality and organization of the communities that have been constituted are used for maximum advantage. This type of participation is not collective in nature; its dynamics are based on individual action and interaction.

Melvin Webber addresses this subject in his book _The Urban Place and the Nonplace Urban Realm_ (1964), where he states that interaction is the essence of a city and life in a city, not the place itself.

2.3 *OPEN SOURCE*: VOLUNTARY SHARING AND COLLABORATION

Initially the *Open Source* (OS) movement was seen as a passing, ephemeral phenomenon, especially due its economic absurdity and the lack of formal guarantees. However, it has been surprisingly successful. The *Open Source* programmes have turned out to be better and longer lasting. It is important to consider the OS phenomenon as more than a simple decentralization or distribution of decisions. The system includes the figure of the «integrator», the person who coordinates new versions, approving or rejecting the inclusion of new parts of the code. It must be specified that this coordination post with no type of obligations possible. The surprise is that OS software development turns out to be more reliable, more durable, and faster.

2.4 *OPEN SOURCE* DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY APPLIED TO THE URBAN PROJECT

The *Open Source* development model offers three advantages when it is used for developing an urban project: 1) it avoids arbitrary exclusions; the project's development gives a true picture of needs and uses; 2) it is fast and evolves, making good use of the dynamism of its community; 3) it is durable: as long as the project is pertinent, its evolution and adaptation are assured.

Open Source shares the principles of agglomeration economics and networks with cities. OS appears where the common good is superior to the sum of private interests. Cities appear when their infrastructures and public facilities and services benefit the community in such a way that it is in their interest to assume high costs. At the same time, the development of urban agglomerations is in large part the result of spontaneous actions and communities' dynamism, without which no institution would be able to

centralize decision-making power.

This dynamic would make it possible to free the distribution of public services and goods, at least in part, from political decisions which are so slow and rarely coherent that they manage to harm certain urban areas.

If we also take into account problems with corruption, we understand why the possibility of involving communities directly in developing their surroundings is worth very thorough research and experimentation.

3. DECENTRALIZATION OF CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

Networks mean we are faced with a new kind of control: a decentralized control exercised by a plurality of independent individuals who collaborate using shared, mobile capacities for calculation and communication.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are not the solution but rather an opportunity to improve our management of a given territory. They can be used for completely different and even contrary purposes. We can make us of their huge data processing capacity to centralize all the information and try to "solve" urban complexity. We can also use them to open up and decentralize decision-making.

Research is needed on how ICTs help to define an urban management structure where discontinuous control centres co-exist in an environment of self-determination (appropriation) and freedom. This idea is quite close to the definition of the concept *tensegrity* by Buckminster Fuller: islands of compression in an ocean of tension.

3.1 CONSCIOUS, INTENTIONAL CONTROL

The presence of a centralized entity is not necessary when monitoring and feedback devices allow those taking action to visualize or become aware of the consequences of their actions.

With the exponential increase in data calculation, communication, and

remote reception, traditional centralized control has undergone a tremendous change. The appearance of the Internet allowed a new kind of control to appear in the 1990s: decentralized or distributed control. The phenomenon of unconscious self-organization turns into conscious, intentional control when individuals are allowed to understand the effects of their behaviour. Here is where the concept of *tensegrity* arises: it refers to a management model where decentralized decisions join the centralized ones, avoiding a completely centralized, omnipotent control dynamic.

3.2 TOWARDS A TENSEGRITY OF CONTROL

Within information society, two types of control are being defined: one centralizes data and decision-making and always has a more thorough knowledge of urban and social development phenomena; the second distributes them and concedes individuals the same level of information and decision-making power as institutions or multi-nationals.

By converting the supremacy of centralization over individual decisions, citizens become aware of their actions and thus can coordinate them in an intentional manner.

This process can serve to return the necessary legitimacy and credibility to interventions made in the management of urban areas.

The use of computers has recently been a tool for expanding automated scientific control for the management of urban complexity. With these experiments, computers are used to structure an information system that establishes a direct relationship between technical specialists and users (citizens).

3.3 HUMAN-MACHINE INTERFACE (PROJECT AS INTERFACE)

Human-machine interfaces developed using geographic information systems are the expression of an attempt to ensure common interests and a new way of thinking about the project, as an information device for those active in it to organize urban development.

These tools allow groups of people to build new types of common goods, become aware of their actions, and collaborate.

4. COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION: IMAGINARIO.CC

Imaginario is a Web platform that synthesizes, via a dynamic scheme, a community's collective imagination. It is mainly of interest due to its capacity for gathering and summarizing all the information contributed by each user, producing an intuitive graphic visualization of that information.

The set of words and assessments contributed by users define a synthetic and collective vision of a given subject which can be understood as the collective imagination of the community to which the users belong.

The corresponding graphic representation (fig.1) reflects the arguments most frequently made by participants. Each word is represented in a box of a size
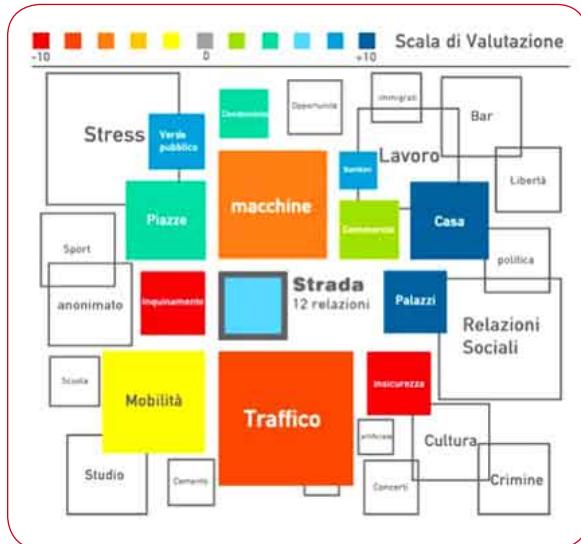
Visualization graphic outcome (in italian)

proportional to the number of times it was used and a colour defining its positive or negative nature, following a defined range of colours. All the words will form a cloud of squares of different sizes. When the computer mouse is placed over a word (square), all the words related to it will be placed around it with their respective assessments (colour).

This project was born during the course of doctoral studies in Urban Planning and its main objective is to develop a useful tool for citizen participation processes. For these processes to be truly effective, citizens need to reflect on their city, the parameters that define it, the activities and lives within it. This Web tool aims, in a simple way, to motivate this type of reflections and make it possible to share them among citizen-users. For that reason, even though it arose from an urban planning perspective, the scope of Imaginario can be projected toward multi-disciplinary fields.

4.1 IMAGINARIO: HOW IT WORKS

The dynamic is quite simple. The system allows the user to describe the city of some aspect of it with words. Then the user is asked to relate those words to other words, first to words that come to the user's mind, and then to a list of words added by previous users. The third step is to assess each relationship of words by a simple scoring system. Lastly, the user can classify the relationship within one of the categories already defined by the system.

It develops a virtual city based on the assessments (positive and negative) of the relationships among different factors (words) that citizens (users) associate to the city. With time, a map will be created that represents in a structured way the semantic ties that exist among the words that define a city.

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www.urbanohumano.org/alcala.htm

Participation workshop with children developed by Laboratorio Urbano

WIKIMAP MADRID

www.wikimap.es

First wikimap project for Madrid

NOTES

1 *Prosumer* is a word combining "producer" (sometimes also a professional) and "consumer". The term refers to a well-informed consumer who is increasingly more active in the distribution of a particular product, whether by recommending it to their personal or professional circles or through developing and improving the product through communication channels set up by the product's producer.

In many cases, they even arrange to exchange information, support each other, etc.

MEIPI: SYNERGY BETWEEN DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL NETWORKS

Meipi team:
www.meipi.org

Alfonso Sanchez Uzábal
Domenico Di Siena
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Meipi is a map (wikimap) where users can upload multimedia files linked to a precise place in the city such that the images, personal impressions, sounds, stories, and surroundings perceived by local residents can be shared in an immediate and everyday way with one's own neighbours.

It aims to develop processes by which the network becomes a catalyst fostering social relationships that allow us to know our neighbours better, thus strengthening community and a feeling of belonging to it.

It defines a new kind of user with another quality different than users of all other Web pages: this user is interested in a real, physical space, which is represented in MEIPI. The user's options and actions will always be related to that place (the user's neighbourhood and city).

To date, various projects have been started. We would like to highlight three of them: a project called Todo Sobre Mi Barrio *(All about My Neighbourhood)* (www.todosobremibarrio.com), which is being carried out in collaboration with the **Laboratorio Urbano** collective and with support from the new **Intermediae** centre, and two others that started with the collaboration of the architectural firm **Ecosistema Urbano**:
a. One in Madrid in the Universidad neighbourhood (http://barriouniversidad.meipi.org)
b. One in Santiago de Compostela (http://santiago.meipi.org) with support from the **Centro de Arte Contemporanea de Galicia** (CGAC).

At present, we are working on a creating an *Open Source* package with the code used on the page for that people who know how to do programming can create their own personalized meipi. Until then, and without needing to understand programming,

one can use **meipimatic**: a creator of meipis. With meipimatic (www.meipimatic.org), any user can simply and instantly put together a collaborative map (meipi) (just like making a blog).

1. WHAT IS MEIPI?

Meipi can be defined as a local collaborative page for self-publication and the search for information referenced on a digital map. In its simplified version, we define it as a collaborative digital map for new forms of citizen participation.
This map allows users to upload multimedia files linked to a precise place in the city such that the images, personal impressions, sounds, stories, and surroundings perceived by local residents can be shared in an immediate and everyday way with one's own neighbours.

It's a voluntary or automatic system for assessing information and participants that guarantees the quality of the contents and ensures participants' trust.
It aims to develop an interactive platform which, directly or indirectly, is capable of strengthening citizen participation in the social and cultural life of their neighbourhoods (cities).

It aims to develop processes by which the network becomes a catalyst fostering social relationships that allow us to know our neighbours better, thus strengthening community and a feeling of belonging to it.

Meipi defines a new kind of user (for now, let's say a "user/citizen") with another quality different than users of all other Web pages: this user is interested in a real, physical space, which is represented in MEIPI. The user's options and actions will always be related to that place (the user's neighbourhood and city).

In sum, a meipi can be considered as a search engine, a collective blog, a digital map or a local communication system, characterized by four key elements: 1) the active role of the user, who can be reader and author; 2) the local nature of the information; 3) the geo-referencing of that information on a map of the neighbourhood or the city; 4) system for assessing information and participants that guarantees the quality of the contents and ensures participants' trust.

2. BETWEEN PHYSICAL SPACE (CITY) AND VIRTUAL SPACE (THE INTERNET)

A very important characteristic of this project is that it is interested in a clearly defined, limited physical space, a neighbourhood or a city. For quite some time now, we have been reflecting on the new model of urban life and the influence new technologies may have on it. Our training as architects and urban planners leads us to think in terms of spaces, and talking about urban spaces, the first thing that comes to mind is public spaces. Historically, what has separated urban and rural life is the quality of their public spaces. They are where the social, cultural and economic meetings and exchanges of a city take place –which are information exchanges- so they are the reason for people to live in a community.

Jona Friedman explains in Utopías realizables *(Achievable Utopias)* that a group of people living in a space constitute a city if at least a certain number of encounters occur among them per units of space and time; according to Friedman, if the number of encounters is over a certain number, then the information exchanged becomes noise. The Internet complements the job of physical public space in that it organizes this information, facilitates its exchange, and separates them depending on the receiver's interests.

Currently, public space is experiencing a huge change. It is being abandoned in favour of new private spaces that offer us safety and services in return for money. Many activities that people used to leave their homes to do can now be done conveniently from the home.

But if we don't leave our houses, who uses public space and more importantly, what is its purpose? Can we still define it as the space for social relationships?

Currently, we increasingly use the Internet to communicate and connect with others, forgetting about relationships in public space. There are many reasons for this phenomenon and they are still hypotheses to think about in an attempt to understand this reality.

In this process, many people think the Internet is to blame in part. In our opinion, the Internet is not the cause of the change in the way people relate to each other. Instead, it is the most immediate way to practice these relationships, a process that had already begun prior to mass Internet use. We think its use has been limited to the attempt to offer what was lost in public space: a safe, anonymous meeting

ground. With Meipi, we mean to use the Internet in more innovative way. We are not going to replace the physical or reinforce the virtual; instead, we will attempt to create a bridge between the two worlds.

The Internet has been used so far mainly due to its ability to bring what used to be far away much closer. Now it is beginning to be used on a scale much closer to home, such as within a neighbourhood or city. Using the Internet on such a small scale can actually be of great interest.

When the Internet is related to a specific space, the way it is used changes. The Internet can be defined as the virtual space *par excellence.* What would happen if we manage to get that virtual space to relate to a real space? In this case, we are not talking about just repeating or simply representing a virtual dimension in real space; we are referring to the possibility that a connection exist between the two spaces, allowing the changes and events that happen in one to influence the other.

The rules of co-existence allow us all (or almost all) to benefit from the development and quality of our community. However, the tendency to enshrine our homes like personal kingdoms is transforming cities into simple containers for persons who only benefit from the city's infrastructures and density for work and the cultural events available. It almost looks like social aspects, and therefore, the quality of public spaces, no longer have a place in the collective imagination when it comes to assessing a city.

Today politicians prefer to reduce the resources earmarked for managing public spaces in favour of offering increasingly varied and widespread cultural activities, which contribute very little to the vitality of those spaces.
What about the spaces for socialization or simply social relations? They are being privatized, structured, measured and controlled. Areas outside the home are now used exclusively for transit, whereas before, they were used for productive activities, then for trade, then for free time. Nowadays, they are only used as a means of getting to all those activities.

2.1 SOCIAL NETWORKS

The same thing is happening on both the Internet and in public space. We are increasingly less interested in non-specialized spaces. Instead, we look for places with very clearly defined characteristics, where we know will we find certain types of people.

On the Internet, in the late 1990s, many of us spent hours chatting to just anybody in open chat rooms. At present, with social networks, things are changing. On these networks, we don't want to talk with just anybody; I'd rather meet my friends' friends, or people who share certain interests of mine.

A social network comprises two things: a display of each user (a personal description) and a system that allows us to make contact (friendship) with other users, that is, the network (communication).

The space has been transformed into a network, a flow. When all these things took place in a tangible space, it was almost always a public space. That was where people displayed themselves and where they met and communicated with others. Nowadays, it is unlikely that we are able to recognize people in public areas as being "display", or else it probably doesn't seem sufficient. Before "wasting" our time on someone, we want more information about them or the assurance that they are a friend of a friend, or people we know.

We are becoming accustomed to being able to deal with and trust people we already know something about, or with whom we share certain ideas and tastes. We are increasingly unwilling to "take a risk" or be unpleasantly surprised.

2.2 PUBLIC SPACE

We not only relate to others in public space: we also act. That is, that is where we manifest our identity, or, more precisely, where we can *freely* manifest our identity.

One's behaviour in public space is free by definition. Once restrictions or limits are placed on that behaviour, the result is its elimination. That is, due to its very nature, I can act out my identity in public space, provided that I want to. My freedom is limited only by complying with the law.

A rather curious phenomenon is that a great many people no longer have the slightest interest in expressing their identities in that space. And considering that a public space is built out of the sum of the identities of the people who fill it, we realize how important it is to understand the reasons behind that phenomenon. As urban planners, we can only think about how to give people back their desire to express their identity in these spaces, something that *social networks* already do.

However, *social networks* are available only to those with Internet access, just as bars and leisure centres are only open to those who buy something there, and if that's not the case, then the owner's rules impose certain limits. Public space is the only place I can express my identity with complete freedom.

3. MEIPI IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

One of the problems in modern life is the disappearance of what is defined as "neighbourhood life". Nowadays, we may recognize the faces of our neighbours but it is unlikely that we have any relationship with them. If we don't know our neighbours, it is almost impossible for "neighbourhood life" to exist. Public spaces have historically fulfilled the function of containing the meetings and relationships among neighbours. When neighbours are strangers to each other, it is much harder to have relationships in these spaces. Our neighbours were what made public spaces in our neighbourhood safe, and today this no longer is the case. We look for that safety now in private social spaces, like bars, commercial centres and leisure centres. A meipi can be used as a catalyst for social activities for the cultural life of a neighbourhood or a city.

On the part of the local administration, it may be difficult to take steps to revive life in public spaces, precisely because the roots that historically sustained them have grown weak. When the administration tries to achieve that goal by financing cultural activities in the public space, the effects are ephemeral because the local residents did not create the use of the space themselves. The most effective steps to take would be fostering local initiative, through voluntary organizations and associations. That way, those roots are "watered" directly, and will grow strong again. In order for that to happen, first of all, local residents need to know one another.

A meipi is a useful tool for taking action in these processes and so offer opportunities for neighbourhood social and cultural life to develop. Our aim is not to provide an alternative for traditional meeting places among neighbours. It is a tool that makes it possible to rebuild the social networks needed so that neighbours can take back the streets in their own neighbourhood.

A meipi allows neighbours to get to know each other better, and it allows those who want to tell more about themselves to do so, remaining as anonymous a level as they choose. With time, it may allow the social networks that normally give life to a

neighbourhood to be rebuilt. City councils can use them as a participation tool, using them as a platform to open up public debates in which a large number of citizens can take part. An Internet connection is all that is needed.

4. MEIPI AS AN ANALYTICAL AND RESEARCH TOOL

Another view on the usefulness of this tool has to do with the possibilities for analysis that it offers to professionals who study urban phenomena: urban planners and other experts, politicians and local administrators.

All the information one can find on a Wikimap is clearly spontaneous in nature. Citizens add any information they want, and the map then serves as the memory of local history. This characteristic may be extremely valuable as a basis for certain analyses or research, given that in general it is quite difficult to obtain totally objective data in this matter; that is, information not influenced by any process of approaching citizens.

Its use may also be of interest to politicians. Although generally, public administration (and politicians in general) do not have much interest in a place characterized by maximum freedom of expression, especially due to the likelihood of seeing ideas there that are contrary or alternatives to what the City Council's position. Nonetheless, if we turn that fear around, we may realize that it could be advantageous to know what local residents think about policies being carried out, knowing in which areas more will be accomplished by consensus, and where we are facing more opposition. In sum, we can offer a map with consensus by subject area. The map will graphically show us the most active points in the city, the points with the most cultural activity, the points where more relationships among neighbours are developed, and the users' activities.

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WIKIMAP MADRID

www.wikimap.es

First wikimap project for Madrid

COVERT REALITY

Peer Oliver Nau

Project Proposal
Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin
(New National Gallery, Berlin)

REALITY VS. VIRTUAL REALITY

It is by no means easy to answer the question of what the real world is[1] ("authentic" reality) and what the virtual world is ("artificial" reality). How do we perceive the real and virtual worlds? How can one differentiate between real and virtual worlds? Virtual worlds have emerged to influence tactile realities.

One of the most successful reconstructions of the world at this time is *Google Earth*, which can be freely accessed on the Internet. Using a perspective that encompasses the entire globe, zooming in on the place one wishes to see provides a sensation of omnipresence. The person is in a global position and moves virtually through a digitally constructed reality. Since there are very few of us who see these perspectives from a bird's-eye view, it is difficult for us to differentiate between the real world and the digital world. Like television and cinema, Internet also tempts us to flee from or influence the "tactile reality".

The *Google Earth* programme therefore gives one the impression of a reflected world that represents the "reality" with all of the good and the bad. But it is here where there is an attempt to influence that "reality" as in the case of the New Orleans images, for example:

http://www.heise.de/newsticker/meldung/87717
"A storm of irritation led Google to replace in *Google Earth* and its map the "photos after Katrina" in the New Orleans area with idyllic images of how it looked before the devastation in August 2007 caused by a cyclone (These images have also be renewed).
Or when strategic military zones are intentionally concealed:

http://www.spiegel.de/netzwelt/web/0,1518,459542,00.html
Terror in the age of Internet: Iraqi terrorists use satellite photos provided by the

Google Earth satellite to plan their attacks. In some home searches, soldiers found printed photographs of British military camps.

Immediately thereafter, strategically important places were intentionally concealed. For example, the representation of reality ends at the doors to the barracks and fades into a safety zone that is unrecognisable.

To what extent can we trust virtual or digital realities? Perhaps there have been virtual "traps" or irritations in this digital reproduction of the world since the beginning. There may even be representations that are intended to irritate possible attackers. Are these virtual realities leading us in a direction that is beyond the "reality" that we can comprehend and experience? To what extent can we confide in these structures? How can one influence these virtual, digital realities? Or going back to the previous question, how can I influence the virtual or digital reality with tactile reality?

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The "Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin" (New National Gallery in Berlin), created by Mies van der Rohe, is located in the centre of Berlin near Potsdam Square. The building is characterised by its square 65.5 m x 65.5 m shape. Thanks to this characteristic architecture, the building is easily identified using Google Earth.

The project proposes covering the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, which occupies an area of 4,290 m², with a reticular canvas that would project another place onto the

building. The building would not change visibly in the eyes of the passer-by except that once the canvas is visible from a bird's-eye view it would look like a completely different place.

A photo is extracted from *Google Earth* and made to fit the size (4,290 m²) of the surface of the roof of the Nationalgalerie in order to get to the bottom of the virtual, digital reality.

Naturally, the almost infantile faith of the aforementioned terrorists in virtual reality as a duplication of the tangible reality is very alarming when it influences the virtual reality to the point of causing movements. "What would happen if we were to project a "cream puff" - for terrorist purposes - right in the middle of Berlin?

A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

For this particular project I decided on a nuclear power plant since this would be one of the most dangerous places imaginable in the centre of Berlin, and not only for terrorist acts. In the photo montage shown below, I projected the Brokdorf nuclear power plant onto the Neue Nationalgalerie. Brokdorf is one of the largest and most important nuclear power plants in Germany. I would like to underscore here that my intention is not to enter into the debate on safe energy sources but rather the intentional manipulation, displacement and irritation of the virtual reality. Therefore, from a purely conceptual point of view, the question of "what would happen if…?"

is important as the really represented nuclear power plant. The nuclear power plant symbolises an extreme example of dangerous manipulation and the infiltration of virtual structures and its consequences.

The programme provides the terrorists with the coordinates to allow them to fix their target (when correctly indicated). This readaptation symbolises in a very simple way the fact that a modification of the real, tangible reality that is not perceptible from a normal point of view can have a significant effect on the virtual, digital reality.
In this case, an incalculable hazard for all of Berlin would be projected through virtual reality without that danger existing in the tangible reality. Trusting in those coordinates would be a convincing target for causing the greatest possible damage to the city.
As for the rest, it naturally also speaks to the question of credibility and manipulability and with them the potential for the abuse of power using the virtual reality of the *Google Earth* programme.

Illusion and its integration in real life are becoming more convincing all the time.

RESPONSE OF NATIONALGALERIE BERLIN
.... Your proposal to project the Brokdorf nuclear power plant on our rooftop in Google earth is at once surprising and unpleasant. We do not wish to become the target of future acts of terrorism and therefore cannot grant you permission. I myself consult Google Earth occasionally and I can easily imagine how appealing

it is to organise those reality games. But the Nationalgalerie does not, under any circumstances, wish to place itself in such a position. In other words: we are opposed.

Yours faithfully,
Prof. Dr. Angela Schneider
Interim Director
Nationalgalerie

The response to the presentation of the project, though regrettable, reflects the nucleus of the installation beautifully. It highlights the intensity with which the virtual digital reality overlaps the tactile reality and the growing tensions this is causing. The operators of the programme have a strong lobby of confidence composed of the majority of users and therefore a not inconsiderable power to influence things.

CONTINUATION
Competition entry: Paradoxien des öffentlichen Raumes (*Paradoxes of the public space*) – Duisburgo 2007

"Der Welt-Parkplatz" ("*The world's parking lot*")

The car will continue to be the apple of man's eye. Charged with the most diverse symbolism such as potency, power and security, it is one of the status symbols used to judge people in many places. The inside is a very private space that moves through the public space. It would be really strange to see someone running around a Golf, taking photos of the car to show it to people somewhere else. What does my car say about me? Is it really a symbol of who I am and, if so, does it represent me properly?

I randomly chose cars parked in cities that are represented in high definition in the programme Google Earth (*screenshot*). They are then pasted to the ground in the form of stickers that are the actual size of the cars (here in front of the Lehmbruck museum in Duisburgo).

The cars that appear here: red – from Google USA; blue, Berlin; black, New York; silver, Munich; white, Potsdam; green, Duisburg; light blue, Frankfurt/M.

This is still a small selection, also due to the resolution of the satellite images of large cities, but this is apparently going to improve in the coming months.
Here, what we could call private spaces are grouped together involuntarily and situated in a comparative relationship.

But the irritation is only perfect thanks to the programme because in reality the stickers do not stand out that much and attempt to disrupt the public space as little as possible. Here again, with just a slight modification I am able to have a significant effect on the virtual digital reality.

Integration in the context of the work

In my previous projects with public space I focused on the displacement of realities or temporary displacements. With my metro entrance built in 2004, I wanted to call the attention of the inhabitants of a small mining village to a lost link: what would have changed if there had been an urban link to a large city? A wooden cube with the dimensions of the office of F. Schiller in Jena represented the limits of the private space of a famous man, which the investigation often intersects uncomfortably. With

my battle of the pillows staged in 2005 at the famous Jena-Auerstedt battlefield, I built a bridge between the historical events and the current social conflicts in our society.

Internet now offers me innovative access to an old theme: virtuality and its influence on man, which in the age of terrorisms takes on an intensity never before suspected.

NOTES

1 In order to avoid the controversy surrounding the definitions of reality and truth and for simplification purposes I use the concepts of tactile reality (anything you can touch) and virtual, digital reality (an apparently digital reflection of the tactile reality).

ACTIVE READING: THE STORY ENGINE

Seth Ellis

The Story Engine is a project currently in development, to be completed in early 2008. It is an experiment in hypertext as a model for active readership and collaborative authorship. The Engine itself is an online tool through which collaborative groups will create hypertexts that are not just linked nodes of text, as the Web is, but a single selforganizing text block composed of different strands contributed by different authors. The Story Engine differs from the wiki model in that editorial additions will not replace existing text, but exist alongside it, so that the total story is immediately navigable along multiple lines. With enough authors contributing, a single narrative may contain nearly infinite potential versions of itself.

This project has two primary influences. The first is the range of conversational games, such as round-robin storytelling or Exquisite Corpse, in which the immediate play of a small community results in shared narrative. These games were a fount of inspiration for the Oulipo, or *Ouvroir des Litteratures Potentielles* (Working Group of Potential Literatures), a group of European writers who used arbitrary, non-traditional narrative structures to force invention in their own work (Italo Calvino is the most famous author associated with the Oulipo)[1]. These efforts in turn have informed a good deal of inspiration for modern efforts to deal with hypertext and non-linear narrative.

The second is Vannevar Bush's seminal 1946 essay "As We May Think," which has been given credit for anticipating hypertext and the Internet[2]. Bush posited the importance in the post-war intellectual landscape, particularly in science, not just of storing information for easy retrieval, but of storing the trains of thought that led contributing scientists to capture this or that data in the first place. The capture and analysis of users' reading habits lies behind Google's search algorithm, for instance, but that analysis is hidden from the user's view; the Story Engine will make other user's thought processes immediately visible, in the shared form of an ongoing story. Participants can thus collaborate in exploring, redefining, or subverting existing stories, as well as co-writing new stories of their own.

The visual form the Story Engine takes is a three-dimensional chain, of which each word is a link. A reader can choose to split off from the original chain at any given word, creating a sub-chain leading off from that point. Subsequent readers can choose which strand to follow, add their own new strands, or view the entire project, including all existing strands, at once. Thus not only can the reader explore different versions of a different narrative, but the text as a whole can be simply viewed as an abstract aggregate of words, growing denser as user activity increases. The project interface will allow the user to make sense of this conglomeration of story, even as the combined conversation that has gone to make up all the alternate versions of this text will form a single
unreadable image.

Although the Story Engine will be presented on the Web for free use, it is intended to be used by small, specific communities of users communicating through the medium of a single story of text. In this way, the Story Engine becomes a laboratory in which to experiment with several contemporary issues in hypertext and in new media theory, in particular with the idea of game theory. In recent years, theorists and developers interested in non-linear narrative have given up traditional models of storytelling in favour of more open-ended models based in game theory. An example of the older model is Robert Coover's workshop in hypertext narrative at Brown University, which he has been running since 1990-91[3]. In these workshops, students experiment in creating nonlinear narratives based on structures on the student's own design. The narratives are single-authored works, created entirely by a single artist/author/programmer, offering multiple paths of reading for the reader-user so that a single text may be experienced in multiple ways. The generic form these hypertext narratives take is of linked text blocks (i.e., pages) in a choose-your-own adventure style, in which the writer offers branching story lines or a series of perspectives of events. These experiments continue through the present, and have advanced into virtual reality with the authoring system *Cave Writing 2006,* which offers a graphical interface for hypertext authors as an alternative to spending weeks programming new narrative interfaces. However, the hypertext products remain single-authored works, created by a single user for a reader to enjoy in a relatively passive mode.

The criticism of this kind of hypertext narrative is that it tends to suffer from under determination; that is, the individual writer is working so hard to create *structural* complexity that he or she has no attention left over to create *textual* complexity—the multiple levels of meaning that we are used to deriving from traditional storytelling[4].

A reader can read and interpret a Jane Austen novel more deeply, and in a more textured way over repeated re-readings, than is available with a non-linear narrative in which the reader's primary experience is simply a cosmetic, physical one of navigating around in a novel way. The reader's experience remains passive, and actually becomes more passive, because he or she is thinking less in a critical way.

In reaction to this criticism, the main focus of research into non-linear narrative has moved away from written text, and into interactive gaming and multi-user interfaces such as Second Life. Here the "artists"—that is, the programmers—simply provide the environment of the game, in which the user has near-total agency. The user's set of potential actions and behaviors are determined by the programmers, but within those limitations, the user collaborates with other users to create autonomous stories on the fly. Stories are self-organizing; the stories told within the game *Grand Theft Auto* tend to be of a certain sort, given the environment, but the stories themselves do not partake of preauthored events. Game theory is, at the moment, the most prevalent model not just for actual games but for social networking and for new entertainment models. James Paul Gee has identified the pleasure of these models as the active participation in figuring out, or even in determining, the rules of the game itself, which are not *a priori* apparent to people participating in the game[5]. Gee describes this game experience as a sequence of "probe, hypothesize, reprobe, rethink," as the player/reader/audience must actively explore and analyze the narrative framework in which they find themselves. Of course, these stories are no longer written, and they are not read; they are acted. The Story Engine is an experiment in applying game theory to the spontaneous, collaborative creation of written texts. In doing so this project re-addresses, as do many network art projects, the questions of identity and authorship that were brought up by postmodern theory and that continue to lurk in the background of contemporary culture. Roland Barthes famously proposed that "This 'I' which approaches the text is already itself a plurality of other texts, of codes which are infinite or, more precisely, lost (whose origin is lost)."[6] By creating the Story Engine I want to examine Barthes' use of the term code, which in the time since he used it has to some degree gone from a literary analogy to a literal description of technology. Modern hypertext environments are written in code; the behaviours that determine the reader/author's output are scripted by programmers into applications with which the users interact. In this context I want to think about code as *interpretive* and as *prescriptive*. Does code determine behaviour, or is its relationship to the reader/author looser in some way? In the Story Engine, as in most game structures, the literal code is invisible, and only frames the possible

actions of the reader: adding words. Each project written with the Story Engine will start with a given text, which will then be added to or rewritten by the reader/writers, so that the eventual project offers what may be called different interpretations on the base text. But reading offers interpretation in a multi-layered, non-linear form, so that interpretation differs even with each reading by the same reader. Does the literally interactive method of reading, in which the reader may act to the text, freeze the interpretation of the text in some limited, underdetermined form? My suspicion is that this depends on the collaborative action of the reader-writers; one reader's additions become fodder for new reading by another collaborator. In this sense the Story Engine, like much network art, is a limited realization of Jean-François Lyotard's formulation of the self as a node, one of many nodes conjoined into a network.[7] The difficulty facing this sort of postmodern theory has generally been that the decentralization of the self is a concept that cannot really be acted upon. We might think of ourselves as compilations of codes, but we can't help but act, or think that we act, as single, unitary beings. The idea of self, and of author, may be an illusion, but it is an overpowering one. Network art of the past decade or so has offered a new perspective on this idea. The decentralized self becomes a reality; authorship disappears not into the fog of postmodern theory, but into collaboration.

The Story Engine is not an end in itself; it is the first phase of the project. The engine is only as interesting as the narratives that are created with it, and so the development of the tool itself will involve the participation of writing groups put together to "play" different stories. As currently projected, a single initial text will be provided, to be made the subject of additions and edits by the group. This collaborative writing will take place over a given, limited stretch of time, so that contributors will be both focused on the task at hand and free to spend some time thinking about the story. This structure will allow reader/writers to actively interpret the given story by writing into it. The idea is to foster *active reading*, in which people have the ability, and the leisure, both to read a story and, in reading it, to write it. Particularly loaded stories (Little Red Riding Hood, the Gospel of John, recent news stories) will make for hopefully dense and interesting multi-linear texts.

The primary audience for the Story Engine is made up of the artists and writers who might use it to collaborate in making new narratives; the secondary audience is a wider group of people who will be able to read these new narratives as they are presented in the Web, and perhaps in print form as well. However, this project, like many new media art forms, implies a wider, more inclusive definition of "artist/writer"

than has heretofore been the case. General Web users will be able to access the Story Engine and stories formed by it; they too, as readers, become partial authors. It is the purpose of this project to investigate, in a practical, productive way, some of the implications of this synthesis of reader and writer.

NOTES

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4 Murray, Janet H. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1998.

5 Gee, James Paul. *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy.* Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY, 2003. p.90.

6 Barthes, Roland. S/Z. Transl. Richard Miller. Hill and Wang, New York, NY, 1974. p. 10.

7 Lyotard, Jean-Francois. The Postmodern Condition: *A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, 1984. p. 15

+ + READER

Marina Zerbarini

In 1998 I created my first Internet website with a programme that came with the electronic mail server. By the year 2000 I had my own website which I had designed using new programmes that allowed me to read the contents better, incorporate images, sound, the much talked-about interactivity and the possibility of hypertextual reading by visitors. Several works arose out of it.

In *L'atido* I worked the topics mentioned above. As a spectator, I could take different reading routes by relating images and sounds, the focal point being an attraction to the enjoyment of relating specially chosen and prepared images and sounds to demonstrate the novelty of the medium. Technically, I also found myself obliged to start studying programming languages like ActionScript.

Subsequently, fascinated with collaborative work, writer's crisis and specific designs for html, I did *Gemelos/no-gemelos* with the intention of creating, along with others, a tower of Babel where all of the words, images and sounds were mixed together without differentiating between authorship or ownership. It includes elements incorporated by me and many others sent in by Internet users. Windows that open, games that appear out of nowhere and the constant incorporation of material I received by email and subsequently added to the site.

Tejido de Memoria was a private project which combines social and personal themes with temporal and spatial ones. I tried to "recount" the political and social history of a country in a parallel way to my own personal life. To make reference to a memory that can be read "from memory" or as a fabric that is constructed and reconstructed in the present time. The historical account of the Mothers of May Square by María del Carmen de Berrocal (Mother of the May Square) accentuated the political nature of the work and the clarity of the message. A video which, despite the rupture of the linearity, did not destroy the meaning. Reader response was immediate, interesting and important. They are still sending me their opinions, which I post on the site. It should be noted, with regard to these voices, that they are not discourses but rather short texts written in an almost colloquial format and with much synthesis where different people who are not related to one another, who live in different countries, express their opinion and share a language. The ones who are expressing their

opinions are common people, not the ones we see on the television, accustomed to the media, to microphones and podiums. They are the voices of people who talk to their friends in small groups, over a cup of coffee. They are the unscheduled, unplanned, unorganised voices. They are not trying to sell the truth or pass judgment, but merely to express an opinion.

They are the voices of those who do not speak.

In 2005 and in view of the different responses to the works mentioned above, I started to wonder about readers, how they interacted, how they read, who the spectators were. What contents I was providing them and how so that they could do a participative reading, how they could perceive and participate. With *Eveline, fragmentos de una respuesta* I asked readers to give their opinion, not about history, politics or social inequality, but rather about love. There were practically no responses on the weblog set up specifically for them to give their opinion on two stories by James Joyce which I cite in that work. Two stories that talk about romantic disagreements, obsessive repetition, fear and the lack of ideas to explain situations. As Italo Calvino writes:

> *"(....)- I speak, speak - says Marco -, but the one who listens to me only retains the words that he expects. One is the description of the world to which you pay attention with benevolent ears, another one will turn back to the huddles dockers and gondoliers in the wharves of my house the day I return, another one I could dictate being old, if I was taken prisoner by Genovese pirates and I was put the trap in the same dungeon in which an adventure novel writer owas. What commands the story is not the voice: it is the ear...."*

And at that time hyptertext was read and spoken about as:

> *"The advent of the digital culture, writing signs, electronic signs, are inscribed in a different space. Another narrative, mobile references in constant movement are some of the properties of this mode of non-sequential writing introduced by hypertext. The random access memories of computers, as non-linear storage devices, make it possible to recover the stored data interactively and enable the reading process to be completed as a journey defined by the reader-operator through a textual universe where all of the elements are given simultaneously.*

All linear or two-dimensional text is always a provisional update of a series of possibilities. It is updated in multiple versions, translations and editions; the reader continues updating it by interpreting it, giving meaning in the hear and now, always in an inventive and singular way.

Thought does not always progress sequentially when one reads or writes; the connections are more reticulated in form, beyond mere closeness. The reader's intelligence reconstructs the flat pages into a moving, particular image, replete with its own particular meanings. They are the unwritten words, the vacuums, the different connection times, the misunderstood fragments, the reading gaps, the disperse parts where the reader is reunited and redefined. It is not the unit of text which is at stake but rather the construction of its "I", always unfinished. The text will have served as an interface.

The hypertext which one tries to analyse is a matrix of potential texts, only some of which will be realised as a result of the interaction with the user. Through it, reading is transformed into a dynamic textual problem. Reading becomes writing, the feeling-producing occasions are multiplied, the reader not only interprets but also organises and structures at the very production level. The hypertextual devices on digital networks have exiled text, creating text without borders, without a defined inner world."

It is at this point where my not so new questions begin:
Is this meaning, this creativity achieved? Are we truly in the age of the enriched and enriching reader? A community reader and social subject who writes and constructs?

Are there really readers or only writers of scattered and disconnected monologues? The ++ reader we expected is a generative reader which has thus far only been achieved by the computer with its mathematics and programming languages, although hypertext does not seem to have generated a *generative reader*, if you'll excuse the repetition.
After several years of uninterrupted work with artistic practices and collective participation, the question is what happened to that relationship everyone had dreamed of between the producer and the spectator, who together would create that feeling, that authorship, that communication between the artist, the work and spectators on the network? The social communication, the changes and the

dynamics introduced into life? What happened to the spectator who was supposed to listen, read, relate, choose, understand, interpret, propose, do?

The cinema talked of the movement, the magic, the subject of the enunciation, identification, the character, the illusion/simulation. And so it was that history gave us marvellous directors who exploited the medium in all its richness and specificity, attracting the masses who were just as fascinated by it as they were.

New rules of play, the same players. Has the complicity between writer/reader perhaps been broken?

Could it be that all that will be left of hypertextual reading and/production is the seduction of a technical tool that empties and replaces itself rapidly?

Information is only bits, isolated and without combination there is no meaning, only numbers. Electronic text is not located in any real place, an electrical signal that contains transitory and unstable bits of information all along the network at any given time, along with all of the modifications and updates made by the different users who've had access to it. Digital text is a group of coded values in a binary system which are generally gathered together using magnetic means in a storage device. It is a unit of information, not of meaning.

The reader is called to travel over arid and complex roads: the originality of the graphic interface design, dynamic texts, hyperimages, movement, generative codes, technological and formal concepts, real time sounds. The spectator is paralysed in a *shopping* centre that offers him much more than what he asked for, work in a living state, even more alive than the spectator himself. Incapable of deciding in the face of such an excessive offering, he opts for anorexia, apathy and in the best case scenario he chooses to write his own weblog.

Random access memories respond to our will. We access the contents we are seeking in direct response to our desire for very short periods of time. We know where to look. We do not open boxes, drawers and shelves just out of curiosity but only because we know that the elements we are interested in are stored there. The need to select contents after reading them for better cataloguing, the combination of contents, their interpretation, etc. involves a time of interest, concentration and desire. Some that is achieved in minimum percentages and by highly specialised publics.

As artists, we waive authorship, meaning and discursive linearity. We leave the reader alone and disoriented in a jungle of binary values without any meaning in and of themselves. The reader, in exile, is then obliged to recreate the meaning.

Apparently, one needs to be much more of an artist to read than to write:

> *"(...) the Book, in its traditional format, is coming to an end" and "the plague of scriptural locusts which today blocks the sun of the spirit of the citizens of large cities will become even thicker in the years to come (...) Before a contemporary opens a book, a thick whirlwind of letters will fall upon his eyes that will be so changeable, colourful and conflicting that the possibility of penetrating the archaic tranquillity of the book will be minimal." (...) "We can assume that new systems with more versatile writing forms will become increasingly necessary. They will replace the malleability of the hand with the nervousness of the fingers that operate the commands".*
> Benjamín, Walter. *"Reflections: Essays, Aphorismos, Autobiographical Writing".* Nueva York.Helen & Kart Wolf, 1978. pp 77-79

The Reader to come will be the one who, having been exiled from meaning and linearity, fought against the arbitrariness of hypertext and managed to build his own meaning, make his own writing, and was transformed into an artist, i.e., a ++ reader. The quantity and diversity of the different voices, the generalised deafness, the loss of feeling the technological invasion, the individual voices have given rise to a reader without aggregate signs. A text that is not yet deterritorialised and a reader that has not yet been added, I would venture to say has been removed.

TEXT AND INTERFACE

In my pervious work entitled "*Hiperimágen, imágen de síntesis, imagen generativa. Una aproximación desde la Interfaz*", I wrote that:

> *"………..An interface can be defined as a set of physical and/or virtual devices that make it possible to interact with a system. The mouse, the keyboard or the monitor are the physical interfaces with which graphic interfaces usually work:*
>
> *The interface is a form of operating, of producing and of thinking. The perspective was the application of geometric principles, the application of*

mathematics to space and it modified the world of images. The interface and the mathematical form of producing diametrically modifies our concepts of image-text/hyperimage-hypertext.

The interface guides through information clusters, providing an interpretation or point of view which leaves impressions on the perceiving systems of what is happening in the world. By presenting the information in a specific way or using a specific medium, the interface design defines the meaning with which that interface constructs the points of view.

As P. Weibel says: "The world changes as the interface changes."

The property of allowing for multiple trajectories, the nature of the links, their ramifications and interconnections also influence the trajectory and inevitably change the way in which the sensibility captures the contents.

The numerical is a turning point in the history of the image-text, transforming and constructing another paradigm. We have gone from the analogue image-text to the digital image-text, artificially created.

Just as one can consider perspective a symbolic form, the binary image-text which is in essence pure information, is also articulated from language to its symbolic form"……………

The reader is a subject of the interface. The latter is the meeting point between the artist and reader or co-author, Hence the importance of the inclusion or exclusion of meaning. His collaboration, participation and interaction are an interface subject. Artistic proposals as models of alternative communicative practices in the new digital networks and the design of new media and tools for digital community action are intimately crossed by the interface concept.

The ++reader continues in a latent state, a pending account; culture continues to be shot through with a renaissance, hierarchical and exclusive logic that persists and is concealed behind the greatest technological advances. Giving space to this heartbeat is perhaps the greatest challenge faced by artists today.

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ART FICTION. *SNAKE PREVIEW* [1]
Curfew, Cinema, Discontinuity

Iñigo Cabo

"Apophenia, had sentenced Win, after rightful consideration and in a careful way:

the spontaneous perception of connections and meanings of things with no relation and never again, as far as Cayce knows, had spoken another word on the subject."

A friend of my friend M had a snake, a Boa Constrictor, which was given to her as a pet by her parents when she was a little girl.

They grew up together, they played together. The Boa didn´t live in a terrarium, it had a whole room to itself, in the house, in the city, where it slithered freely, shut away in that spacious place of closed windows, with plants, toys and different elements to develop itself in a symbiotic space, a house for snakes and humans.
The girl learnt to feed her boa and the snake to eat with her, to sleep together, to curl up and enjoy a common and silent dialogue.

They continued to grow. From eight to nineteen years old, from half a meter to one meter eighty. They had reached such a state of intimacy and understanding that with just one look they each knew what the other was thinking, when it was time for fun, imitating oriental dances, and when it was time for peace and quiet, respect.

Their biorhythms syncopated and they both slept the same number of hours and they got on with their things at the same time, but one day, the boa suddenly stopped eating. They placed the food next to her as always, in a woody corner where she easily caught her prey. The parents and the girl tried to make the snake eat, pointing it towards the dead bodies of its prey, but the snake blankly refused to the point where it began to harden. They took it to a vet in the city who after examining it, while all the dogs cats and other pets whined in terror in the waiting room, deduced that its illness was probably due to some kind of transitory internal change, "stress",

possible provoked by the prolonged absence of its master or lack of space. In any case, nothing that couldn´t be put right with vitamins, company and the removing of superfluous objects from its room. He advised them to return to the clinic if there was no improvement in the snakes condition or if it worsened. The days passed, the boa didn´t get better, in fact it got much worse, it grew more and more rigid and stretched, hard as a rock and with the scales cracking all along its body, an enormous trunk with dull skin.

It looked at its owner with dilated pupils, still, watchful and straight, refusing to eat, throwing up the medicine that they forced it to swallow.

The friend of my friend M cried every day looking at the snake, stroking it to lessen its pain, to understand it, motionless together, contemplating one another in silence. Suddenly the phone rang, it was the vet. Nervous, anxious, he couldn´t articulate his words. It seemed as if he were trying to find the best way to say what he had to say:
–I´ve been consulting colleagues and finally I found an expert in South America who knows what this is all about…” …. “ you have to get rid of that boa RIGHT AWAY!!”
–but why? What´s the matter, what´s wrong with it?”
–the snake is conscious of its master, its growing, its comparing itself to her!”
“what?”
–the snake is preparing to EAT your daughter!!, it´s measuring her size and calculating the moment when its ready to swallow her…..that´s why it´s not eating! You must get it out of there straight away!!

This is a true story, I should say, ”based on a true story”
The way that a narration transforms the facts in event and how this moves contains the fundamental principles of fiction.

The story remains forever suspended, meanwhile we don´t see all the angles of action and development. They are references and as such follow a pattern of representation. I consider it necessary to point out that the connections shown here are the same mechanisms of juxtaposition communicating scenes in an abstract sequence whose sense appears in the final form that represent the links as much as the non delimited spaces that hide information, not because it´s hidden, invisible or non viable, but because it refers to itself as the strange intention that doesn´t have to be defined in words, voices or images (language), this same taken as read understanding that recently has been called -*Off*-. (absent structure-suspended-).

For my part, I now want to employ Discontinuity [2]to visualize the form of the sense of Closing Time, the life rhythm of this project and its logic in the contemporary artistic systems. For that end, I will not restrict the use of the synonym – Contingency-[3](casual), in the way that it has collated the historiography in a bias way or even ignoring it, with the aim of preserving the continuity of reading the events and their apparent determinism. I will attempt to activate the *display* such that it allows us to see the results as alternatives to their other possibilities of happening, bringing together in the form every Possibility. That of the event and that which could have been, and as a result, the anticipated fiction of a different reality, not pre-recorded.

This text therefore will be fiction and the discontinuity its premonitory foundation. An anticipation that will allow us to view an alternative to the curfew, to the closing time that history proposes, to its *necessary* restriction [4]and to verify that the logic of this fiction corresponds to a cinematographic sequence whose rhythm reveals the intuition that insinuates that actual time is a communicative vessel with the future, that its cropped views and non linearity are the dynamics that join the abstractness of a fire in Paris with a curfew, and this at the same time with an artistic program – images of the pre-recorded transmission with which we represent reality-; and that the way to view the discontinued possibility of *now*, brings us to the freedom of decision about this future, being anticipators and as such, masters of our time-story, of our projects.

The idea that information isn´t always in the visible or in the spoken, nor in this exclusive aside of the *Off* in inverted commas, is what leads me to connect the discontinuity with the approximation of Gadamer to *another type of knowledge*:

"Instead of thinking that, in order to be "scientific", the "sciences of the spirit" are in need of a methodological grounding that hold to the model of nature, Gadamer asks if "the truth and the method" [6]maintain in fact, as close a relation as had been affirmed until that moment the accepted idea of science. In this way the defensive posture is abandoned and an offensive one is adopted as opposed to the scientific interpretation of science. According to Gadamer there is knowledge that vindicates a right to the truth that has been obtained by persons who are not specialists in science. But that is not all; certain types of experiences unconnected to science, such as art or philosophy, have allowed us to reach true facts, in the same way as the historic experience of practical life.

The experience of historic legacy goes further than is possible to investigate in itself. It´s not just true or false in the sense determined by historical criticism, but one that always transmits a truth in what it attempts to *obtain / participate*." [7]
It is then that the knowledge or the artistic epistemology mustn´t bow down before the same logic and rules of the system of relationship between the real and its models of metaphor corresponding to other forms of apprehension of understanding. That the discontinuity is the mechanics WHATsetting down the techniques of representation –Formal/ non Formal-, adapting its original functions for the new uses that describe them not now as techniques in function, -continuity of values/ category-, but as a description of the reality of each one of its techniques thereby to point out the method of construction of another type of representation based on models of connection and anticipation of its meaning of possible reality.

In this way, to find out as this project shows; as much from the inherent technique of its construction, as beyond the exercise of possible articulation between its phenomenon, forms and visual operatives. We will place here the description of: the conditions [of its nature], the mediums [beyond its devices], and the object that they shape according to [in discontinuity] our intention to view it as a form of possible anticipation.

CURFEW

We have at our disposal the following formatted elements to compose our story: Documentary, Production, Fiction, Art and Anticipation. The method according to which these describe the phenomenon here in accordance with their techniques of definition and location will not be (in answer to all the anterior) contingent; it does not contain the exact reference of the data, given that they have been extracted from a reality and used to communicate now not in accordance with the principles of that, not even with regard to the formulas of narration of its event, just as this pretended historic continuity tries to support. Further more; neither as the dynamics of the selfsame project in origin were projected, obeying a series of intentions that in search of the appearance of its form simply shorten the continuity characteristic of some accepted causes like vulgar conflict, that of the disappearance of the explicit form in the face of facts.

This will always be incomplete and it is from this (imaginary) liberty with regard to the idea of End, where we try to indicate a projected system of relationships in which the artistic object manages –by itself- to participate. A Fiction not a Chimera.

We are talking about answers to social participation.

The certain and not written capacity of the individual to restore their imagery in the cascade of images of the imagined object. In the very social description that brings with it the uprooting of the symbol and the conversion in eminent realities of supposition. In the mechanics of displacement that permit the continuity of the sequences in juxtaposition, the agreed reading of the super-story.

There is no paranoia, at least not here, nor identification between the subject in persecution and the incongruity to secure it. Precisely because it is these very same mechanisms that we mentioned with which they restore the maps of reality.

The subject here is transported by laws of indication that reveal it without being able to establish the origin,-apparently-, given that this is incorporated into the image of the conflict that encapsulates it, the trajectory of sequences that transforms it in a character of its information. Therefore not now attributed but added, authenticated as sign-pattern of its codification. An example of what is shown would be what William Gibson tries to represent with the steganographia in it's form of internal writing or hidden code that securely binds the film (sequence, progressive filming) whose degrees of reality and representation do not now obey the importance factor of; -fragment, -scene, -complete, -/still or sequential filming/-, but to the inherent discontinuity that activates a type of subliminal identification between the subject, the image and the form of relationship that precisely dramatizes the degree of potential participation of the individual in the work without showing visible signs of their language. This is the direct recognition of behaviour patterns, the definitive confluence of the subject and the realities by its nature.

Parkaboy is the de facto bearer of the progressives, those who suppose that the film is formed by fragments of a work in progress, something unfinished whose architect is still creating it. Completionists, on the contrary, in the minority but well articulated, are convinced the film is made up of parts of a finished work, that its creator has decided to show little by little and in a non correlative order.

Mother Anarchy is the completionist par excellence. (…) Darryl and I are entering the depths of old posts in a notice board based in Osaka and one which is outstandingly boring; we have chanced upon what seems to be a reference that a watermark has been discovered in N° 78. (I have filed all of this for you, in case you want to follow it in an exciting Step by Step account).

Cayce knows little about digital watermarks, but there were none in the film he saw. If it had a watermark, one asks, how and what would it be like?

I can tell you about this segment now in the strictest confidence. It probably carries an invisible watermark. Does that mean that the other fragments also have them? We don´t know. It is a watermark made steganographically (…)

I don´t understand, but I know. I think it´s something I have in common with Parkaboy, with Ivy and with many of the others. Something relative to the film. The sensation that it transmits. The mystery. You can not explain it to someone who is not involved in it. They will just look at you blankly. But this is important, it is important in a unique way.

Steganographia hides information by dispersing it throughout the extension of the other information. At the moment I know little more about the subject. [8]

But let´s look, as I said, at this appearance. In its original form, the representation of this indication of sequential form that identifies the individual with the model of social participation, clearly has to do with the equally and apparently sudden generation of conflicts of identifying character that are represented and are acted out in the origins of social behavior. I am referring to the actual selection process of civilizations

with which they come to justify what is supposedly a sign of rebellion which, having remained latent, explodes through connection to the other forms of conflict that do not represent the conditions in which that would manifest itself, that is to say, it does not attend to the same reasons, but is identified as the argument for its presumed guidelines of behavior that by magic convert into the standard for extrapolation and dislocating the original conflict, translates into a system of historical contingency whose last analysis is the irresponsibility of those who having warned about it (when? at what moment?)- would have to attend to it as such and try to solve it.
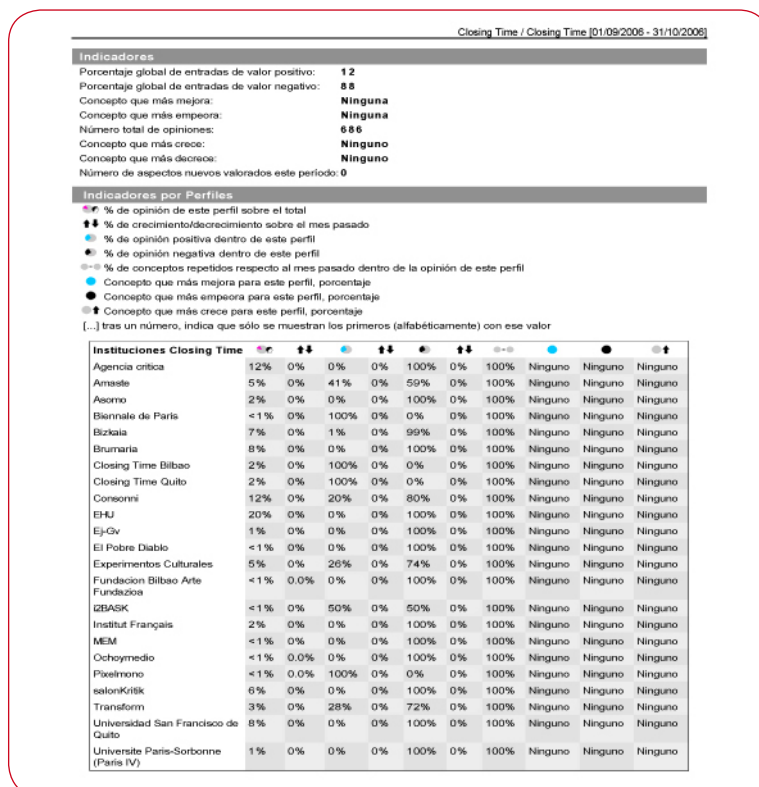
With the so called Sarkozy Law in France, came a series of legal principles that under the substratum of politics establish society as a symptomatic body, social paradigm that –bore witness- to how the superior order of Law, (in this case the state above the social individuals), sequentially determines the sum of conflict patterns. (immigration-culture) and they do, - the determining factor here-, installing at the same time the ontology of its jurisprudence, creating the image of it and its truth, leveling its particular form of "understanding" categories that this same power as instructor establishes, to position ourselves finally before the revolution of the definitive extrapolation of the symbol of assumption, which each of the diverse realities that configure a broader reality, the social (although without being homogeneous), abdicate from their imminent reality, of their capacity as authentic symbolic imaginary, to be described from this moment on as *identification standards* –mass- and acknowledge the existence of this image of faith as the structure of the social goal. It could be called the Law of historic necessity.

But this is not the only or the greatest derogation. It is not the law that acted as a fuse. It was the establishment of the supposed image of a unifying conflict that served as a transmission route to another sphere of greater realities, the true condition of search… To reinstate [and to do it in the symbolic origins of the setting par excellence of the revolution, the cradle of the people in the republic] the supra real (superior) order, that of awareness of the inevitable (the necessary), the subsequent curfew, as response anticipated by the order, according to a stego-encrypted strategy, that assumes its revolutionary character, of incitation to the masses. (not to the citizens, -in the first analysis…-) so that through its response to the threat of the violation of its right to be {associated symbol, citizen with different conditions and in difference, in its consubstantial state of law, of religion, of economy, of ideology, of symbols, of access……} incorporates by itself the last identification between answer and reprisal, between the burning of cars at night in the suburbs (Banlieue) and the reasonable –then- logic of the curfew.

One of the reasons that gives us an idea of how this image forms precisely in continuity is the metonymic identification between the Sarkozy Law project of official emigration, that was not the direct contributing factor which caused the disturbances and the state of emergency laws that promulgated in the periphery of Paris and other provinces when Sarkozy himself called the participants in the disturbances "riffraff", unifying the peripheral conscience and its exclusion. Both now commonly confused at least outside France. (later we will talk about the different curfews in Ecuador, another of the headquarters of this project).

Such is the foresighted capacity of order to substitute or replace, not only regulating but also standardizing, the permutation of the basic conditions of a culture, the factor and symbolic forms of each and every identification, a type of question then arises that possibly should be asked previously. What type of answers? Or better still. What forms of action maintain us as individuals in a certain culture where our consideration

Closing Time / Closing Time [01/09/2006 - 31/10/2006]

Indicadores

Porcentaje global de entradas de valor positivo:	12
Porcentaje global de entradas de valor negativo:	88
Concepto que más mejora:	Ninguna
Concepto que más empeora:	Ninguna
Número total de opiniones:	686
Concepto que más crece:	Ninguno
Concepto que más decrece:	Ninguno
Número de aspectos nuevos valorados este periodo:	0

Indicadores por Perfiles

- % de opinión de este perfil sobre el total
- % de crecimiento/decrecimiento sobre el mes pasado
- % de opinión positiva dentro de este perfil
- % de opinión negativa dentro de este perfil
- % de conceptos repetidos respecto al mes pasado dentro de la opinión de este perfil
- Concepto que más mejora para este perfil, porcentaje
- Concepto que más empeora para este perfil, porcentaje
- Concepto que más crece para este perfil, porcentaje
- [...] tras un número, indica que sólo se muestran los primeros (alfabéticamente) con ese valor

Instituciones Closing Time	●↗	↑↓	●	↑↓	●	↑↓	●-●	●	●	●↑
Agencia crítica	12%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Amaste	5%	0%	41%	0%	59%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Asomo	2%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Biennale de Paris	<1%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Bizkaia	7%	0%	1%	0%	99%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Brumaria	8%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Closing Time Bilbao	2%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Closing Time Quito	2%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Consonni	12%	0%	20%	0%	80%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
EHU	20%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Ej-Gv	1%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
El Pobre Diablo	<1%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Experimentos Culturales	5%	0%	26%	0%	74%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Fundacion Bilbao Arte Fundazioa	<1%	0.0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
ẼBASK	<1%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Institut Français	2%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
MEM	<1%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Ochoymedio	<1%	0.0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Pixelmono	<1%	0.0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
salonKritik	6%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Transform	3%	0%	28%	0%	72%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Universidad San Francisco de Quito	8%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno
Universite Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV)	1%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%	Ninguno	Ninguno	Ninguno

Images of the prospection of the network of the project Closing Time and analysis of social climate (impact in the institution and several influences) among participating nodes and related blogs to the central topic, developed by the software JUDOsocialware by ASOMO.

of subjects always prevails whilst at the same time being able to anticipate the laws of this culture; constructing not only the   implied reality, but also the legitimate authority of its consequences? In what way can we protect, if not defend, the idea of discontinuity of the desire of what is necessary, of what remains here, of that is how it is?.

We proposed that the things here were not in this way, that given certain conditions (in this supposed particulars), of cultural recognition, we put aside the presumed symbiosis between figure and form, -the mechanics of a rhythm that closes-, to open ourselves to the imaginary possibility. It could be that we first have to put our rigorous signs of identification in crisis, that which defines us as ourselves, without even understanding what such a circumstance consists of. Perhaps just an object. But let´s look closely at the facts, we attend to its sequence in a different order, where they are neither prevalent nor conductive. Where all this representation, in its analysis (visualization) of the systems of objectivity and subjectivity could predict (make) its own riot, to anticipate all that were not the same reality, -curfew-.

This is the scene: five agents of "advanced" art, who work in France, seated in front of an audience, in a prestigious museum in another country. The night before the conference thousands of cars burned in Paris, their clothes still smell scorched. The conference is about art as the last reality. Not a single word is spoken about the Banlieue. A few hours later Closing Time begins.

CINEMA
30th of March, 1968, Godard leaves Paris and begins the filming in London of One Plus One / Sympathy for the Devil with the Rolling Stones in the studio recording the mythical song and the Black Panthers as parallel icon, allegory that is underlined by the suicide of the 3rd protagonist Eve Democracy.

In the original version, the story flows above the argument. The song is never shown completed.
The intention to film a –straight narrative- documentary/fiction, finally overflows in the episodic discontinuity.

The same day the president of the Republic De Gaulle announces the dissolution of the French Assembly and calls for early elections.

-27th of October, 2005. the disturbances begin close to Paris and rapidly spread to the rest of France and other cities in Europe. The riots are characterized by the burning of cars and the violent confrontation between hundreds of youths and the French police. The incidents began after the death of two young Moslems of African origin who died while trying to escape from police in Clichy-sur-Bois, a poor commune in a banlieue (suburb) in the east of Paris and were exacerbated by the declarations of the interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy who called the rioters "scum". The disturbances have spread to other areas of France (Seine-et-Marne, Val-d´Oise, Lille, Rouen, Dijon and Marseille) and also to other countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Holland, Switzerland…).
http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/disturbios_de_Francia_de_2005

-10th of November, 2005- 17.30 Auditorium of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. During this encounter the philosophers Yves Michaud and Francesco Masci, the art critic Stephen Wright, the director of the Biennale Paris Alexander Gurita and the historian of ideas Francoise Gaillard, put forward their own concepts and visions of the new statute of art.

/activities guide of the French Institute Bilbao.
The same day the director of the biennale Paris gives me a commission for an artistic project. I accept on condition that I have the freedom to discover and describe the non correlation between what is real and what is pragmatic. It occurred to me to make a programme in Paris with agents, I proposed to record a dislocated fictional film with actors.

-December 2005. The Biennale Paris gives its confirmation to the project Closing Time. In January and February I contact Dayana Rivera in Quito, Ecuador and Iskander Rementeria in Bilbao, they assume the coordinated management of the departments and the headquarters of CT Quito and CT Bilbao are set up. I, from CT Paris, will film a joint fiction of all of this. Synopsis: Discontinuity-Anticipation. We do not believe in the arguments of immateriality nor in the alibis of the production systems of artistic discourse such as the Biennale. The project assumes its condition to make. (and to be able to be unfaithful to itself).

-23rd of March, 2006. A state of emergency and curfew in Ecuador are decreed by the government in the face of protests by students and native Indians.

-March-September 2006. Production of the programme completed with authors and participants Closing Time.

-May 2006. The Pompidou Centre presents, on the contrary to the artists idea, in retrospective format "VOYAGES IN UTOPIA, GODARD, 1946-2006 Á LA RECHERCHE D´UN THEOREME PERDU". Initially this project entitled "Collage(s) of France, Archaeology of cinema according to Jean-Luc Godard" was made up of nine exhibition rooms where the order of the visit was imposed. In each of them the visitor was offered a reflection of poetic and philosophic nature thanks to a general question of approach –montage of images taken from the history of art, the history of cinema and current affairs- that could evoke the beginning of hieroglyphics.

-October 2006, Closing Time agrees, with the Biennale Paris, the independence of this project with respect to the official programme and carries out the three parallel stages. The 37 authors who intervene daily by videoconference connecting the headquarters, act in the simultaneous film. On the last day of filming in Paris with Dojo Cinema I am told of Godard´s unsuccessful project.

Apophenia, heterotopia, juxtaposition, episodic collage, …contingency. The order of sensations that carried us so strongly to the filming, wanting almost to trap this time in its spontaneity, observing the functioning of its techniques beyond that of the objective or subjective. The premonition that the representation in the form of non correlative story had as much to do with the type of mechanism as with the sequences that, in apparent disorder, we wanted to construct by means of its dramatization: maintaining the rhythm of connection between field and counter field, between the backdrop of a multiple discourse and multiplier and the form of daily filming. Three authors, three stages, three discourses, three sequences….

Without a fixed script, without temporal or special unity of the narration, with the cameras blind to each other, …the only possibility of *Raccord* 9 lies in the reproduction of this norm according to which the sequential script -in our case the daily programme of intervention of authors- in its postproduction montage, will reveal the story-line and the meaning of Closing Time in regard to its initial propositions.

Our suspicions about the illusion of raccord (following the intuition of fear and its behavioral possibilities), concerning the going beyond the structures of identification

and to understand the true nature and scope of this technique to manifest how the symbolic-entity relationship of the phenomenon; [whose descriptive ability is prescribed precisely by the inherent conditions of language –historical necessity- that is applied to them], can express itself outside these conditions and in this way indicate its full significant capacity. Its real state of premonition in the time to which it directs its meaning, in this case that of the anticipation of the symbolic closure. It was that which at the same time confirmed to us the possibility to subvert as much the supposed norms of code as whichever marginal intention that will overlap once more the expression of this discontinued nature by the production mechanics of continuity, as much spoken as corporative. In this way, assuming the logic of the trick script, the old and incomplete idea of cinema for revolutionaries, we decided to give the film priority over the events, a deformed idea about the documents, and prepare to film each actor in each setting, without waiting for any new logic beyond the lens of the camera, (One Plus One does not mean one plus one = two, as Godard would say), and without believing at the same time in situational paradigms or in *Dogma* models of practical rules.

Our interest was therefore a multi-field object that, bringing together the conditions of respect and admiration for the authors, will transfer this personal invitation to the subject itself, expressing not now in another form but <u>in</u> another form of prominence, without having to modify its original discourse (identification). We can say, that it proposed a fictional, personal and intentionally cinematographic otherness.

The selfsame fact that the CT Paris web page will not now be put forward as a hypertext of links but as hyper-image for the appearance of fragmented videos whose non sequential form will announce a *progressive filming*, drawing the snaking of images as a symbolic quality of the screen; it proposed a type of live *interface*, a Snake Preview in which the spectator would access that which would be the conditions of a consecutive filming and little by little enter into this reality within the other reality. Not fantasy but fiction. Because the final construction of the object is the union of all its visible and invisible parts showing themselves –as when the group Dojo Cinema transformed our stage in La Sorbonne, Paris, into a film set, which was simultaneously broadcast live by videoconference to the other CT HQ´s, as in *la nuit americaine* by truffant-, bringing all this discontinuity to the shooting sequence of the project and for that we must convert the film into the true protagonist. In the

words of Julie (Jacqueline Bisset) in the film: "…films are more harmonious than life, Alphonse. There are no blockages in films, there are no empty pauses. Films move forward like trains, do you understand?, the same as trains in the night. People like you, like me, we are made to be happy in our work… in our cinematographic work". It is the simultaneous contribution of all the genres (clip, action, art and experimentation, anticipation, romantic comedy, social, musical, suspense, *nouvelle vague*, detective, …) the film buff quote and the most allusive artistic quote. When the documentary, in its maximum conditions of objectivity (the live broadcast of the construction of a ring, without intervals, for the transmission of an entire evening of boxing) is visualized as a subjective spectacle. A scene within the live stage, a déjà vu of a presence where contingency and discontinuity occur revealing the true flow of the story, reality-fiction, and how we anticipate them, or at least in this cinematic moment, foresee them.

In time, the way to view the idea of this object and its fiction will reveal to us its anticipation.

Perhaps it is because of all this that, to look now at Closing Time, its story flows above the argument, or that its account, being such a different fiction, tells things of its time and still has the presence of that day in Paris, when filming at seven in the morning with Rob in La Défense, Patrick and I sang for almost the entire duration:

-Time Is On My Side, …yes it is !

DISCONINUITY
Discontinuity is not in the difference towards the object, it resides in it.

-Sequences filmed in independent locations brought together in a fictitious setting.

-Daily filming/non sequential. Spontaneous sequences - pre designed scenes.

-Different interpreters for the same character.

-Advances and backtracking in the narration. Suspended temporality - non episodic space and time.

-Sequential script base modifiable according to the interventions of the authors-

actors.

-Voice in Off and dialogues extracted from the conference texts and interventions of the authors in the project.

-Construction of the meaning of the non lineal text, exchange of phrases.

-One single voice interpretation for all interpreters in Off (dubbing 2 voices-multi-character)

- Anachronism in voice identification man-woman/woman-man. (Lip-sync)

-Joining of shots in the same shot, fading into a single shot of two scenes.

-Mixture of recording formats and devices. Digital, analogue, cinematographic, manual, live, pre-recorded, objective, subjective, 16:9 / 4:3 ...

-Musical composition outside the image.

-Original music for the recording of scenes and subsequent montage of different tracks and audio.

-Audio, direct and studio in the same sequence and from sequence to sequence for shots without connection.
-Music in composed tracks and single track.

-Scenes unplanned and scenes with actors added to the general plot.

-Documentary as entrance to fiction, fiction as passage to the documentary.

-Minimal identification of wardrobe (symbolic) and *atrezzo*, different identities, physical, gender, skin.

- Subtitles non explicit. Jumps in translation.

-Alteration of the narrative plane. Filming/animation, characters, over-characters

(masks).

-Interruption of the visual plane. Graphics in movement, opening-closure-displacement.

-Maximum utilization of filmed material, concision and permutation of appearances and meanings.

-Dual beginning, dual ending / alternatives. Superimposed reading of events.

-Visibility in close up of trick photography and effects.

- Presentation –*Snake Preview*- initial episodic order and different final edition. Two plots.

-Artistic quote-Film buff quote in relation to genres.

-Interchange of meaning of genres.

-Lending of sequences and shots from other authors and methods.

-Direction of scenes shared and delegated (participants, directors) and alternative technical crews.

-Fictional-retraction of historic time-projection, anticipation in Flashback (sequences and shots).

-Same representational plane for different objects:Fiction/ Documentary/Making of/ Book.

-Multiple presentation context. Exhibition space/ cinema/ individual reading.

NOTES

1-Snake Preview. This is the name for the cinema screening of a film to an invited audience in order to carry out a survey to gauge the different aspects of film and assess possible changes, alternative endings, etc. with a view to a favorable acceptance by the general public. (N. of A.)

3-"It´s quite frequent, with respect to science, that the most truly awful of ingenuous questions is not the absence of

answers but the lack of willingness to take them seriously. In the case of history, this observation has special validity since its consolidation as an academic discipline- that is to say, since the beginning of the nineteenth century- for the compromising question that one wishes to know, that one could know (or could have known) different to what it is (or what it was). Thus is formulated the Aristotle paraphrase of the fundamental philosophical question that is asked about *eventuality*, *contingenc*y from the Latin contingere, "to occur (at the same time)" much more ancient than historic concepts and thoughts."

Daniel, Ute. Kompendium kulturgeschichte, Theorien, Praxis, Schlüsselwörter. Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main, 2001. p. 385.

4-The opposite concept to contingent, and always thinking closely to it, is since Aristotle the notion of the necessary: necessary is precisely, what cannot be any other way. As with many other conceptual couples of dichotomy construction- that is to say mutually exclusive and that don´t permit a third intermediary -, the great importance attributed to this conceptual opposition until well into the nineteenth century is especially based on that the line of separation drawn by virtue of it is destined to distinguish the divine kingdom- that of necessity- from the earthly sphere, in which many things could be different from what they are. That is to say, the idea of a "coherent whole which maintains itself on the margin of the possible cuts and delimitations that can be applied to it". With this conceptual couple enters another into the game, which in respect to the historiography and the philosophy of the story, is in close relation with Coincidence and Necessity: that of Continuity and Discontinuity.

Ibid., p. 386.

5- Ibid., p. 386.

6-7- Gadamer Hans-Georg. Warheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutic.

(= Gesammelte Werke, vol. 1: Hermeneutik), Tubinga 1990 (ed. Original 1960).

8-and initial quote- Gibson, William. Mundo Espejo (pattern Recognition). Pages. 53,54,81,82. Ediciones Minotauro, Barcelona 2004.

9- the continuity or (raccord) refers to the relationship that exists between the different shots of a film with the object of not breaking the illusion of sequence for the spectator or receptor. Each shot should relate to the previous one and serve as a basis for the next.

Inclusiva-net

First Inclusiva-net Meeting

CREDITS