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CTION-PRANK TOOLS-WEAPONS REVOLUTION-TERROR AMATEUR CONSPIRACY
ORGANS SHIT DOMINION CORPORATE MACHINE FILTHY LUCRE SOFT CONTROL
CHINE.LANG ART.SYS AFTER.NFT WRITING THEFT MAPPING READING DECAY

NTNTNT

OVER: *Bubble Chamber Event*, image courtesy of CERN.

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Bubble chambers were an analog means of tracing the path of subatomic particles. The particles were shot between two powerful magnetic poles in a chamber filled with superheated, highly pressurized liquid, and as they spun, collided and decayed, they left a thread of boil in their wake. An instant later, the liquid would completely erupt into boil, obliterating all trace of the particles. A camera would flash on the one initial moment of fizz, capturing the bubble-path of the vanished particles, and the resulting images of collision and decay were painstakingly analyzed for significant patterns. After decades of use, bubble chambers were replaced with computer modeling.

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NTNTNT

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- B / ARTIST-ACTIVIST | ACTION-PRANK | TOOLS-WEAPONS | REVOLUTION-TERROR**
- C / AMATEUR CONSPIRACY | COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS | OCCULT NETWORKS |
SACRIFICIAL SCIENCE | BASE ORGANS**
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Natalie Bookchin

Vuk Cosic

Critical Arts Ensemble : Steve Kurtz

Fiambrrera : Santiago Barber Cortés, Jordi Claramonte i Arrufat
and Curro Aix Gracia

Irrational : Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting

I/O/D : Simon Pope and Matt Fuller

Olia Liliani with Florian Cramer

Geert Lovink with Sarah Diamond and Dee Dee Halleck

Jenny Marketou

Mongrel : Mervin Jarman and Richard Pierre-Davis

Rtmark : "Frank" and "Raoul"

Alexei Shulgin

Cornelia Sollfrank

INTERVIEW COLLECTIVE

Amy Alexander

Angus Andrew and Ian Brook

Jason Brown

Josh Caffrey

Zoe Crosher

Cathy Davies

Mollie Engelhard

Fran Ilich <net.net.net.mx>

Grace Kim

Jen Liu

Astra Price

Erica Redling

David Reed

Casey Schatz

Braxton Soderman

Naomi Spellman

The Toxic Titties

Nathaniel Udell

INTRODUCTION /

ZOE CROSER <*net.net.net*>

NATALIE BOOKCHIN *Interview*

JASON BROWN *NTNTNT*

ZOE CROSER

The <net.net.net> project lived and breathed net.art mania, its speed paralleling the dot.com frenzy of the time, denying those involved any distanced reflection. Enthusiasm suffused it; the excitement of the conference, the speed of the visiting net.artists' turnaround, the half-drunk interviews spiced with international wit. Its logic was a logic of momentum, of an absolute present; it did not consider consequences; it provoked continually shifting action (akshun). Behind the van trips between CalArts and the MOCA lectures, impermanent connections were made, transient partnerships struck up; sparks flew. A logic like youth: a naïve motion that made sense at the time.

Like Bateson, Mead, and Brand sitting at a kitchen table on that March morning in 1976, I am sitting at my kitchen table in March 1996. I'm looking at the pages on which their interview is published. I'm particularly intrigued by a photograph that Brand included, one evidently given to him by Mead or Bateson. It's a large picture, too large to include in one frame, so it stretches across two pages. The caption identifies the setting as the 1952 Macy Conference—the ninth, the conference with the last real Macy transcript, for the tenth volume... was not a transcript but was instead formal papers.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman*. p. 80

It began on a utopian (tequila-ravished) night in Echo Park. The 'group' conducted its first interview around a table in Natalie Bookchin's little bungalow, where Natalie and Grace Kim smoked cigarettes for the first time. That initial group was the Bookchin-

led Akshun class-collective, who were, in 1999, in the messy afterglow of their recent eBay auction of a CalArts gallery.

Wired News

"Free Speech vs. Restricted Trade" by Michael Stroud

3:00 a.m. 23.Oct.1999.PDT

VALENCIA, California—It's every art school dean's nightmare: a group of students and alumni auction off space in your school gallery to the highest bidder on eBay. Then they start considering whether to take bids from dissidents in North Korea, a country with which Americans are forbidden by law to trade. That's exactly the position the prestigious California Institute of the Arts in Valencia now finds itself in....

"We're not friends of the oppressed, and we're not defending their views," said an art student, who gave her name only as "Mona." "Our complaint is about not having a forum for the free exchange of views."

As for the auctioning off of the gallery space usually reserved for students' work, Mona said the students are making a statement about the way art is displayed—in most galleries anyway.

"It's not necessarily the best artists who are awarded with visibility," Mona said. "It's a matter of where you went to school, who you know. We wanted to reduce it to the most base economic sense."

And, truth be told, the students wanted to throw a party. The roughly US\$150 they've collected so far will help them throw a shindig for a Russian punk rocker and Web artist whose exhibition runs from 11-16 December.

<http://wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,32070,00.html>

Akshun spent the entire \$660 from the eBay auction on champagne for the opening party. And Alexei Shulgin DJed the opening event with his 386DX.

Following the map laid out in the Akshun sister-class, Natalie's

"Power of the Line," the class-collective started off the series of

http://www.calarts.edu/~line/seminar_require.html

interviews with Steve Kurtz of CAE. We didn't care too much about

the language of the CAE books, or how they were received. Rather, we wanted to know about the meat of their actions, their triadics and formations, the blood and guts of CAE, a collective with a ten-year track record. Within a collective space, how do you make a project start and move? How do you create a motion and a momentum in this net.art explosion? How do you grasp the net.art freak-out, the people who perpetuated it, gained from it?

Story listed directly below the Akshun story on the *Wired News* page:
"Inflated Public Offerings Loom" by Joanna Glasner
2:20 p.m. Oct. 22, 1999 PDT

Buying shares of a hot company at its stock market debut—already a costly undertaking—is getting even pricier. But so far, it looks like IPO inflation isn't scaring investors away. And a bunch of companies are hoping that pattern will continue into next week....

Slavin expects a few offerings next week are also set to rake in big first-day gains, although he's not predicting any repeat of Sycamore's debut.

<http://www.wired.com/news/business/0,1367,32058,00.html>

The intention of this book parallels that of the <net.net.net> conference and project, a series of links and stoppages, references layered on top of half-truth mailing-list posts. All the <net.net.net> hearsay spread out vertically and horizontally, simultaneously, creating an expansive root structure. First came the conference contacts, and the workshops and the lectures and the interviews (the actual events); then the gathering of these interviews; the collective consolidation and idea of fragmentation; the actual fragmentation of the interview texts; the conceptualization of the fragmentation; and finally the re-collection and un-collection and reinvigoration into this final book-form. Rhizomatically speaking, it just kept on happening.

What follows is far from a collection of straight transcripts of a conference event; nor are these the "proceedings" of the confer-

ence. The interview texts remain incredibly raw, exposing the burps and hiccups of those late nights, invigorated and activated by sitting beside related excerpt-texts, brilliantly integrated by Jason Brown. This book realizes the promise, and the disappointment, of our recent <net.net.net> utopia. A frenzied path to historicize something that happened (only?) three years ago. Looking back, agape, I wonder how to set historical parameters on an event whose logic was so much its own, why it is so difficult to see the pattern when you are inside it. The blurred motion of <net.net.net> becomes an almost blindingly perfect reflection of its dot.com bust time.

From *Yahoo Market Guide*, May 2002:

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Sycamore Networks, Inc. develops and markets products that transport voice and data traffic over wavelengths of light, designed to enable customers to quickly and cost effectively create usable network capacity over existing fiber. For the six months ended 1/26/02, revenue fell 84% to \$43 million. Net loss totaled \$283.3 million, up from \$12.4 million. Results reflect weak conditions across the telecommunications industry....

<http://biz.yahoo.com/p/s/scmr.html>

What is left is a collection of broken-up interviews, condensed and refigured like dreams, surrounded by debris and rubble and fragments. Interviews remembered only because of the last edit, memories tinged and tainted by the utopian enthusiasm in which these interviews were conducted. Lingering texts that reconfigure events of the day, omitting and expanding unwittingly.

The photograph shows a large group of men and one woman — Margaret Mead — sitting around cloth-covered tables pulled into a U-shape. A speaker

stands at the mouth of the U; the caption identifies him as Yehoshua Bar-Hillel. But wait. That must mean the date is incorrect, since Bar-Hillel spoke at the tenth conference. He wasn't present at the ninth. So this photograph must have been taken in 1953, at the conference in which the conversation was so meandering and dilatory that it couldn't be published. I wonder where the caption came from. I imagine Bateson digging out the photograph and giving it to Brand while he and Mead clue Brand in on who was who as Brand scribbles down the names, probably while they are still sitting at the kitchen table.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman*, pp. 80-81

THE ORIGINAL AKSHUN MEMBERS:

Nathaniel Udell, Zoe Crosher, Angus & Ian, Naomi Spellman, Grace Kim, Josh Caffrey.

They were only present, really, for two of the interviews: one with Steve, who inspired the promise of utopia, and one with Alexei, who knew its demise before it had begun.

Wheelchairs, shifting personas, shifting importance...

Now I notice that Mead isn't the only woman in the picture. Another woman sits with her back to the photographer, her arms extended, hands reaching out to a machine I can't quite see. The caption identifies her as "Janet Freud," but I know this can't be right either. She must be Janet Freed, listed in the published transcripts as "assistant to the conference program." I have seen her name in the typed transcripts of the editorial meetings that followed the later conferences, and I know more or less what she did.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman*, p. 81

THE INTERVIEW(SECOND) COLLECTIVE—SEMESTER II:

Jason Brown, Zoe Crosher, David Reed, Casey Schatz, Mollie Engelhart, Amy Adler, Cathy Davies.

The set of participants changed according to need as stage succeeded stage. Trying to nail down who was involved and when has proven to be a historical faux pas. Our attempts to capture, edit, pinpoint, date, reedit, have backfired a bit. I am the only original member still involved. Natalie has long since swept past this net.art wreck. She's heavily involved in genetics, now.

She was the one who presided over the physical transformations of signifiers as they went from tape-recording to transcript to revised copy to gallery to book. Others—the editors Teuber, Mead, and von Foerster, the organizer Fremont-Smith, and the chairman McCullochz worried about content—but her focus was the materiality of the processes that make sounds into words, marks into books.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman*, pp. 83

Then the dark times. After the conference, we floundered for a year, a skeleton crew, knowing we were sitting on something important, but not knowing what it was or what it meant. The confusion of conflicting transcriptions, multiple edits, of turning the spoken to the written. The frustration of realizing the original Mongrel & Alexei interviews were lost, lacunae, due to faulty audio on the video cameras, while scrambling to conduct last-minute participant Cornelia Sollfrank's interview during the rolling blackouts of Fall 2000. We brought in hired guns to take stock of what was left to do. Sometimes they stuck it out, sometimes they didn't. Who did we remember, and who did we forget?

THE THIRD COLLECTIVE/HIRED GUNS

Jen Liu, Erica Redling, the mysterious transcriber Elaine Farris, Astra Price, Braxton Soderman, The Toxic Titties, John Kieselhorst

She did the best she could, but the transcription took much time and she had many other things to do. When she was told not to take time, the transcript had more ellipses than words, and she felt bad. What to do? She suggested to Fremont-Smith that he and McCulloch insist the speakers deliver drafts of their talks ahead of time. Then she wouldn't have to strain to listen to tape-recordings that were noisy beyond endurance by today's standards. She wouldn't have to guess at unfamiliar words (the manuscripts of the transcripts are peppered with misspellings).

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman*, p. 81

This project has run its course. Historicizing is not an automatic process—somebody has to DO it, knowing full well there is no singular claim to history. Acknowledging this, we had a sincerely collaborative vision, true to the utopian potential of the time. Our frenzied, drunken hooray with Steve Kurtz in Natalie's living room has become this object-bookness, with the strangely final weight of a memorial.

Miss Freed has no such illusions. Embedded in context, she knows that words never make things happen by themselves—or rather, that the only things they can make happen are other abstractions, like getting married or opening meetings. They can't put marks on paper. They can't get letters in the mail. They can't bring twenty-five people together at the right time and in the right place, at the Beekman Hotel in New York City, where white tablecloths and black chalkboards await them. For that, material and embodied processes must be used—processes that exist never in isolation but always in contexts where the relevant boundaries are permeable, negotiable, instantiated.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman*, pp. 83

What remains is not a history or a crystallization of the pieces, the formal visits, or the cloudy MOCA-lectures, but an artifact of the surges that made us flow and ebb with such flushed vision.

On a level beyond words, beyond theories and equations, in her body and her arms and her fingers and her aching back, Janet Freed knows that information is never disembodied, that messages don't flow by themselves, and that epistemology isn't a word floating through the thin, thin air until it is connected up with incorporating practices.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman*, p. 83

The rigor and the passion of this project were not lost—it breathes and heaves ever in fits and starts. Is it possible, in this casual history of slippering references, to acknowledge and not monumentalize? We move fast, trying not to forget.

NATALIE BOOKCHIN

Collective > What was the idea behind putting <net.net.net> together?

Bookchin > When I first decided to do <net.net.net>, I pitched it to both my departments (Photography and Integrated Media) as a class that would have a series of artist/activists come in to give workshops and meet with students in lieu of having a single faculty member teach them for the semester. The plan was for the artists to come in for two weeks and basically to teach this class. I didn't see myself at that time as a curator, and I wasn't methodically curating anything. Ultimately I was, but the process was much more spontaneous than that. The people I brought, I had either worked with or was working with or they were people I wanted to see in LA, people that could bring something to a discussion that was at the time nonexistent, both within LA and at CalArts. I wanted something that wasn't just virtual. Because even though most of the work was happening on the net, it was also happening in real time and in real space.

Collective > How did you choose the people you invited for the conference? And more specifically, what kind of connection were you trying to make between artists and activists?

Bookchin > Some of the people that I chose were self-proclaimed and not-so-self-proclaimed activists. The self-proclaimed activists felt their work was openly politically driven or politically motivated. The others, who claimed they weren't activists in not thinking that their work was political per se, were activists because they were working in a medium that put them into a position of doing something

against the grain of conventional ideas of what art is and of what art is acceptable. I chose people who I felt were making things rather than just theorizing about them. This was a primary choice for me. But I didn't think that systematically determining in my choices. I was thinking about who was making amazing work at this particular period of time. Some of these people I invited aren't doing anything anymore, and right now we would bring in a very different group of people. Things are very different now, not just because of September 11th, but also because of the collapse of the new economy, which held a different kind of utopian idea.

- Collective > Why did you want to have such a long series at multiple locations?
- Bookchin > I didn't want it to be a one-time thing, where someone would come give a lecture and leave. I wanted there to be a sustained contact where people could drink and have dinner together, to have the informal setup of the interviews. It was also important to hear a lecture in a formal space, a legitimizing space like MOCA, where at that point these net.artists could only have come in through the back door. Now, years later, they would be welcome in the front door. Finally, I wanted it to happen at CalArts, where there were hands-on workshops and studio visit encounters. All these semi-curatorial aspects were as important to me as who I was selecting to bring in to take part in them. But one curatorial thing I didn't want to do was to set up a historical context for <net.net.net>. I didn't talk about early video art practice and those parallels with net.art, such as channels of distribution to get alternative content out. I didn't talk about Dada. I didn't contextualize it in that way because it just didn't seem like the place to do that. Reconstructing that context becomes something you can do after

the fact. The conference was more about bringing people together that were doing things right at that point.

Collective > So your hope for <net.net.net> was not to have just a series of top-down lectures, but to make it a means for people to communicate informally, on a one-to-one basis?

Bookchin > Yes, absolutely. And also to put the participating students in a position of responsibility where they would need to do some active, investigative work to push the conference further. At that time I did think that there would be a book that would come out of it, and I am so happy that it's you and not me doing it because it extends my desire to avoid a solely top-down process. I wanted the experience to be something where the students could take a position and really integrate, interrogate and question the voice of professorial authority of the visiting artist/activist who was coming in and giving this formal presentation and lecture.

Collective > Rather than bring in media theorists to talk about the net, it seems like you only brought people who were both making and theorizing.

Bookchin > Well, they could have been theorizing, but they had to be making. That point is crucial. There are a lot of people I didn't bring.

Collective > Like the canonical web artists that you didn't bring because they were just making but not theorizing? Do you see a separation between aesthetic work and activist work?

Bookchin > I have a bias in my own art practice, towards a more activist-type art production. I think aesthetics is important, but the idea has to be driving the aesthetics rather than the aesthetics driving the idea. I don't think it has to fundamentally, but it's my bias. Even though I'm denying that I "curated" <net.net.net>, of course I did curate. And I curated around my own interests because... [pause] I could. I remember the summer before, thinking about who I was going to

bring, and I made a list. I was in London at the time, at a pub with Benjamin Weil, and I asked—

Collective > That's funny, I'm sorry.

Bookchin > Why?

Collective > Well, just because Benjamin Weil is so concerned with aesthetics and design and not so much with activism.

Bookchin > I know. So I said, "Hey Benjamin, who do you think I should bring?" And everybody he said, I didn't bring.

[LAUGHTER]

Bookchin > I'm sure that the New York scene hates my guts! I'm being facetious. But I brought a kind of anti-aesthetic group of artists mainly from Europe.

Collective > It's dishing, but who didn't you bring based on that list?

Bookchin > Well, I could say who I didn't bring who are canonical in the genre of net.art. People I could have brought, and in retrospect, maybe I should have. Mark Napier was somebody that Benjamin suggested, who is very important to many people, but for me the use of collage as an aesthetic tactic right now just doesn't seem to have the kind of edge that I was looking for. I didn't bring Superbad, even though I think they have made really important work.

Collective > You tried to bring Jodi.

Bookchin > I did. I did try to bring them.

Collective > Did it feel ironic to bring these renegade net.artists to lecture at MOCA?

Bookchin > I don't know if I would say "ironic," but maybe it was a playful gesture, using this institution that has a status and an authority that many of the artists were not particularly interested in.

- Collective > That dynamic translated into many of the MOCA presentations. But you didn't just have a classroom space or a museum space.
- Bookchin > There were all these different kinds of venues in which conversations and actions could potentially emerge. Normally when you go to a conference, there is a set way you act, a discourse you have to be part of—the formal aspect of the conference. But people really talk about the most exciting things in the bars or in the bedroom, right? Great collaborations emerge from those moments of play that aren't legitimized. So with <net.net.net> I was trying to make legitimate spaces for these things to happen. The artists stayed in the houses, not necessarily the bedrooms, eating dinner with us instead of just being in the classroom at CalArts. The central event wasn't the MOCA lectures. All the spaces were important.
- Collective > MOCA was the low point, the least interesting. That was my experience.
- Bookchin > That was the only way that some people in the community would have access. They weren't all invited to the dinners, right?
- Collective > Sometimes the leap from very personal interaction to an interaction onstage was a hard leap to make. The public lectures were often painful.
- Bookchin > You weren't drinking enough tequila beforehand!
- Collective > One amazing thing about the MOCA lectures was the incredible amount of people that were there, packing the house.
- Bookchin > That was nice. That felt good because there were so many unknowns. I thought these were unknown people, unknown entities. I spent hours going through different universities and colleges all around Los Angeles area collecting all the faculties' names, the newspapers, and I just spammed everybody. And it worked!

Collective > Bringing this particular group together at MOCA sort of set up an alternative net.art canon. Did you see this in a political light?

Bookchin > I wasn't trying to set up another canon. That's why I wanted to bring people in as often as I could, so that the conference wasn't focusing on the stars. I don't think it functioned like a canon. But if I had to do the conference again, I would think more strategically about who I would bring in. And I did throw some wrenches in the tradition by bringing in Geert Lovink and Fiambrrera and really emphasizing the collaborative aspects of art-production rather than trying to promote individuals.

Collective > You also brought in several groups.

Bookchin > I first brought in individuals and became more ambitious and invited them to bring their partners in (partners in crime, not necessarily partners in bed). I wanted to emphasize the role of collaboration in this kind of work. That was very important for me because I think that this technology and also the ideas of networking have to do much more with collaboration than focusing on a sole individual working alone as the locus of their own practice.

Collective > Did you have any personal motivation for putting <net.net.net> together?

Bookchin > There was a selfish reason for wanting to bring this discourse to Los Angeles—I was new, and I was trying to find the net.art community in LA. It seemed that this conference would be a way of doing that, of accessing a community that I could be a part of, through both CalArts and the local scene...

Collective > You were trying to create a network in LA?

Bookchin > Yes. Many of the artists I brought had spoken in public places all around the world. All of these people were, at that point, public figures. But not in LA. Steve Kurtz had been working for years but

had never given a talk in Los Angeles before. And at the time, Alexei Shulgin was a really important figure in net.art, and before that a photographer of some renown, but had never come to Los Angeles before. It was great to be able to bring them to this city and also to bring them to a major public space that would attract other people. I really wanted to have the conversation with a larger community, so it was strategic for me to have the public lectures at MOCA. We got large audiences from UCLA, from USC, from Art Center—I doubt that would have happened if the talks had only taken place at CalArts.

Collective > That's an interesting point. Because just geographically, the distance from Art Center to USC or USC to UCLA is maybe 15 or 20 miles—about the same as the distance from one end of Manhattan to the other—but these distances in Los Angeles feel vast. A lot of that sense of separation in LA has to do with the car and the freeways, but even more of it has to do with a mythology of absence, the idea that in spite of millions of people living in a very dense landscape, there's somehow nothing here. By putting <net.net.net> together, do you feel like you had any success in dispelling those illusions of absence and a lack of community?

Bookchin > No.

[LAUGHTER]

Collective > That was easy.

Bookchin > Well, I was being a little... I—

Collective > Oh, my God, that was classic!

Bookchin > It was really hard because I felt that—I felt disappointed after <net.net.net> because I had thought that something would come out of it in that sense. One thing that came out of it is that I

personally got a lot more invitations—but that wasn't the intention! The intention was not to make myself into a public figure by doing it. I mean, I was really interested in trying to create a local community. But I felt like people showed up, and when it was over, it was over. People went back to their own separate spaces, and then the students graduated, and...

Collective > It's true.

Bookchin > I participated in Freewaves, and Anne Bray, who had come to some of the <net.net.net> things, wanted it to continue. So I organized the Street Action on the Superhighway event, and that was one continuation of it for me. That also drew a good conversation and a good crowd. But I think—I think LA is a really hard place. And I don't have a really clever answer for that one.

Collective > Where is the action, then?

Collective > The action is right here, baby, come on!

Collective > Would you say that the action wasn't at MOCA? It wasn't the events that happened there, even though it reached so many people?

Bookchin > I can't follow every trajectory that could have shot out of these events, but I know that a lot of people learned about things that they didn't know about before. A lot of people became informed. They learned about these artists, and maybe that's the best thing that could have happened. Also a lot more people at CalArts are now aware of these kinds of things. Maybe my fantasy of community is just not something that can happen here. I don't find community by going to an art opening. For me that's not... that's not really how it works. And I don't have any shortage of community, because I continue to do my work, I have various collaborators, I'm still using the net and then meeting people physically and going back to the net again. So I was a little too

strong in just saying no. I think that it happens in more subtle ways. It's not like all of a sudden there was a big community and a media lab was formed. Well, in fact there was a media lab that was formed, right? Which was C...

Collective > C-Level.

Bookchin > C-Level. I don't know if that has anything to do with this, but... I mean, it's something, right? Sometimes I tend to have these very big hopes about what can happen, and things end up happening in smaller ways that are less noticeable at that moment. At first I thought it was really a shame because <net.net.net> was so intense and so exciting, and then it seemed to dissipate. Or not even dissipate, but disappear. But I don't think it really did. I think it's more subtle than that.

Collective > When you describe it like that, it sounds like there are two mythologies in terms of personal contact—one about the net, and one about Los Angeles—which in a way are similar. It takes time to build a personal connection, which contrasts to the extreme intensity and rapidity that you can make that connection on the net. And in Los Angeles, those personal connections are there, but there's an enduring perception—in some cases true and in some cases not—that things here are totally distant and separate. Maybe just increasing the awareness of what is happening here is something in itself, something that goes along with the awareness that lasting connections usually take time to build?

Bookchin > Yeah, I agree. I wouldn't say "no" so extremely. It's also about setting out a set of possibilities that people can choose to attach themselves to, offering different models of practice.

I was thrilled by real things that occurred, like the fact that you have formed your own individual autonomous cell, creating links back to

this collection of interviews and the conference. Although I sometimes I felt frustrated because the conference was so ephemeral and people just came and went, I think that sometimes projects take a little while to brew, and other things can eventually erupt.

Collective > But it did take a while.

Bookchin > Yes. That is with a qualifier. I mean, I'm impatient. I'm an impatient person. I think it's really hard to see the slow connections that are made in such a short amount of time. And also when I was done working on <net.net.net>, I left the country for six months. I took the year off from teaching, so I wasn't around. I didn't get to see the immediate results in terms of people working or not working together.

Collective > In terms of immediate results, doing a book seems really different from putting a bunch of people together as quickly as possible and having them interact in a space. But maybe it's also a little more similar to the patient, ongoing process of bringing people together as a community?

Bookchin > How so?

Collective > Bringing together a community happens slowly and organically over time, and we don't necessarily see a lot of it while it happens—we usually just see the more dramatic public symptoms. And a book can also take years for its gestation before we finally get to see an object. So that kind of relationship, a patience in working towards something, is maybe similar to the process of...

[UNINTELLIGIBLE]

Bookchin > Well, to go back to the bringing people together as quickly as possible, <net.net.net> wasn't that quick. I mean, I thought about it for about six months, and then organized it for about six months, and then it was an eight-month ongoing thing. So it

happened slowly, you know what I'm saying?

Collective > Right, but the intensity of each individual was—

Bookchin > But that intensity, yeah. That was apart from the planning. That was more the final stage of bringing them together and seeing what happens, and exactly what would happen was up in the air. Whereas if you make a book, you know that it's going to have a particular lasting material form. We had videotapes from <net.net.net>, some of which lasted and some of which didn't, right? And then we had some projects that came out of it, some of which continued and some of which didn't. But with a book, you have a document that you know is going to be around for a bit of time, so there's a little more concern with purposefulness—you're deciding what to include and what to exclude. And the book is going to go on a lot longer than you're going to be around. I mean, there's more of a sense of immortality with a book.

Collective > Does it seem ironic?

Bookchin > Does it seem ironic?

Collective > To do that for net.art?

Bookchin > No. It actually doesn't seem ironic to me. I don't believe that one medium makes another one irrelevant, it just changes it. Photography didn't make painting irrelevant—it changed it. Some people argue it made it irrelevant, but it's still around. There's still a life and a culture around it. And I don't think that books are dead. I don't think they're going to be dead for a long time, if ever. I mean, I love them. Making a book as another iteration of something, it's not the same as putting it on the net, but it's just as valuable or viable. Nettime made a book called "Read Me" where they selected different texts, all of which you can get on the net, but they curated it. They decided which ones they wanted to

include, and they contextualized it and put it into a book form so they would have access to a different group of people, and readers could experience it in a very different way. Not everybody lies in bed reading the *New York Times* from their laptop screen, right? Well, I do. But a lot of people don't do that.

Collective > You do? I have this whole image...

Bookchin > I actually get the hard copy of the *New York Times*. But because I live in LA, I get it late, and I want to find out what's happening before then, so... yeah. So... no. I don't think book making is an irrelevant practice. Do you? Obviously you don't because you're doing it.

Collective > We're doing it.

Bookchin > Right.

Collective > But it's a question.

Bookchin > It's sort of a simple question—it's like suggesting that there can't be manifestations of an idea in different forms.

Collective > Yeah, but everything happens so fast. The thing we've been battling is this short shelf-life that net.art inhabits and the constant question of "you're still doing that?" To some people, we're doing ancient history.

Bookchin > I don't know. I don't think that net.art has to happen so fast. I think that it can happen very, very slowly, too. I/O/D took a long time to make *Web Stalker*. I'm doing a project now that I've been working on for the past year, and it's only partially done. I'm finding that the projects I'm interested in working on are projects that need groups of people to come together and that require enormous amounts of investigation and time—that's just as true of a work that will appear on the net. The net can produce speed and distribution, it can allow for that. But I don't think that the net

equals speed. I don't think that the two are synonymous.

Bookchin > If you take the idea of a network as being something beyond, above and beyond and outside of the Internet itself...

Collective > Right, it's just the content, right.

Bookchin > ...then I think you articulate it in a very precise way, yeah.

Collective > Yeah. That was—and that was really... I mean, it was a slow boat. It was just really hard to get moving. Our interest was really trying to understand and contextualize the whole thing, like just try to make sense out of something that made no sense at in the beginning.

Bookchin > What do you mean?

Collective > Just that this realization, like this eventual cell that has been created, took a long time in coming. And that was really frustrating. But all of us really engaged with the text in a very in-depth way. And the transition from a spoken text to a written text to getting the references—it's been an amazing way to look back. When you're in the middle of it, it's all happening so fast.

Bookchin > Right, right.

Collective > You're just, like, what the hell is going on?

Bookchin > I mean, it was so ambitious. I had no idea how ambitious it really was. And we were so worn out from it...

Collective > We were so worked.

Collective > But now we're finally getting to the end of the process. I kind of think we should call the book, like, N-T dot N-T dot N-T, as opposed to n-e-t-n-e-t-n-e-t.

Bookchin > That's always how I thought it would be.

Collective > I sort of did that for, like, shorthand.

Bookchin > That's what the website is.

Collective > The N-T-N-T. Oh, yeah, that was with the—that's how I got it, yeah. So I think maybe that's the way. 'Cause we were really discussing,

like, what the fuck are we supposed to call this?

Bookchin > But how—what would it be called? It would look like NT...

Collective > N-T-N-T-N-T-N-T.

Bookchin > It would be called N-T-N-T-N-T?

Collective > Maybe. 'Cause it's from net.net.net, just without the E.

Bookchin > Right. So it could be called net.net.net...

Collective > It's like without the, you know, without the consonant, or you know, whatever. I don't know...

Bookchin > Great.

Collective > And then we're always, like, what do we call it?

Collective > Well, that will be nice 'cause we can get sued by Microsoft...

Bookchin > Oh, right.

[TALKING SIMULTANEOUSLY]

Collective > What do you mean we can get sued by Microsoft?

Collective > NT-NT-NT.

Collective > I hadn't even thought of that. Oh, my God, you're right.

Bookchin > You should check if they've trademarked it.

Collective > 'Cause if they do sue us, we'll be famous.

Bookchin > Call it microsoft.microsoft.microsoft.

Collective > No.

[UNINTELLIGIBLE]

Collective > ...guess what our book is called...

[UNINTELLIGIBLE]

Collective > No, no, no.

Bookchin > I don't know if you have any more.

Collective > That's it. And the computer screen just clicked off and went to sleep, so I think it's an appropriate...

Collective > And we're going to run out of tape.

Collective > So I think that's the end.

JASON BROWN

I.

The first transmission over what would evolve into the Internet, originated in Los Angeles, with one machine at UCLA and the second at the Stanford Research Institute. On October 29, 1969 the research teams were on the phone with each other while the UCLA team tried to log in:

“Do you see the L?”

“Yes, we see the L,” came the response.

We typed the O, and we asked, “Do you see the O.”

“Yes, we see the O.”

Then we typed the G, and the system crashed....

<http://officialcitysites.org/URS/urs-1b-arpa.htm>

On the second try, they connected without a problem—it was just a bug. And bugs had already been in the lines for a long time. Early telephone operators were already describing random noise as bugs on the wires. And according to the Jargon Dictionary, the technical use of “bug” probably originated even earlier—the Vibroplex repeating telegraph key had a graphic of a beetle and was notoriously difficult for novices to use, often resulting in Morse code errors. But the origin of the computer bug was on September 9, 1947 when a moth was found in relay 70, panel F of the Mark II Aiken Relay Calculator. The moth was taped to a report sheet

<http://jargon.mu.nu/Archives/000266.html>

<http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/csr/comphist/objects/bug.htm>

(now in the Smithsonian) with the note *first actual case of a bug being found*. They declared the machine “debugged,” and in later anec-

dotes Admiral Grace Murray Hopper spread the term in it's
<http://ei.cs.vt.edu/~history/Hopper.Danis.html>
current usage.

There's a tendency to think of computer bugs as "actual" bugs, something like moths between relay points that can be plucked from the system, singular errors that can eventually be stamped out. But there's also something about information technology itself that squirms and flutters, bugs on the line spitting out random code and making unexpected connections. For example Grace Hopper, often credited with originating the term "bug," was also the inventor of COBAL ("Common Business Oriented Language"). And because COBOL programmers tried to save two bytes of storage, we ended up with Y2K, a bug far more infamous than the original moth.
<http://www.nyarm.com/apr99/0107my2k.html>

2.

The summer after <net.net.net>, I was working with the Independent Media Center during the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, helping run the live web radio feed.
<http://www.d2kla.org/>
When the gunfire started, we were taking cell phone calls from a concert on the first day of major marches and protests. Rage Against the Machine had finished playing in the fenced off parking lot next to Staples Center and the LA band Ozomatli had started playing. After about 15 minutes, the LAPD declared the concert an illegal assembly. A few minutes after that, they rushed the crowd.

Rubber-coated bullets are fired from a shotgun. Over a cellphone, the shots sounded like sharp cracks. *They're shooting at us*, the man yelled into the phone. *They're coming at us with horses*. In the background we heard screaming, popping noises, the sound of

hundreds of feet. The man on the phone yelled frantically at his friend, *get up, get up*. They ran. He told us the police had blocked the exit to the parking lot and were swinging nightsticks at anyone who tried to get past. They turned and ran in the other direction, more screaming, a protest chant in the background. The man was out of breath. We heard a helicopter roar over the phone, then roar over our own building. We sat in front of our computer screens a few blocks from where this was happening, staring at the phone handset, stunned. The audio kept streaming over the net, while the man panted over and over: *we're running... we're running... we're running...*

In spite of various lawsuits, the city declared the week of the DNC a complete success and praised the LAPD and National Guard for keeping downtown Los Angeles safe from violent anarchists.

http://www.jasonschock.com/writings/dnc2000-downs/hell_a_1.php3

<http://www.coagula.com/rage.html>

3.

The conversion of raw data into valid information is a mysterious alchemical process. Out of endless fields of empirical accounts and statistical output, only a tiny fraction is given the force of reality. When he first described a hypertextual linking system in 1945, Vannevar Bush was confronting a potential alchemical failure. He needed a way of dealing with mountains of scientific data generated by the dawn of atomic warfare, so much data that it threatened to swamp traditional indexing systems and overwhelm any individual researcher. In order to keep the alchemical information refinery working, he deployed another magical system—association—which used the sympathetic magic of the researcher's perception of linkage and the contiguous magic of the link itself.

Bush called his hypothetical information association device a *memex*, which was a military style contraction of *memory, external*.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/unbound/flashbks/computer/bushf.htm>

More than a personal database, Bush described this external mind as a site of collaboration, suggesting that the collected associative trails of many researchers would literally make sense, manufacturing new meaning out of the vast array of available data.

But nothing about associative indexing or collective cross-linkage requires the links to be logical or the collaboration to be rational. In fact, looking at our existing world wide hypertextual system, it almost feels like the exact opposite, with the aggregate result of collaborative linkage sometimes having only the most oblique or schizophrenic connection. Rather than a chorus of rational investigators, there is just as often a legion of voices, sometimes whispering filthy propositions and paranoid threats, sometimes gathering into a shout or a howl, sometimes diffusing into a conspiratorial haze of gossip.

The memex is a paranoid machine, filled with conspiracies and convoluted associations, but the root of the word paranoia suggests *a mind beside itself*, implying the same motivation behind oracles, conspiracy theories and external memory machines—a desire to see ourselves reflected in the world, to tie our stories together and surprise ourselves with the results. The root of the word conspiracy is not the painfully obvious collusion of the powerful but rather *breathing together*—working with others on an intimate level, actually sharing someone's air, even if that air is digital.

4.

On the cover of *Wired's* December 1999 issue, there is a winged woman leaping off a high cliff into a bright blue sky. Let's call her

an angel. Her arms and torso are dark, while her legs are pale and her feet are as gray as the stone behind her. Perhaps the color is filling her naked body as she leaps, or perhaps it's draining away. Her wings are tiny—far too small to hold her up—but her arms are flung high and her head held back, utterly confident. Or utterly resigned to her fate. The text below her reads, *Here We Go....* The Wired angel leaping into the sky was an image of blissful optimism, an overcoming of all the millennial paranoia surrounding the rollover of the Judeo-Christian odometer. But there was also a hint of cynical abandon, the suggestion that nothing was holding up the wired economy but a sense of irrational exuberance and “we” had already stepped off the edge into the void.

<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/7.12/full.html>

In the spring of 2000, the NASDAQ began a three year drop. And as the gas left the cyber-bubble it was once again clear that *cyber* does not mean techno or shiny or mechanical—it comes from the Greek root *to steer*. Cybernetics is the science of control, or more specifically, the study of feedback control loops (which puts a dark spin on all the *cyber* terms of the '90s: control-loop surfing, control-loop punk, control-loop art). However cheerfully the term had been used to market consumer electronics, *cyber* always referred to finding clever ways of exacting control over a system, computer systems, economic systems, social systems.... When Norbert Wiener first wrote about cybernetics in the 1940s, he was explicitly afraid of subtle social control mechanisms, feedback loops that would make people want to obey, freedom lost to an array of well-mapped desires.

5.

The term *net.art* was born in a garbled file which was later lost in a hard drive crash. It was a label which deleted itself and which

described a practice that no one would personally admit to practicing—at least none of the people we spoke with at <net.net.net> in the before and after shadow of Y2K. But this resistance to labeling was the sort of thing that made the web so exciting for artists and cultural experimenters in the early days of the graphical browser. Web work didn't need to be clearly named any more than the net itself needed to be a clean orderly research tool. It seemed as if the web could embody the illogical process of creation and collaboration, with all of the noise and mess.

When the web still felt like a brand new field of nomadic possibilities, some people equated it with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's rhizome—the concept of a multiplicity with fuzzy edges and connections passing between categories, as opposed to the divisions and stark categorizations of an indexical “branching tree” style hierarchy. Calling the web a rhizome usually came with the assumption that rhizomatic structures were qualitatively better than the striations and divisions of an indexical arboreal structure. But even at their most exuberant, Deleuze and Guattari still warned of the dangers of the rhizome. Lines of striation could impose homogeneity, but rhizomatic lines of flight were far more risky with their constant lunging after schizoid rupture. Attempts to flee oppressive structures could turn into the repetitious pathos of psychosis. The line of flight itself could even become a line of death, “a line of destruction pure and simple,” with the leap towards destratified freedom ending in the suicidal collectivity of fascism. But most often the rhizomatic line of flight ends in brutal recapture and the imposition of a yet more rigid order.

A Thousand Plateaus, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, p. 506

The 2000 Whitney Biennial featured web-based art for the first time. In a show in which some individual video artists had multiple

rooms and projections, ten net artists were put in a single room with a single computer, all of their work run by a single user in a single browser. Anyone else in the gallery was left to watch the projected computer screen, sitting lined up on a single bench. The mess of networked hypertextual art had been safely contained.

6.

This book began with the hope of collecting a few conversations, a set of interviews about art and activism on the net. But while we edited and transcribed, everything we discussed had changed. The notion of activism was radically different from post-Seattle 1999 to post-New York 2001. Web work in a time of sexy dot.com stock options stood in stark contrast to a time of post-crash bankruptcies and rampant technology unemployment. And some of the original clever net.art browser tricks had already become standard features, while pornography, spam and malware innovations had far surpassed artists in technical sophistication.

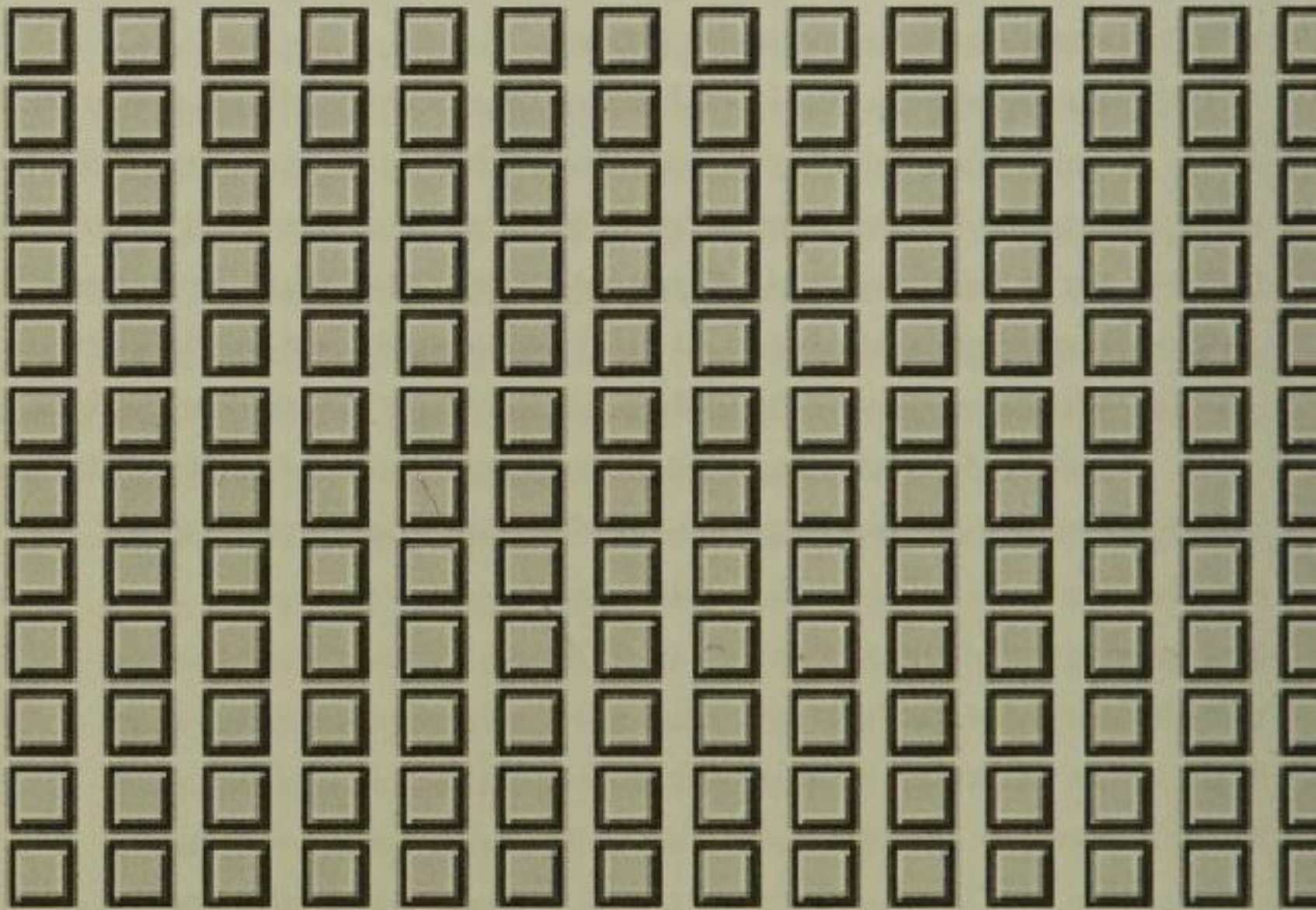
And as we tried to collect our <net.net.net> memories together into a physical thing, we realized that what is saved and what is erased has little to do with their value. Systems of forgetting and remembering operate on the same line and are subject to similar bugs, making some things suddenly appear out of the noise while some things flickered out of existence. We did not have a set of clean orderly interviews.

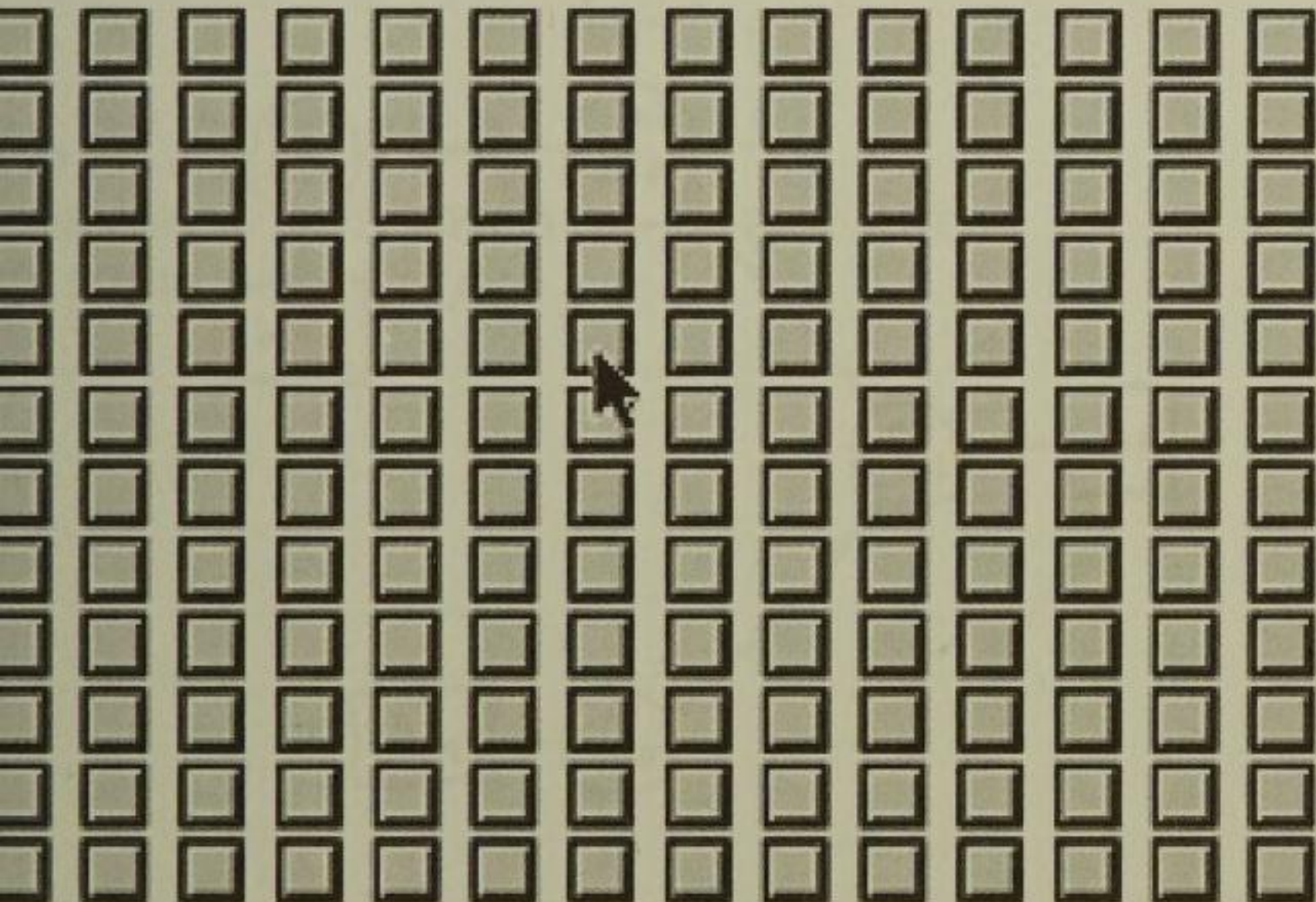
Faced with a suddenly “historical” project and a decayed array of texts, we imagined organizing it all into a guide book, a map book, a children’s book, a scrap book, a wonder cabinet. We discussed kabbalistic systems based on the 216 web-safe colors and homages to the 36 categories in Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*. In the

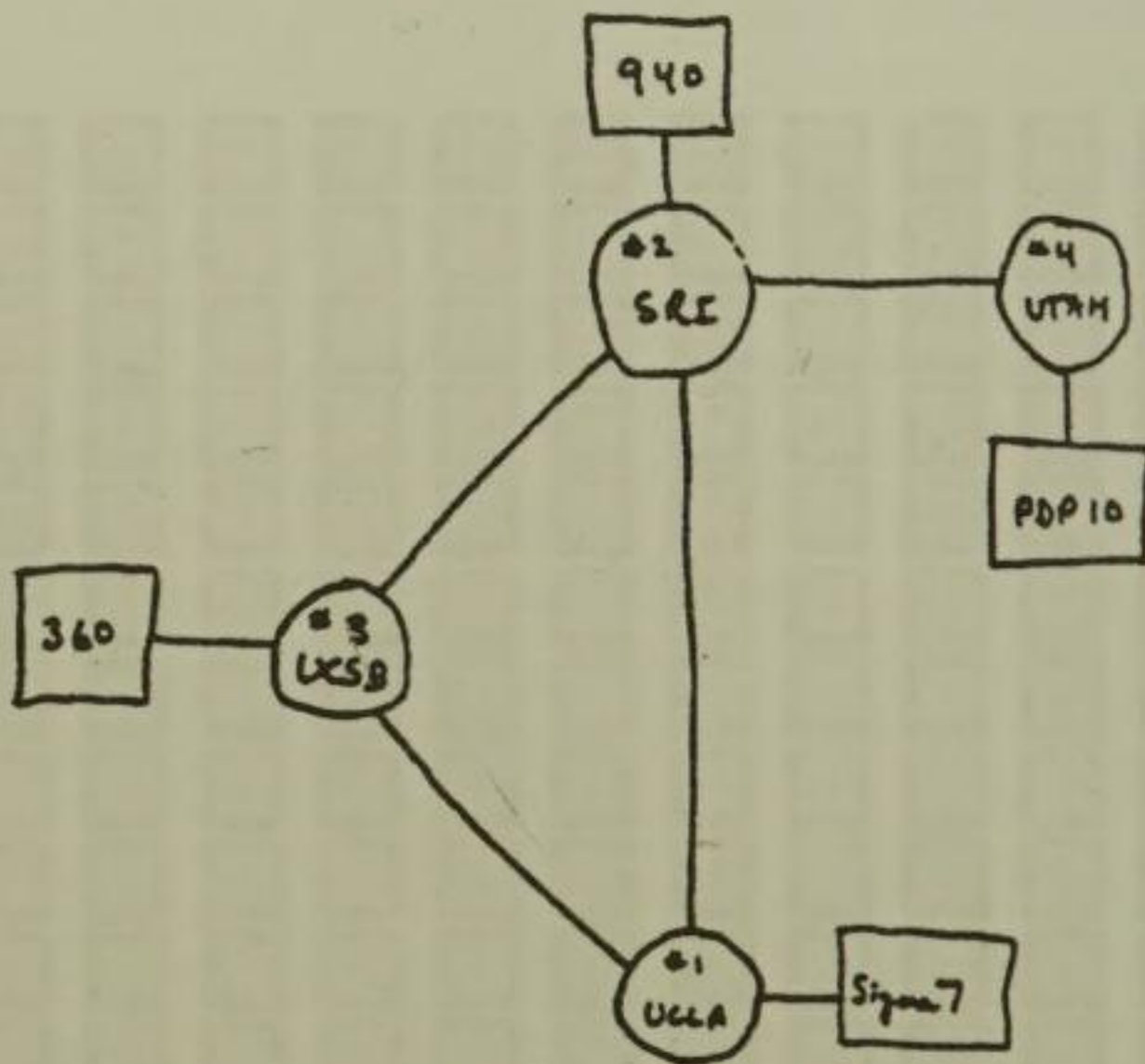
end, this book was built around six major subject nodes, each with several topical subsections. And within these are fragments of the original <net.net.net> interviews, fragments referenced by the interviews, fragments of information lost in transcription, fragments to contextualize other fragments...

It's a book of associative tangles, constructed by means of linkage and accretion, composed of accidents as much as it is of an effort to record and explain. It's an honest book, not because it attempts anything so crass as writing history, but because it openly wears the symptoms of a particular history.

Unexpectedly, this book became what it originally set out to be. It's noisy, conspiratorial, paranoid, haunted, gossipy, definitely buggy—but a conversation. Following that model, it also doesn't try to follow a single argument to its conclusion, and it remains naggingly unfinished. It might also work best in the kitchen or bedroom, maybe the bathroom. Really anywhere that it might risk stains. And as a book, it should be excellent for bibliomantic oracles—something the web will never quite be able to do.







THE ARPA NETWORK

DEC 1969

4 NODES

SECTION A /

ORIGINS | RETROFUTURE | MELANCHOLY |
UTOPIA | NOSTALGIA

Form Art Fragment

[HTTP://WWW.C3.HU/COLLECTION/FORM/INDEX1.HTML](http://www.c3.hu/collection/form/index1.html)

First Four Nodes of ARPANET

This network evolved into the substructure of the Internet.

[HTTP://WWW.COMPUTERHISTORY.ORG/EXHIBITS/INTERNET_HISTORY/
FULL_SIZE_IMAGES/1969_4-NODE_MAP.GIF](http://www.computerhistory.org/exhibits/internet_history/full_size_images/1969_4-node_map.gif)

ORIGINS

< *Diagram of First ARPANET Test Message*

Stanford Research Institute Network Working Group, Request for
Comment #4: Network Timetable. Elmer B. Shapiro. 24 March 1969.
[HTTP://WWW.FAQS.ORG/RFC4.HTML](http://www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc4.html)

ORIGINS { code : erasure : crash : 1997>1995 }

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ALEXEI SHULGIN > NET.ART—THE ORIGIN

Shulgin, Alexei. "Net.Art—the Origin." POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 18, 1997. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-9703/MSG00094.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-9703/msg00094.html). JUNE 2002.

[SOME APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED]

To: nettime-l@Desk.nl

Subject: nettime: Net.Art - the origin

From: alexei shulgin <easylife@hawk.glas.apc.org>

Date: Tue, 18 Mar 1997 01:05:08 +0300

I feel it's time now to give a light on the origin of the term—
“net.art”.

Actually, it's a readymade. In December 1995 Vuk Cosic got a message, sent via anonymous mailer. Because of incompatibility of software, the opened text appeared to be practically unreadable ascii abracadabra. The only fragment of it that made any sense looked something like:

[...] J8~g#\;Net. Art{-^sI [...]

Vuk was very much amazed and excited: the net itself gave him a name for activity he was involved in! He immediately started to use this term. After few months he forwarded the mysterious message to Igor Markovic, who managed to correctly decode it. The text

appeared to be pretty controversial and vague manifesto in which its author blamed traditional art institutions in all possible sins and declared freedom of self-expression and independence for an artist on the Internet. The part of the text with above mentioned fragment so strangely converted by Vuk's software was (quotation by memory): "All this becomes possible only with emergence of the Net. Art as a notion becomes obsolete...", etc. So, the text was not so much interesting. But the term it indirectly brought to life was already in use by that time. Sorry about future net.art historians—we don't have the manifesto any more. It was lost with other precious data after tragic crash of Igor's hard disk last summer. I like this weird story very much, because it's a perfect illustration to the fact that the world we live in is much richer than all our ideas about it.

ORIGINS { technology : memory : dream }

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WALTER BENJAMIN > *ARCADES PROJECT N2A,1:*
CHILDHOOD BINDS TECHNOLOGY TO SYMBOL

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Prepared on the basis of the German volume by Rolf Tiedmann. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin Mclaughlin. CAMBRIDGE: HARVARD, 1999. P. 461.

Only a thoughtless observer can deny that correspondences come into play between the world of modern technology and the archaic symbol-world of mythology. Of course, initially the technologically new seems nothing more than that. But in the very next childhood memory, its traits are already altered. Every childhood achieves something great and irreplaceable for humanity. By the interest it takes in technological phenomena, by the curiosity it displays before any sort of invention or machinery, every childhood binds the accomplishments of technology to the old worlds of symbol. There is nothing in the realm of nature that from the outset would

be exempt from such a bond. Only, it takes form not in the aura of novelty but in the aura of the habitual. In memory, childhood, and dream. —*Awakening*

ORIGINS { cyber- : childhood : symbol }

++ **WILLIAM GIBSON** > *NEUROMANCER*: “*THE MATRIX HAS ITS ROOTS IN PRIMITIVE ARCADE GAMES*”

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. NEW YORK: ACE, 1984. PP. 51-52.

“The matrix has its roots in primitive arcade games,” said the voice-over, “in early graphics programs and military experimentation with cranial jacks.” On the Sony, a two-dimensional space war faded behind a forest of mathematically generated ferns, demonstrating the spatial possibilities of logarithmic spirals; cold blue military footage burned through, lab animals wired into test systems, helmets feeding into fire control circuits of tanks and war planes. “Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts... A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights receding....”

“What’s that?” Molly asked, as he flipped the channel selector.

“Kid’s show.” A discontinuous flood of images as the selector cycled. “Off,” he said to the Hosaka.

<NETTIME> ORIGIN FABLE OF NETTIME

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Lovink, Geert. "Intro of Readme!" POSTED TO NETTIME NOVEMBER 19, 1988. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-9811/MSG00051.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-9811/MSG00051.HTML). JUNE 2002.

Readme! Ascii Culture and the Revenge of Knowledge. AUTONOMEDIA: NYC, 1999.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL]

To: nettime-l@Desk.nl

Subject: <nettime> intro of readme!

From: Geert Lovink <geert@xs4all.nl>

Date: Thu, 19 Nov 1998 04:30:49 +0100 (MET)

Once upon a time, an unlikely group of people gathered around a table in a house somewhere in a German forest. Around the table sat a group of men, all eating, talking, drinking, sampling each other's ideas. The language was German. The hours passed, and the table burgeoned under a mass of papers, notes, books. At the end, they cleared the table, taking various notes with them as they returned to their own desks, scattered across Europe, from Amsterdam to Budapest. The months passed; email was exchanged. Another meeting was planned for late spring 1995—this time in Venice, the floating city, during the Biennale in the Teatro (Malibran). By night it housed an imported Berlin club scene; by day, the men—and now a few women—gather. The languages are English, fast and slow, sometimes broken, and also some Italian. The days pass, and once again the table disappears under the papers, notes, books, scribbles.

It was at this second meeting of the Medien Zentralkomitee (ZK) that the Nettime mailing list is conceived. The ZK itself was a parasite attached to the main body of the Biennale; it had a small budget to invite a eclectic group of international activists, artists, organizers, theoreticians, and writers, all involved with the net, for an intense three-day, closed meeting. The name: Nettime. The topics: the city metaphor versus the life metaphor, the labyrinths of real and virtual

worlds, wandering websites, the city-state, a critique of the political agenda that would come to be called the “Californian Ideology,” and the perennial question of art. Nettime became a reality at this meeting. Or so one version of the story goes. Since this is the story of a network, there is a network of stories about the its multiple beginnings. Some day someone will think of a way to write a history of such a network. For the time being, this fable will have to do.

ORIGINS { CompuServe : The Dot : 2000>1991 }

CORNELIA SOLLFRANK > *ANTIQUÉ E-MAIL*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective Interview. SPRING, 2000. CALARTS.

I had one with two numbers behind the dot.

Collective > Have you always used the net as a venue?

Sollfrank > My very first contact with the Internet was through e-mail and communication, and it stayed like this for many years. I have a really old CompuServe e-mail address. I think it is from 1991.

Collective > You mean like 100111.1111?

Sollfrank > At the moment they have a dot and then four numbers behind the dot. I had one with two numbers behind the dot.

Collective > Wow.

Sollfrank > I still keep this e-mail because it is an antique, it is very cool. I got this e-mail address because a good friend of mine had moved to New York, and we had just heard about e-mail and how to use it to keep in touch. So I got a modem for my laptop, which was this really strange machine—a Toshiba with no hard drive!

++ Imagine there's no countries

John Lennon. *Imagine*

October 1971

Apple

It isn't hard to do

Nothing to kill or die for

And no religion to

Imagine all the people

Living life in peace.

You may say I'm a dreamer

But I'm not the only one

I hope someday you'll join us

And the world will be as one

All the leaves are brown

And the sky is grey

I've been for a walk

On a winter's day

I'd be safe and warm

If I was in L.A.

++

Mamas and the Papas. *California Dreamin'*

November 1965

Dunhill

RETROFUTURE { obsolescence : technology : nostalgia : classic rock }

**ALEXEI SHULGIN > 386/DX: AFFORDABLE
FOR EVERYBODY**

<NET.NET.NET.MX> Interview with Fran Ilich. DRIVING ON INTERSTATE 5, DECEMBER 1999.

I wanted to use an old computer with old software and do something that anyone can do but nobody has done.

Ilich > You are interested in what is outdated and using it for artistic purposes. Could you talk about your 386/DX project? Why the idea of playing classic rock songs such as "Imagine," "California Dreamin'," or "Anarchy in the UK"?

Shulgin > First of all, I thought of these songs and not ones composed by myself because these songs represent a time in which rock was perceived as hope for liberty and utopia, a time when people really believed in revolutions and in the power of the means. And another thing, everybody is familiar with them. The 386/DX project has a lot to do with nostalgia and utopia. I used this obsolete computer on purpose because it is accessible and affordable for everybody. I wanted to ask a critical question of technology that is developed so fast that it converts itself into an aesthetic motive.

These aesthetics become obsolete quickly with the next technological advancements, but at the same time it makes all art dependent on technology seemingly useless after a short while. On the other hand, when this technology is accessible to everyone, everybody can do it. That is why I wanted to use an old computer with old software and do something that anyone can do but nobody has done or expressed. It also had to do with artificial intelligence and that computers will be substitutes for people in the future, and the fact that everyone takes it as a joke. Such an idea was a fad years ago; it was some sort of utopic idea, but up until now it has not been working very well. I wanted to comment on this and substitute a computer for a human being at a very basic level, like a street musician.

Ilich > What is your creative process with the 386/DX?

Shulgin > I use two software pieces, one for voice synthesis, which came standard with a SoundBlaster card. They stopped selling it a few years ago and it became obsolete. The other piece of software I use synthesizes MIDI. This particular software I found on the Internet. Somebody—an American—programmed it in his free time and distributed it for free. I had the idea that this software should be the standard media player for Windows 3.1, but then I realized that I was losing perspective. This is about when the famous topic of “multimedia” came into place. I started looking for screen savers that would be activated by sound, and I ended up finding this software that suits the genre of music—classic and nostalgic rock—because it presents the obsolete aesthetics of old computer graphics.

WILLIAM GIBSON > *SAMISDAT IN THE CENTURY'S BACKWATERS*

Gibson, William. "Academy Leader." *Cyberspace: First Steps*. Ed. Michael Benedikt. CAMBRIDGE: MIT PRESS, 1991. PP. 27-29. PP. 28-29.

Once perfected, communication technologies rarely die out entirely; rather they shrink to fit particular niches in the global info-structure. Crystal radios have been proposed as a means of conveying optimal seed-planting times to isolated agrarian tribes. The mimeograph, one of many recent dinosaurs of the urban office-place, still shines with undiminished samisdat potential in the century's backwaters, the Late Victorian answer to desktop publishing. Banks in uncounted Third World villages still crank the day's totals on black Burroughs adding machines, spooling out yards of faint indigo figures on long, oddly festive curls of paper, while the Soviet Union, not yet sold on throw-away new-tech fun, has become the last reliable source of vacuum tubes.

The street finds its own uses for things—uses the manufacturers never imagined. The micro-tape recorder, originally intended for on-the-jump executive dictation, becomes the revolutionary medium of magnetisdat, allowing the covert spread of banned political speeches in Poland and China. The beeper and the cellular phone become economic tools in an increasingly competitive market for illicit drugs. Other technological artifacts unexpectedly become means of communication... The aerosol can gives birth to the urban graffiti-matrix. Soviet rockers press homemade flexidisks out of used chest x-rays...

JEAN BAUDRILLARD > *REVERSION OF HISTORY*

++

Baudrillard, Jean. *L'Illusion de la fin: ou La greve des evenements*. PARIS: GALILEE, 1992.TRANSLATED BY CHARLES DUDAS, YORK UNIVERSITY, CANADA AND REPUBLISHED ON CTHEORY,
20 APRIL 1994. [HTTP://WWW.CTHEORY.NET/TEXT_FILE.ASP?PICK=54](http://www.ctheory.net/text_file.asp?pick=54).

In the Euclidean space of history, the fastest route from one point to another is a straight line, the one of Progress and Democracy. This however only pertains to the linear space of the Enlightenment.... Somewhere in the course of the eighties of the twentieth century, history took a turn in another direction.... In our non-Euclidean space of the end of the century, a malevolent curvature invincibly reroutes all trajectories....

Can we avoid this retro-curvature of a history that backtracks on its footsteps and effaces its own traces; can we sidestep this fatal asymptote which in some way rolls back modernity in the way one rewinds a tape deck? We are so accustomed to viewing all films over and over again, the fictitious ones as well as those pertaining to our lives; we have been so thoroughly contaminated by a retrospective technique that we are quite capable, under the blow of contemporary vertigo, to rethread history as one threads a film wrong side up.

RETROFUTURE { a-life : Mickey : 3D : SyQuest : 1994>2001 }

KEVIN KELLY > *DISNEY ANIMATION IN 2001*

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Kelly, Kevin. *Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems, and the Economic World*.

READING: ADDISON-WESLEY PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1994. PP. 327-329.

It's the winter of 2001, in a corner of the Disney studio lot; a trailer is set up as a top-secret research lab. Reels of old Disney cartoons, stacks of gigabyte computer hard drives, and three 24-year-old computer graphic artists hole up inside. In about three months they deconstruct Mickey Mouse. He is reanimated as a potentially

3-D being who only appears in two dimensions. He knows how to walk, leap, dance, show surprise and wave goodbye on his own. He can lip sync but can't talk. The entire overhauled Mickey fits onto one SyQuest 2-gig portable disk.

<http://www.syquest.com/infagans.html>

The disk is walked over to the old animation studio, past its rows of empty and dusty animation stands, to the cubicles where the Silicon Graphics workstations are glowing. Mickey is popped into a computer. The animators have already created a fully detailed artificial world for the Mouse. He's cued up to the scene and the tape turned on. Roll!...

After 1997, nobody ever draws Mickey again. There's no need to. Oh, sometimes the animators butt in and touch up a critical facial expression here or there—mere make-up artists the handlers call them—but by and large Mickey is given a script and he obeys. And he—or one of his clones—works all year round on more than one film at once. Never complains of course.

The graphics jocks aren't satisfied. They hook up a Maes learning module into Mickey's code. With this on, Mickey matures as an actor. He responds to the emotions and actions of the other great actors in his scenes—Donald Duck and Goofy. Every time a scene is rerun, he remembers what he did on the keeper take and that gesture is emphasized next time. He evolves from the outside as well. The programmers tune up his code, give him improved smoothness, increase the range of his expressions, and beef up the depth of his emotions. He can play the "sensitive guy" now if needed.

But over five years of learning, Mickey begins to get his own ideas. He somehow reacts hostilely to Donald, and becomes furious when he gets clunked on the head with a mallet. And when he is angry, he becomes obstinate. He balks when the director instructs him to

walk off the edge of a cliff, having learned over the years to avoid obstacles and edges....

So by 2007, Mickey Mouse is quite an actor. He is a hot “property” as the agents say. He can speak. He can handle any kind of slapstick situation you can imagine. Does his own stunts. He has a great sense of humor, and the fabulous timing of a comedian. The only problem is he’s an SOB to work with. He’ll suddenly fly off the handle and go berserk. Directors hate him. But they put up with him—they’ve seen worse—because, well, he’s Mickey Mouse.

RETROFUTURE { prank : attitude ; theory : '80s : '90s }

++ **0100101110110101.ORG (FLORIAN CRAMER) >**

INTERVIEW YOURSELF: ATTITUDE AS THEORY

Cramer, Florian. “Anti-Post-Net Art: A self-interview of www.0100101110110101.org.”
[HTTP://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IV/](http://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IV/). JUNE 2002.

[THE READER SHOULD NOTE THE FOLLOWING E-MAILED WARNING FROM AMY ALEXANDER OF PLAGIARIST.ORG, REPRODUCED VERBATIM:

Btw note that the 01 IY interview is actually a practical joke by Florian Cramer. Since neither Florian nor the “real” 01 were ntnnt people not sure if that matters to you anyway. But in case you mention other interviews, I figured I’d clarify that...

APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

1 > [T]hese Anti-Post-Net Art works are anti-conceptual, since the focus is on the person and not on the idea.

0 > In this way, you can avoid two of the major traps of Net Art, the need to be innovative and the need to be recognized in the Net Art community.

1 > We think so, this is the primary mood of our work. The '80s were about “attitude,” the '90s were about “theory,” we think the next ten years are about the synthesis of the performative and the conceptual—about “attitude as theory.” We suspect that we won’t see much changing after that in Net Art, we’ve set it all up that way.

++

THE 2000 WEBBY AWARDS > *IMAGINE YOU JUST
TIME TRAVELED TO THE YEAR 2010*

Webby Awards. "The Webby Awards 2000 Interviews." [HTTP://WWW.WEBBYAWARDS.COM/
EVENT/WEBCAST/INTERVIEWS/](http://www.webbyawards.com/event/webcast/interviews/). JUNE 2002.

Q > Imagine you just time traveled to the year 2010. Describe how the Web is affecting lives, inventing heroes, and/or changing time and space.

HOWARD RHEINGOLD, JUDGE

[HTTP://WWW.WEBBYAWARDS.COM/EVENT/WEBCAST/INTERVIEWS/HRHEI/HRHEI.HTML](http://www.webbyawards.com/event/webcast/interviews/hrhei/hrhei.html)

A > Oh, the Internet is this magical machine for transforming itself, so I am sure that the Web will be something else totally and entirely different.

DJ SPOOKY, MUSICIAN

[HTTP://WWW.WEBBYAWARDS.COM/EVENT/WEBCAST/INTERVIEWS/DJSPO/DJSPO.HTML](http://www.webbyawards.com/event/webcast/interviews/djspo/djspo.html)

A > Think about what is going on with Napster and MP3—the way they actually lost their lawsuits because of the control of intellectual property issues. Web content, if anything, has really got to deal with this right now. Because in the rest of the 21st century... forget it, they have to set up some framework. I think it is healthy to see more and more people deal with that.

BIRCH, MARY, TYLER, STEVE, AND KATHLEEN, OF FLYSWAT

[HTTP://WWW.WEBBYAWARDS.COM/EVENT/WEBCAST/INTERVIEWS/FLYSW/FLYSW.HTML](http://www.webbyawards.com/event/webcast/interviews/flysw/flysw.html)

Amy > I feel like I'm on a show or something... can I pass?

Tyler > I think Flyswat has completely revolutionized the way people use the Web. They can now get every facet of their lives through our revolution.

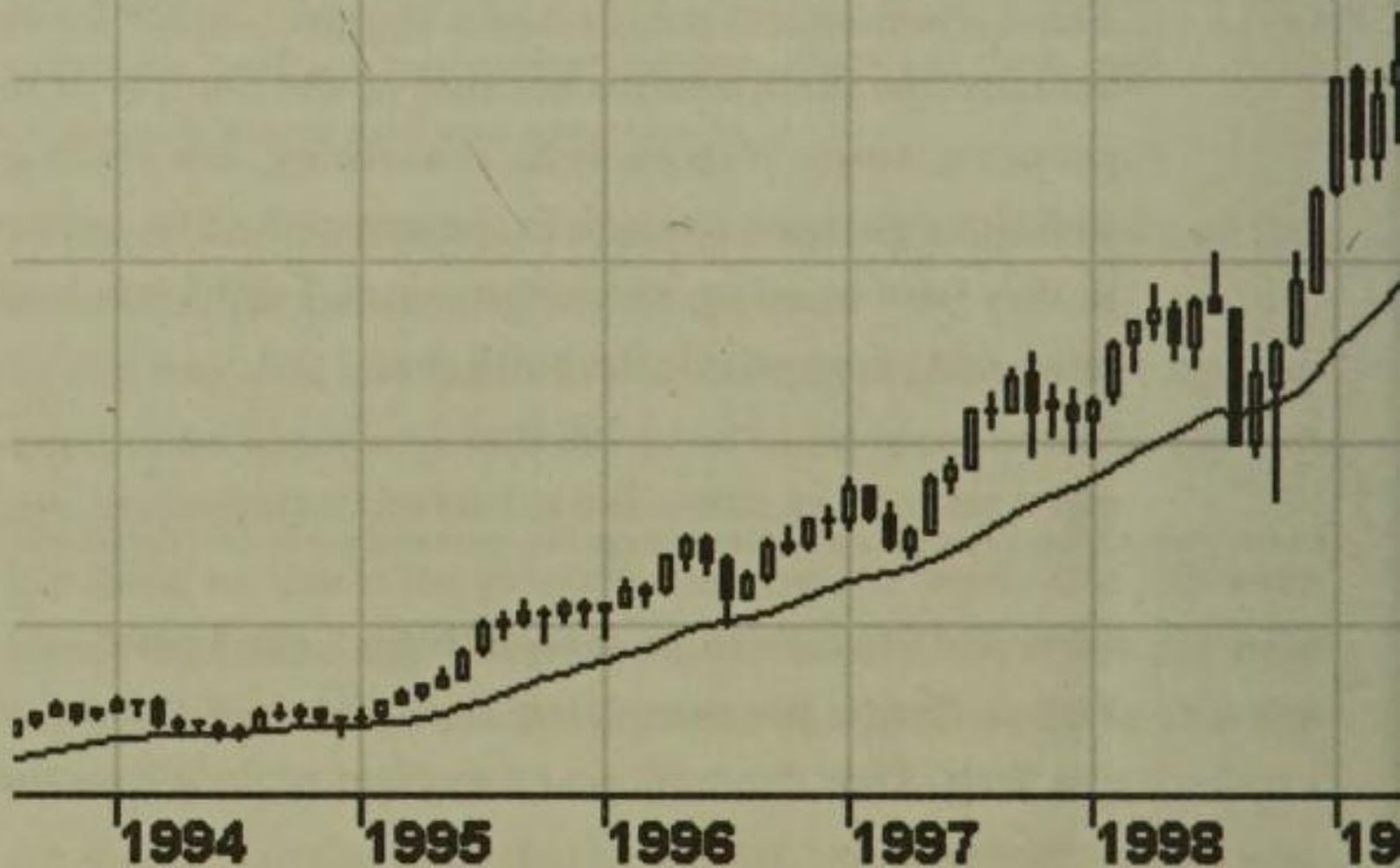
INTERNETNEWS.COM > *NBCi GOES SHOPPING*

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[HTTP://WWW.INTERNETNEWS.COM/BUS-NEWS/ARTICLE.PHP/332591](http://www.internetnews.com/bus-news/article.php/332591).

Looking to fortify access to its e-commerce services, NBC Internet Inc. Monday bought privately-held Flyswat Inc. for about \$100 million in stock.

Flyswat's core service is a free, downloadable tool that identifies and hyperlinks existing words or phrases in any Web page, enabling users to retrieve relevant information by clicking on these terms....

"Flyswat's best-of-breed service will bring NBCi and our e-commerce and advertising partners directly into users' lives when they surf the Internet and work on documents on their computers," said Will Lansing, NBCi's chief executive officer. "We look forward to building Flyswat's features, content and distribution through partnerships and alliances."



++ **SEARCHENGINEWATCH.COM > NBCi DOWN,
PROBABLY OUT**

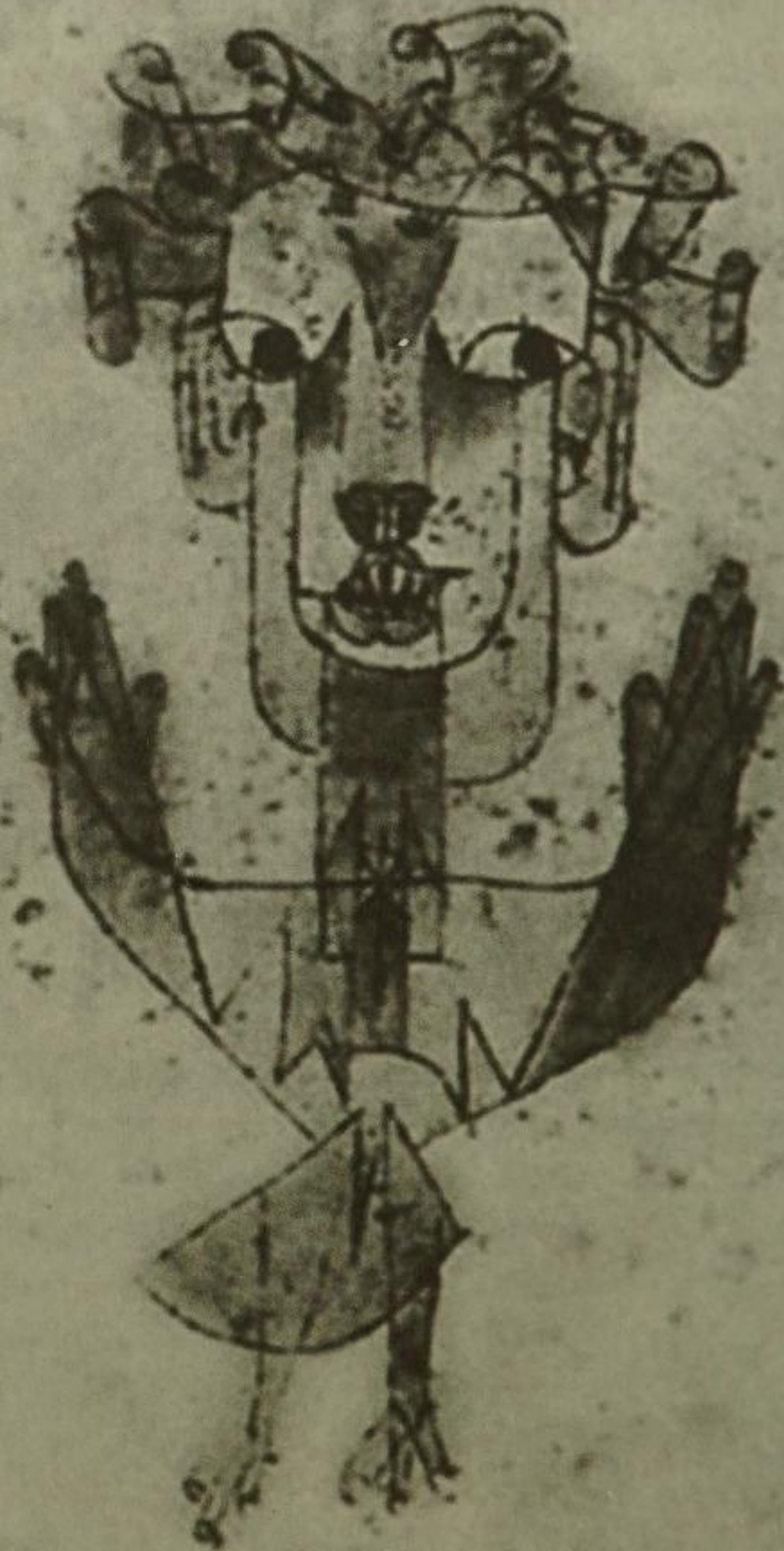
TUESDAY, APRIL 09, 2001. [HTTP://SEARCHENGINEWATCH.COM/SEREPORT/01/04-NBCL.HTML](http://searchenginewatch.com/sereport/01/04-nbci.html).

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

The future of the NBCi site as a search resource is now very much in doubt, given the decision by US television network NBC—which is NBCi's largest shareholder—to close its spinoff company.



The Dot.Com Bubble
as rendered by NASDAQ monthly averages.



Angelus Novus, Paul Klee (Collection: Israel Museum, Jerusalem)

In the ninth section of *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Walter Benjamin described this figure as the "Angel of History."

MELANCHOLY { impermanence : change : decay }

++
**AURIEA HARVEY > THE CODE IS
GIVING ME THE BLUES**

Harvey, Auriea. E-mail located at *Praystation*. Transcribed May, 2002 from image-text.
[HTTP://PS2.PRAYSTATION.COM/POUND/V4/](http://ps2.praystation.com/pound/v4/). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

From: A! [mailto:entropy8zuper.com]
Sent: thursday, june 22, 2000 1:46 pm
To: chaos@praystation.com
Subject: abuse

I have been kinda disgruntled lately. Feeling the impermanence of it all.

Usually I feel like nothing ever dies on the net... but lately... I have felt like we spend all our time making this stuff... and what happens to it... it fades becomes old data... gradually fading to unusability... standards change but the code can't adapt on its own.

The nature of the net changes and we must change with it. Towards re-design (reincarnation?) isn't it eastern philosophy (taoism?) which tells us that we shouldn't hold on to things the way to do is to not think of yourself as doing. to draw an eye you must concentrate on the ear.

doesn't help me right now.

The code is giving me the blues.

I need a happier point of view... maybe I'm crazy... do you ever think of it... what's the point of it all... or is that just the nature of design... and I am not a designer...

Dunno... auriea

MELANCHOLY { Ibiza : Kaballah : loss : history : 1933 }

WALTER BENJAMIN > AGESILAUS SANTANDER

(NEW ANGEL)

Benjamin, Walter. "Agesilaus Santander (Second Version)." *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927-1934*. Trans. Rodney Livingstone. Eds. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith. CAMBRIDGE: HARVARD, 1999. PP. 714-715.

IBIZA, AUGUST 13, 1933

In the room I occupied in Berlin, even before that person had emerged fully armored and accoutered from my name, he had fixed his image to the wall: New Angel. The Kaballah relates that, at every moment, God creates a whole host of angels, whose only task before they return to the void is to appear before His throne for a moment and sing His praises. The new angel presented himself as such before naming himself. I only fear that I had kept him excessively long from his hymn....

[T]he angel resembles everything from which I have had to part: the people, and especially the things. He dwells in the things I no longer possess. He makes them transparent, and behind each of them appears the figure of the person for whom they are intended. This is why no one can surpass me when it comes to giving presents. Indeed, the angel may have been attracted by a person who gives but who goes away empty-handed himself. For he, too, has claws and pointed razor-sharp pinions, and makes no attempt to fall upon whomever he has his eye on. He looks him

steady in the eye, for a long time, and then retreats—in a series of spasms, but inexorably. Why? To draw him after himself on that road to the future along which he came, and which he knows so well that he can traverse it without turning round and letting him whom he has chosen out of his sight. He wants happiness—that is to say, the conflict in which the rapture of the unique, the new, the yet unborn is combined with that bliss of experiencing something once more, of possessing once again, of having lived. This is why he has nothing new to hope for on any road other than the road home, when he takes a new person with him. Just like myself; for scarcely had I seen you the first time than I returned with you to where I had come from.

ARCADES PROJECT EDITOR'S NOTE : The two autobiographical texts entitled "Agesilaus Santander" have provoked much speculation. There is now general agreement that the title does not refer to the Spartan king Agesilaos.... Nor is it now thought to refer to the name of the ferry linking Barcelona and Ibiza. Gershom Scholem has speculated that, if we set aside the extra i as an ornamental flourish, the name is an anagram of Der Engel Satanas, "Satan's angel."

MELANCHOLY { memory : loss : boom }

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**L.A. TIMES > COLUMN ONE: PARTY IS OVER
FOR INSIDERS**

"Party Is Over for Insiders." *Los Angeles Times*. MARCH 1, 2002.

[HTTP://LATIMES.COM/NEWS/PRINTEDITION/LA-000015503MAR01.STORY](http://latimes.com/news/printedition/LA-000015503MAR01.STORY).

FUZZY MEMORIES

Like revelers after a wild party, the inhabitants of Silicon Valley are struggling to remember just what they did, and whether there's any evidence. The statute of limitations for insider trading is five years, which encompasses the height of the boom. And insider trading is just as illegal when executives use their privileged information to cut their losses by selling shares.

GEERT LOVINK > THE PROBLEMS OF HISTORY

<NET.NET.NET> Interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience.

09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

Culture is something that needs to be really attacked...

Diamond > You've talked about how Europe has been able to hold onto notions of history as a kind of construct, and also how it has maintained a very problematic and fetishistic relationship to the historical, such as in Austria. Could you talk about history and the problems of history, such as where it does and doesn't provide models and how you think people can work with an "actual" history?

Lovink > It's obvious that in Holland, the whole idea of freedom and tolerance comes from this tradition, and that idea goes back to Spinoza—

Halleck > That's why the pilgrims came here.

Lovink > Some things happen in history, whether we like them or not. History is there, and it's been reproduced, criticized, and altered. For the most part, I'm fairly cynical about history in Europe, in the sense that it's our last asset. Europe is in immediate danger of being turned into a sort of reality park where you can go and experience history. A lot of Europeans are willing to fulfill this even up to the level of war, because war is a very important special effect in this production of history.

Halleck > Reichstag revivalism?

Lovink > Yes, absolutely. History definitely is a nightmare. One which we should try to awaken from. We've seen a tremendous revival of the idea that we are able to make history and to take events into our own hands. What concerns me most is that this idea of history is imported into a view of culture, and the whole idea of modernism

and experimental culture is under immediate threat. This is what we can see most clearly in Austria, but it is also true to a certain extent in Amsterdam. Amsterdam runs on the Rembrandt and Van Gogh industry. This is where the tourism industry gets its money from. It doesn't come from the experimental art scene or the nice things we do with new media—we have to be realistic about that. Culture in Europe is in immediate danger of being reduced to a description of national heritage. We are condemned through our national heritage. Culture is something that needs to be really attacked and really redefined or rejected! There's a lot of dangerous stuff going on in Austria....

Diamond > How much is the Austrian phenomenon a cultural movement, a kind of historical artificing, and how much is it political? Or is there even a way you can separate those fields?

Lovink > It has been separated quite effectively up until they weren't able to do so anymore. In American terms, the Republicans and the Democrats have ruled Austria together for more than thirty years. This whole idea of an unholy alliance has severely corrupted the whole political [consciousness] because it exists to keep some other group from coming up and taking over. I think it has definitely been a cultural phenomenon.

**war is a very important
special effect in this
production
of history.**



UTOPIA

Utopian Fragment with Artificially Expanded Sky

Generated from the cover of Wired v7.12, December 1999.

UTOPIA { island : ideal : impossible }

++

OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY > UTOPIA

"Utopia." Oxford English Dictionary. Ed. J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner. 2ND ED. OXFORD: CLARENDON PRESS, 1989. OED ONLINE. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. [HTTP://DICTIONARY.OED.COM/CGI/ENTRY/00274074](http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00274074). JUNE 2002.

Utopia

[mod.L. (More, 1516), f. Gr. *οὐ* not + *τόπος* a place: see -IAI, and cf. EUTOPIA. Hence It., Sp., Pg. *Utopia*, F. *Utopie*.]

1. An imaginary island, depicted by Sir Thomas More as enjoying a perfect social, legal, and political system.
- 1.B. *transf.* Any imaginary, indefinitely-remote region, country, or locality.
2. A place, state, or condition ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions.
- 2.B. An impossibly ideal scheme, especially for social improvement.
3. *Comb.*, as *Utopia-maker*, *-monger*.

ALEXEI SHULGIN > THERE WAS NO LONGER UTOPIA

<NET.NET.NET.MX> Interview with Fran Ilich. DECEMBER 1999, DRIVING ON INTERSTATE 5.

I really don't understand it, the term "media art"—I think it does not exist.

Ilich > You mentioned utopia; how do you relate to utopia, being a citizen of the land of ex-utopia?

Shulgin > Well, I really don't know what to say. My country had utopian ideas, but that was a long time ago, in the '20s, and from then on it turned into something completely different: there was no longer utopia.

Ilich > In the past couple of months, in some way thanks to the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, utopia has been discussed a lot. Considering the utopian idea could not die out, what do you now consider utopia?

Shulgin > There was this utopia when the Internet started to populate and people thought that they could change the world for the better, that the Internet would create better communication, etc. Sometimes this virtual kingdom can be better than real life, but this virtual world is inhabited by the same humans with the same bad habits, egos, and ambitions. It is almost the same as real life. I think that really no one has seen the Internet as a utopia for at least two years, but on the other side it gave us a lot of energy. I still think that this method of communication, relatively new, is changing the world, although I don't know if it is to make it better. For some reason I cannot see very good results. Yes, I believe that it gives people more liberty, in a sense, but I would not call it a utopia and I don't see a utopia coming. No, I don't see it coming on any side.

Ilich > Could you tell me more about media art in Russia and how it is affected by Soviet realism?

Shulgin > The traditionalist school is still strong. Even though it is no longer socialist, the realist tradition of the arts is still strong. I was never in that—I never went to art school or anything, so I can't relate to that. And to speak of Russian media art is difficult. First of all, the artistic scene is very unusual, I dare to say, in that there are only two cities that are relevant in the global process: Moscow and St. Petersburg.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg there are a lot of people that use video, and some that use computers and interactivity. But they often use technology with more traditional methods of expression and representation. But a lot of people simply do not have access to technology. In fact the majority of people are disconnected from global processes for a lot of reasons, one of big reasons being language. Not a lot of people know how to speak English, so they don't know about some of the communication that occurs on the Internet. They just simply don't know.

To me it seems that the most exciting thing about technology and especially art on the Internet is the possibility of communication. I am not related to the media art scene that much, because I really don't understand it, the term "media art"—I think it does not exist. Art or something exists only if it can be defined and put into context. But "media art" is constructed of so many things: technology, anthropology, sociology, politics... nobody can be an expert in all those areas, so no one can create a context for media art. That is why I don't think it exists.

GEERT LOVINK > *THE INTERNET WAS*

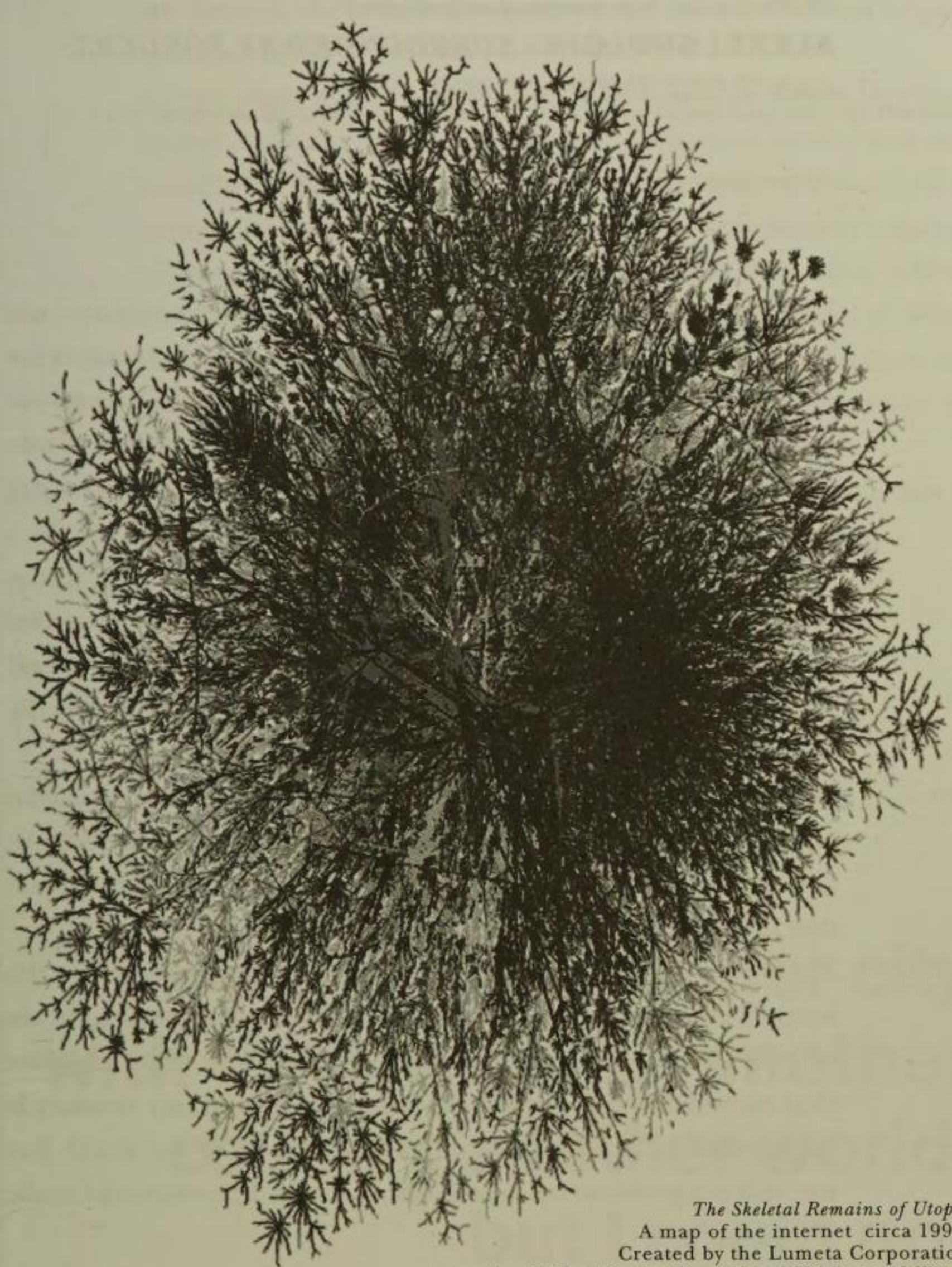
A UTOPIA

<NET.NET.NET> Interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience.
09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

But no, it's not a utopia anymore.

Halleck > I'd like to raise the issue of utopia. I don't know if you've read about Jesse Helms speaking recently at the U.N., where he said, "the United Nations better keep their utopian notions away from the American people." When I spoke to Geert about this, he said, "Well, in America, the Internet is the utopia." Is the Internet, in fact, a utopia?

Lovink > It certainly has been one. However, in most Western countries—at least in mine—the utopian vision has been gone since somewhere in 1997 or 1998. Currently there's a big fight going on, a sort of last heroic fight for standards and regulations, but we all know that it's corporate and increasingly dominated by a few big players. Maybe, in some outskirts of the world where it hasn't really reached a certain critical mass, the Internet may still function as such, in the sense that there is still a longing for the basic infrastructure of communication and exchange. But no, it's not a utopia anymore.



The Skeletal Remains of Utopia

A map of the internet circa 1998.

Created by the Lumeta Corporation

and published in the December 1998 issue of *Wired*.

[HTTP://RESEARCH.LUMETA.COM/CHES/MAP/GALLERY/WIRED.GIF](http://RESEARCH.LUMETA.COM/CHES/MAP/GALLERY/WIRED.GIF)

**ALEXEI SHULGIN > SURROUNDED BY BORDERS:
CAN'T GET INTO MEXICO**

<NET.NET.NET.MX> Interview with Fran Ilich. DECEMBER. 1999, DRIVING ON INTERSTATE 5.

As a matter of fact, our country is surrounded by borders...

Ilich > How do you feel after your concert?

Shulgin > I feel good, because I was not present, even if my computer was there and I was playing. I hope that people enjoyed it. It makes me happy, there was something that made me feel that the people—at least you—had the sensation that even if I was not there, in one way or another I was there, in one form or another. As a matter of fact, during the concert I was very close to this place, maybe a couple of miles, that way I think it gave a new meaning to the project. And of course I like the area, the place. In some way it fed the speech of the border and the crossing of the borders and different cultures on each side of the border. So I think that the context for the concert was good.

Ilich > Now that we realized this action on the border, this question comes to mind: what do you think about borders? Specifically in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the new form that the territory of the ex-Soviet Union took.

Shulgin > The topic of borders is and always will be a big one. Somehow the borders in some way or another have been reconfigured, there are no real borders in Eastern or Western Europe, it's just a border that moved towards Russia. As a matter of fact, our country is surrounded by borders, like any other country in the world. For me, this is a problem because I cannot travel. The contacts I make

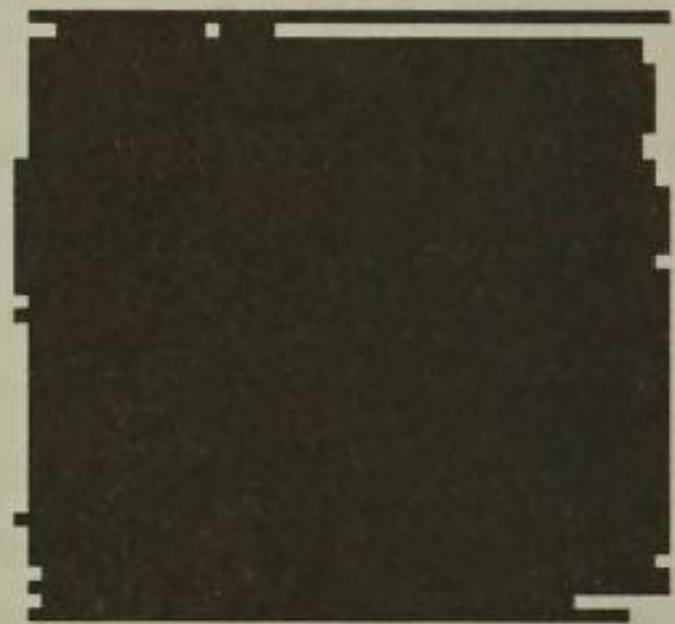
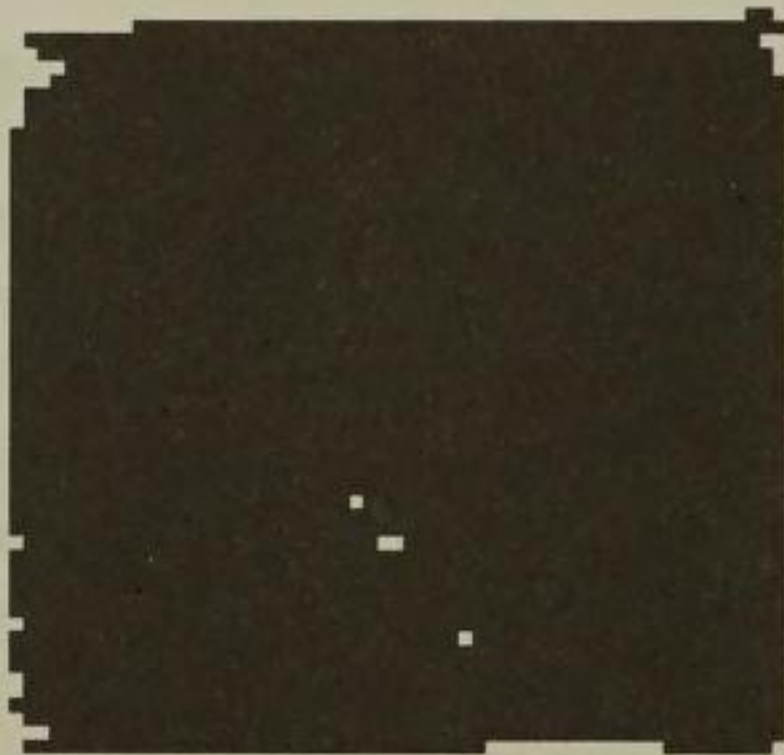
are through the Internet, so in this sense the Internet has helped break borders.

A little while ago I had a very strange sensation at the Mexican border, because I was looking at the pedestrian border and the automobile border on the highway, and I was very impressed because I could see another city with my own eyes, another country, another world, but I could not get in. That area on the other side of the border was very attractive, I was really looking forward to being there and I couldn't, and maybe... I want to say, this is far from my house and maybe this is the last opportunity of my life to go to Mexico and I can't and for some reason this is weird.

Ilich > For me, this explains the significance of "utopia." A place that is impossible to reach but nonetheless we will not stop trying.

Shulgin > Yes. We will see each other in the future.

**I could see another city
with my own eyes, another
country, another world,
but I could not
get in.**



window.gif, Olia Lialina

From *My Boyfriend Came Back From The War*.

[HTTP://WWW.TELEPORTACIA.ORG/WAR/](http://www.teleportacia.org/war/)

NOSTALGIA { form art : Shulgin : Lialina : pre-Flash : epistemology }

NATALIE BOOKCHIN > USING THE MATERIAL OF THE PRE-FLASH WEB

<NET.NET.NET> Collective Interview. 30 SEPTEMBER, 2001. LOS ANGELES.

How many times do we have to see “click to pass introduction”?

Collective > There was a group of people using the web with a self-referential medium-based practice that could be generally called “form art.” Alexei Shulgin was sort of the founder. It’s also Olia Lialina’s specialty. And I would argue that, like Jodi.org, they participate in breaking down preconceptions of what the norm of the medium is.

Bookchin > Those artists were using the material of the Internet before Flash as a formal, aesthetic practice.

Collective > Could that aesthetic practice also be considered an activist practice if you look at it as a process of breaking down preconceptions?

Bookchin > I think that Olia’s project did that in “My Boyfriend Came Back From The War.” At that time I found it a beautifully poetic, though aesthetically simple project that was using a new form of Internet technology, which was frames. You have to understand that within the context of the time, Olia’s project was really powerful because she was making aesthetic use of these tools that were

supposed to be used for commercial ends by corporations. Instead, she was using the new frame technology to tell a story.

Alexei's work, however, is semi-ironic. He comes out of a tradition of Russian conceptual art, out of the underground during pre-1989 Russian conceptualism, à la Kabakov, and Komar and Melamed. One major issue he was dealing with in his work was grappling with the material of the medium—making playful, sometimes beautiful, sometimes silly visualizations using a structure that is supposed to be used for another purpose. After that, there was a certain turning point where there were so many designers making amazing design work on the Internet, but not approaching it in the same way, not directly challenging the materials. He was following an earlier generation of artists using the material not of the net, but of the web. Trying to figure out what else can be done with it for no other purpose than to generate some kind of creative expression, to interrogate and foreground the materials rather than foregrounding the information intended to be communicated.

Collective > That's a useful distinction, foregrounding the material versus foregrounding the information.

Bookchin > There is so much amazing design work on the net, but I don't know if it's necessarily that interesting. How many times do we have to see "click to pass introduction"?

Collective > Do you think it's too early to generalize about how net.art may have impacted more traditional art forms?

Bookchin > I don't know if net.art has impacted—would have impacted it so much as the net, and the way that the net, as a medium in our lives, alters the ways that we communicate and the ways that we access information. So I think that just as a phenomenon in itself,

it will impact the way that people think about the world. Net.art itself? Yeah, it's probably too early.

NOSTALGIA { Sex Pistols : punk : grunge : society dreaming }

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WILLIAM GIBSON AND ROBERT LONGO > NO

LONGER POSSIBLE TO DO THAT BOHEMIAN THING

Bakel, Rogier Van. "Remembering Johnny." *Wired* 1995. ARCHIVED WEB VERSION.
[HTTP://WWW.WIRED.COM/WIRED/ARCHIVE/3.06/GIBSON_PR.HTML](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/3.06/gibson_pr.html).

[SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.]

Longo > In the late '70s, early '80s, the white-walled art galleries in New York were dead, and the places I ended up going to get inspired and psyched to do great work were the rock clubs and the old movie theaters. I remember thinking, I want my art to be like a chord change in a Sex Pistols song. For the first five years, punk rock was the power source of what I was doing.

Gibson > Punk was the last viable bohemia that we've seen, perhaps the last bohemian movement of all time. I'm afraid that bohemians will eventually come to be seen as a byproduct of the industrial civilization; and if we're in fact at the end of industrial civilization, there may be no more bohemians. That's scary. It's possible that commercialization has become so sophisticated that it's no longer possible to do that bohemian thing.

Longo > Next time anyone even tries, it'll be a prime-time show before you know it. Bohemia: The Series!

Gibson > Look what they did to those poor kids in Seattle! It took our culture literally three weeks to go from a bunch of kids playing in a basement club to the thing that's on the Paris runways. At least, with punk, it took a year and a half. And I'm sad to see the phenomenon disappear. I think bohemians are the subconscious of industrial society. Bohemians are like industrial society, dreaming.

**ALEXEI SHULGIN > THE ART OF MASSIVE MEANS
IS NOT ABOUT IDEAS**

<NET.NET.NET.MX> Interview with Fran Ilich. DECEMBER, 1999. DRIVING ON INTERSTATE 5.

[A]fter three years anyone can do what they can...

[TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SPANISH.]

Ilich > I remember a piece of net.art where the scroll boxes are useless but create an aesthetic effect through their structure, the way they look. I wonder if you could discuss Form Art on the net in the context of nostalgia?

Shulgin> Form Art is a very important piece for me—it is a critique of the way technology develops. I had an idea to use all scroll bars, buttons and text areas, things that are usually only used as an interface so people can send their input through the software. My idea consisted in using those elements like visual elements, like elements created by ASCII. The text symbols from ASCII are generally used to write text, but you can also make images with them, and in a certain way my project with the visual interface of forms is similar to the production of ASCII images. For me, this is a critique of the attitude adopted by people towards technology when they want to get to the point, to uncover the real use. There are so many artists that work with the most recent software, and they can do something with that, but after three years anyone can do what they can because it becomes accessible. The art of massive means is not about ideas, it's about the access you have to technology. I don't think we should work in this manner. I wanted to step aside and see what could be done with older, more accessible technology, technology that was becoming obsolete.

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American Standard Code for Information Interchange characters converted to braille.
[HTTP://WWW.URONRAMP.NET/~LIZGRAY/ASCII.HTML](http://www.uronramp.net/~lizgray/ascii.html)

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ALEXEI SHULGIN > ENTRY RULES FOR THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL FORM ART COMPETITION

C3 Gallery. *Entry rules for the First International Form Art Competition.* [HTTP://WWW.C3.HU/COLLEC-TION/FORM/COMPETITION.HTML](http://www.c3.hu/collec-tion/form/competition.html). JUNE 2002.

[UNCHANGED FROM ORIGINAL.]

YOU ARE WELCOME TO TAKE PART IN THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL FORM ART
COMPETITION!

THE GOALS OF THE COMPETITION ARE:

- > further development of this new form of artistic
expression
- > support of talented artists working on the Internet

THE WINNER WILL BE AWARDED WITH CASH PRIZE—USD 1000!

RULES ARE VERY SIMPLE:

0. Check Form Art site - <http://www.c3.hu/hyper3/form>
1. Create your Form Art piece(s) (consisting only of html-
coded form elements—no gifs or jpegs, no colours,
no text)
2. Send the URL(s) of those pieces to: easylife@glasnet.ru
or if you don't have possibility to put your files on the
WWW, then send them directly (please use the
form below).

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: AUGUST 31, 1997.

SUBMITTED PIECES WILL BE EXHIBITED ON-LINE AT FORM ART SITE.

The winner will be announced in the middle of
September at the special press conference in Linz
during Ars Electronica festival. Submitted Form Art
pieces will not be used for any other purposes than
Form Art Competition and on-line exhibition. All rights
belong to their creators.

++ **VUK COSIC WITH TILMAN BAUMGÄRTEL >**

***HOW COME THAT AN ARCHEOLOGIST IS WORKING
ON THE INTERNET?***

Telepolis. "Art was only a substitute for the Internet." 26 JUNE, 1997.
[HTTP://WWW.HEISE.DE/TP/ ENGLISH/SPECIAL/KU/6158/1.HTML.](http://www.heise.de/tp/english/special/ku/6158/1.html)

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.]

Baumgärtel > I noticed that some of the pieces on your homepage seem very literary. Do you have a background in writing?

Cosik > I originally came out of writing, but then I developed a very strange attitude about which platform I wanted to use. I first have the idea, then I decide which medium it is going to be this time. I did land art, I did exhibitions. I actually have three different biographies. I was very active in politics, I was a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize with a few friends, because I was a leader of student demonstrations in Belgrade. Originally I am an archeologist by training. I am still sort of working on my Ph.D. thesis, but I did not pursue my career as an archeologist. I know that your next question will be 'How come that an archeologist is working on the Internet?' I think that it is the same apparatus that has just been turned around on the tripod, looking in the other direction...

Baumgärtel > So you are an archeologist of the future?

Cosik > Yeah, I am on that tripod.

JORGE LUIS BORGES > *TLÖN AND FORGETTING:**PLASTIC ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE PAST*

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." Trans. James E. Irby. *Labyrinths, Selected Stories & Other Writings*. Edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby. NEW YORK: NEW DIRECTIONS, 1964. PP. 13-14.

In the most ancient regions of Tlön the duplication of lost objects is not infrequent. Two persons look for a pencil; the first finds it and says nothing; the second finds a second pencil, no less real, but closer to his expectations. These secondary objects are called *hrönir* and are, though awkward in form, somewhat longer. Until recently, the *hrönir* were the accidental products of distraction and forgetfulness. It seems unbelievable that their methodical production dates back scarcely a hundred years, but this is what the Eleventh Volume tells us....

The methodical fabrication of *hrönir* (says the Eleventh Volume) has performed prodigious services for archaeologists. It has made possible the interrogation and even the modification of the past, which is now no less plastic and docile than the future....

Things become duplicated in Tlön; they also tend to become effaced and lose their details when they are forgotten. A classic example is the doorway which survived so long as it was visited by a certain beggar and disappeared at his death. At times some birds, a horse, have saved the ruins of an amphitheater.

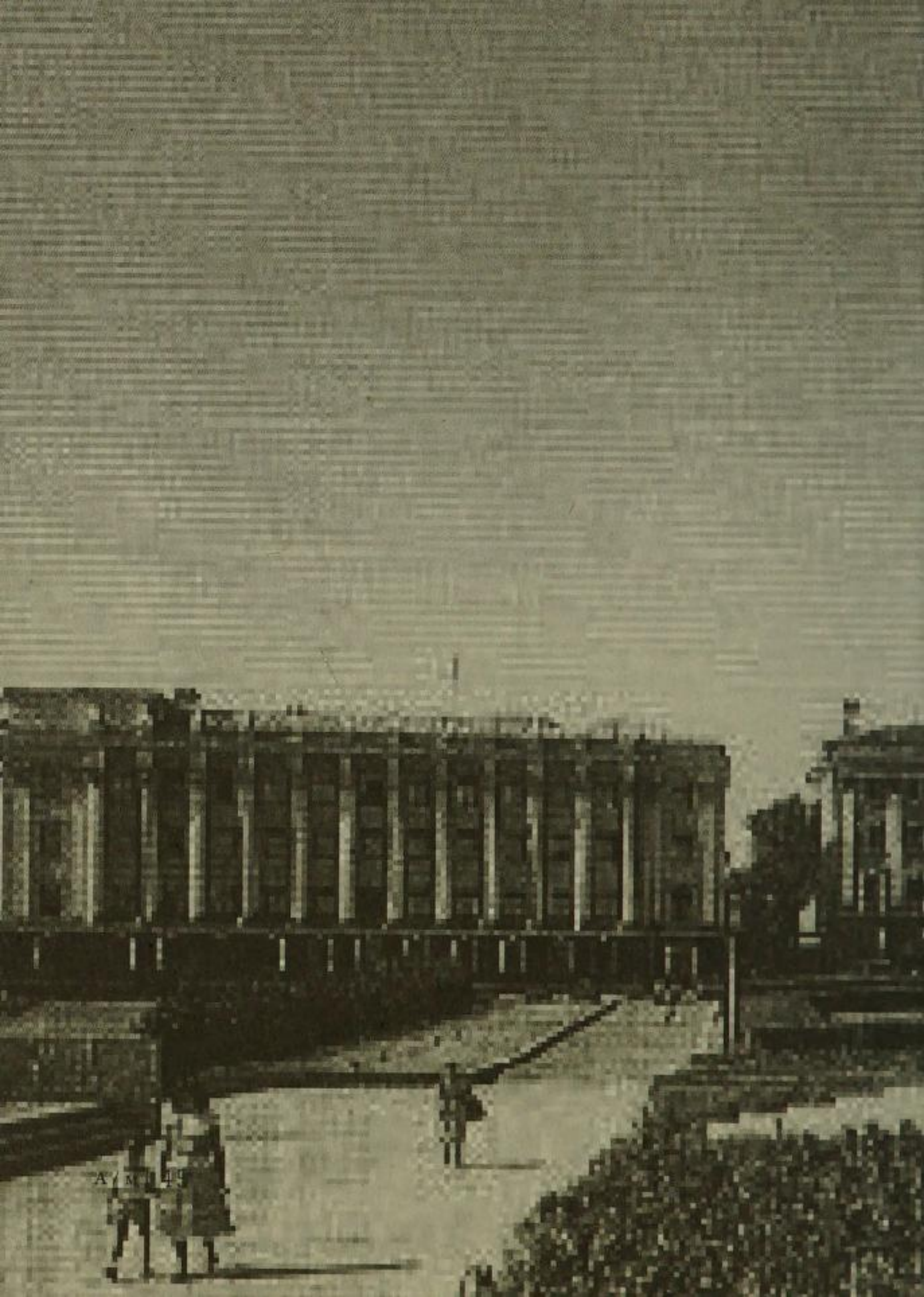
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WALTER BENJAMIN > *ARCADES PROJECT N4,1:****HISTORY AS DREAM INTERPRETATION***

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Prepared on the basis of the German volume by Rolf Tiedemann. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. CAMBRIDGE: HARVARD, 1999. P. 461.

In the dialectical image, what has been within a particular epoch is always, simultaneously, “what has been from time in-immemorial?” As such, however, it is manifest, on each occasion, only to a quite specific epoch—namely, the one in which humanity, rubbing its eyes, recognizes just this particular dream image as such. It is at this moment that the historian takes up, with regard to that image, the task of dream interpretation.

**At times some birds,
a horse, have saved
the ruins of
an amphitheater.**



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SECTION B /

ARTIST-ACTIVIST | ACTION-PRANK |

TOOLS-WEAPONS | REVOLUTION-TERROR

Postcard of Ulan Ude, capital of the Buryat Republic

[HTTP://HOME.IAE.NL/USERS/ARCENGEL/TRANSIB/ROSSIYA.HTM](http://home.iae.nl/users/arcengel/transib/rossiya.htm)

Head of Lenin

<< *Head of Che*

ARTIST-ACTIVIST { artist-activist : activist }

IRATIONAL > TRUTH OR DARE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.
APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

Collective > Okay, truth or dare. Are you an artist or an activist?

Bunting > ...

Collective > He won't answer. Rachel, are you an artist or an activist?

Baker > I'm an... activist.

Collective > It starts with an A.

ARTIST-ACTIVIST { net.art : labeling : cubbyhole : artist-activist : The Group }

NATALIE BOOKCHIN > WHAT IS ART AND WHAT IS ACTIVISM?

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 30 SEPTEMBER, 2001. LOS ANGELES.

I'd rather let it slip and slide around as need be...

Bookchin > The questions of "is it political, is it apolitical," or "what is art and what is activism"—I think these are just terms that are thrown on something which is functioning in a particular context, something which is changeable. These are slippery terms.

We could say that even deciding to be an artist, in this kind of a

culture, is a political act. One could argue that. To even be a painter is a certain kind of political act. Steve [Kurtz] also spoke about the flexibility of terms. He talked about using whatever term you need to use in the particular context that you're in. A good example of this is Fiambrera or ®TMark. ®TMark won't call themselves artists, but they have a huge repertoire of art shows in which they've appeared. They get a lot of cultural capital, as they put it, by disseminating their work through the art world. I think that it's just a matter of tactics. Maybe it's a way to promote activism as something viable, for young producers to be doing something. Maybe it's a way to be taken more seriously by the media. If you say you're an activist, people will interpret your work in a particular way, and if you say you're an artist, then maybe you'll be dismissed as crazy artists.

When artists show their work, when they're listed in the top ten in *Artforum*, then they are artists. All terms are defined in a context, and you use what term you need to use.

I wouldn't consider myself a "net" artist because I never want to define my practice through a particular medium, and I think the media of the net is going to change. All media changes. At the time that I started working with the net, it seemed a relevant and useful tool to use in order to express ideas I wanted to communicate. And I still think it is. Who knows what the net will be in the coming years?

I wouldn't want to call myself a net.artist, I wouldn't want to call myself a political artist or a feminist artist, because I'm very wary of having to limit and define my practice through a small cubbyhole. I'd rather let it slip and slide around as need be, which is where the idea of tactical media is very useful to me.

CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE > *“ARTIST” VERSUS
TACTICAL MEDIA PRACTITIONERS*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

The more things that are incommensurate, the better—because that is what is going to undermine the monstrous nature of authoritarian rationalism...

Collective > How do you think the label “artist” fits into this new molecular model of resistance?

CAE > We tend not to really call ourselves artists. That has always been a problematic thing. What we are interested in is accessing the cultural symbolic. To say that you are an artist is to have really corralled yourself because there is just too much baggage, too much history, too much specialization that comes along with that term. For a long time there was no real name for what we do; we did not know what to call it. We always had to talk with people who needed to place us in a clear-cut category or conversation was impossible! We found ourselves often claiming to be new genre artists, new media artists, but the terms never sat well with us. They were something we had to use in order to identify ourselves when hailing someone. Recently, we have been using the Dutch term “Tactical Media Practitioners.” CAE thinks they have really hit on something. In some ways that category does not help, because then we are always asked if we are doing art or not. People do not really have any associations with tactical media, but we have given them a category, so they are somewhat satisfied. At the same time, we must acknowledge that what we are doing certainly has tremendous overlap with art: to access the cultural symbolic and to try and manipulate through the use of aesthetic systems is something an

artist does. But we want to be able to do it in a grander sense, to be able to move more freely within the possibilities of representation, instead of keying solely on an aesthetic experience. What we do is related to aesthetic history, but that is just one flow in a complex practice that engages a variety of cultural and political systems and experiences.

Collective > In the interview you did with Mark Dery, you mentioned the “emerging postmodern politics of non-linear dynamics.” What did you mean by this?

CAE > That goes back to what I was talking about earlier, the celebration of contradiction. The more things that are incommensurate, the better—because that is what is going to undermine the monstrous nature of authoritarian rationalism, that is what is going to create a radical dynamic.

Collective > What do you think about the Trojan horse approach to subversion?

CAE > It depends how far you want to take it. When I have students who talk about going into business administration because once they rise up through the ranks they will screw the system up, I am [suspicious]. That notion is a complete fantasy, absolute insanity, because the only way you can rise up is when you have been socialized to get into that position, and that is an assurance that you won't screw anything up. And to think that you can maintain radical subjectivity while going through that kind of socializing process of grooming for the elite is absolutely naïve.

Collective > What about the example of the TV show “Ellen”? She created a trusting relationship with her audience, she was in everyone's living room, and when she introduced gay issues, it was like “whoa.”

CAE > Right, and then she got cancelled. But before she got cancelled she got to throw a few surprises into living rooms of mainstream

U.S.A. in the case of Ellen, however, I somehow doubt that was her plan all along—it was just a happy accident.

Collective > But as a means to an end, you have said before that you think it is all bullshit, the idea of going in and allowing yourself to become part of something and then to disrupt it.

CAE > I think that when you hope to gain an upper hand in a set of power relationships through participation in the illusion of meritocracy that it is not going to work out well.

ARTIST-ACTIVIST { Makrolab : The Container : coaliton : indymedia : utopia }

MATT FULLER > BEYOND SELF-REFERENTIAL NET.ART

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. MAY, 2000. CALARTS.

[A]ll of these efforts that are traditionally separated become connected for as long as it takes to get something done. I think that's what people are learning from network forms.

Collective > How does net.art get beyond a self-referential exploration of the medium? What potentially comes next?

Fuller > I think some key examples of this kind of thing are “The Container” that Mervin is doing—a mobile media lab in Jamaica, giving direct <http://www.container.access-it.org.uk> access to the net straight off the streets, but in a conscious, collage-y, pragmatic way that is key to all the important culture that comes out of there. The Makrolab project in Slovenia, where they're bringing <http://makrolab.ljudmila.org> new methodologies of working, using subtler strategies on the net like mapping animal migrations and mixing interpretations of network systems with prosaic interventions in different legislative territories. Also, ®TMark takes a very specific set of rhetorical strategies and applies them to networks and political contexts in a way

that disturbs all the components. These projects learn from the net and distribute new forms of action and organization, sharing different forms of information dynamics or products and then mobilizing them in terms of social events and political currents.

Collective > Is that going into new territory or is it just extending old territories? A good example is what happened with the Independent Media Center where a lot of the footage got online, but isn't that <http://www.indymedia.org/> just an extension of a traditional type of press?

Fuller > But I think the most important thing about the IMC in Seattle, from what I understand of it, was that a coalition was formed. In order to get anything done, people had to work within a context where everyone was different. The relations between people, what they could do by combining, became more important than who they "were."

Collective > The IMC also opens up an activist space to include people that would not have had access to participation.

Fuller > This type of coalition also forces you to learn how to cooperate—if the thing's going to work—even solely on the passive level of tolerance. If you're an environmentalist that wants the world to be safe for trees, then how do you learn on that basis to cooperate with steel workers? And not just being brought together to produce this media, but how all of these efforts that are traditionally separated become connected for as long as it takes to get something done. I think that's what people are learning from network forms, which are a more abstract extrapolation of specific network technologies. So when people no longer feel the need to belong to a political party, they merely go out and produce political effects with the network of people that it takes to make things happen. What we need now is to develop ways in which this cross-communication

can develop, so that people at least have the possibility of learning about potential alliances, about the things that they, along with others, can make happen. This means discourse. Public thinking. Most importantly, learning by causing trouble....

Collective > You sound so utopian!

Fuller > You can use utopian visions that galvanize action, but if they're ever totally realized they become some type of monolithic lock-down structure, like the L.A. freeway system.

ARTIST+ACTIVIST { Cosic : Lovink : Shultz : Manovich : East-West : inside-outside }

NATALIE BOOKCHIN > *TACTICAL ARTIST,*
PLAYFUL ACTIVIST

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 30 SEPTEMBER, 2001. LOS ANGELES.

That's why I said activists would maybe think I was full of shit.

Bookchin > I'm an artist. I would say that. And I think that teaching for me is very important because it allows me to bring in what I'm doing outside of the space of myself and my artwork (which is never quite so close, since it's always in collaboration with someone else and often in a public space). It really depends. It's very interesting, too, because of the attention I've received in the art world after <net.net.net>. Having been one who has worked in this area for a long time, relatively speaking (three or four years), I get a lot of coverage. And I can use that attention to—

Collective > Further what you do?

Bookchin > —address the issues that I think are important to address to a larger public. So it's very useful in that way. It's not like I'm going to make a living out of it, because I haven't chosen to make work that can do that. But having an audience is very important. I don't

think that many people are making work without imagining that they have something and someone they want to communicate to. So it can be tactical to say, okay, I'm an artist right now, one who is very public and so I'm able to get certain things out in a way I couldn't have if I was doing it by myself in the studio. I don't know what activists would say I am... full of shit?

Collective > Vuk Cosic made a big distinction between being an activist and being an artist. He kept on insisting on how he used to be involved in politics and actions, but that now he was an artist.

Bookchin > A major part of the <net.net.net> conference was dedicated to the idea of art versus activism. Geert Lovink claimed that he was not an artist, that he was an activist, but Heath Bunting went on to claim that Geert is actually the one who curates such art shows as Documenta, and that it was he and Pit Schultz who were the ones to create nettime. Heath made the point that Geert is at a lot of these art functions and conferences.

Collective > I would argue that was an artistic move. If I hadn't known Geert in this context, I would consider his actions in terms of an art context.

Bookchin > I think what Vuk says about this is interesting considering that Vuk and Olia are both from the East—Vuk from Slovenia and Olia from Moscow. I think where they're from has something to do with their insistence on separating art and politics. Lev Manovich too does this. Lev grew up in Moscow where politics was propaganda, and being an artist meant being an activist—being in an underground and working against the mainstream. The terms were really different there.

Collective > Geert has also spent a lot of time in the East, fulfilling his role of provocateur.

Bookchin > Alexei has also vacillated between calling himself an artist and an activist, out of skepticism for what politics means, politics as a bunch of lies. Vuk is very hard-line in that way. He really believes that there is a strong division between art and activism. ®TMark's approach is incredibly different, as I think the ideas are very American, often blurring the lines between art and activism. During the time that I was very active with ®TMark, I was thinking about the elimination of proper names as the mix of art and activism... now that one of the ®TMark people is based in Paris, it will be interesting to see how it changes, if it changes.

Collective > It sounds like you're highlighting the value of play, both in your art practice and in terms of activism.

Bookchin > Yes. I think that there is a distinction between art and activism. That's why I said activists would maybe think I was full of shit. There is an old school of activism, and then there's a new school of activism. And the new school that I identify with, which has much more to do with accepting the fact that there is no purity in your action, and accepting that you are always inside and outside at the same time. You're always in the institution—there's no outside. You need to devise clever and playful and sexy ways to entice people, with your aesthetics and with clever concepts, to become involved. That mentality is something fairly new, and is something that I really admired in Fiambreras and is something ®TMark has done in the past in very smart and clever ways. ®TMark represents this new kind of activism that insists on playing with the terms.

VUK COSIC > *WHO'S THE SEXY GUY NOW?*

(*BELGRADE, 1991*)

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

Nowadays, Eastern European people don't do art at all. It's not interesting; it's not sexy.

Collective > You were doing actual politics in Yugoslavia?

Cosic > I was a professional politician before this. It was great, I felt powerful. I was a leader in grand student demonstrations in Belgrade, Siberia. That was the last place we had people from all over Yugoslavia working together. In March 1991.

Collective > How did you get out of politics and into art?

Cosic > I was doing art anyway. I was editing for some very smart newspapers at the time. It was the only platform for any oppositional ideas. It was an interesting spot to be in and I spent years with them. Before the changes in Eastern Europe, cultural activism made a lot of sense. Art was in focus. Art was action. It was much closer to social change than it is today. Nowadays, Eastern European people don't do art at all. It's not interesting; it's not sexy. It used to be, ten, fifteen years ago, but you are not a sexy guy in the neighborhood if you do that stuff now.

Collective > Who's the sexy guy now?

Cosic > Web designers? Maybe. I don't know. So anyway, in '91 "real" life became interesting. Accelerated. All these weapons around and all this talk of lebensraum [space to live]. It was translated into different languages to hide the traces a little bit, but that was the story: the Nazification of Serbia. And I thought that the thing to do was not to write about it, but go into direct action. We had demonstra-

tions. We were putting actual pressure on the authorities.

Collective > But your direct action in the student movement only lasted a few days?

Cosic > The day before our demonstration, there was a big opposition demonstration and a couple people died. There was a lot of fighting and they put the opposition leaders in jail. Us kids were all that were left—the student population. It was great. We went to the streets to see what would happen and there were 400,000 of us. We wanted to put pressure on politicians, and our success was only in getting about 100, 110 people out of jail, among them several prominent members of the opposition. Later the leaders of the opposition made a coalition with Slobodan Milosevic. After that demonstration I was totally disgusted with politics. There was this art festival going on—it was lots of fun and I felt much better. The opposition is doing a lousy job, and I have no faith in the opposition. These last ten years have shown how that worked out, and I think I made a good decision.

ARTIST-ACTIVIST { veil : corporate : drive : focus : profit }

®TMark > CONSISTENT WITH THE BOTTOM LINE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with “Raoul” and “Frank” of ®TMark.
09 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

We have this one drive—for the bottom line, but for cultural profit, not financial gain. That’s all we do.

Collective > With other activist work by artists, there’s a tendency for things to be shallow and wide. I’m struck by how successful you are at thinking through all the angles in depth and keeping up this thickly constructed veil.

®TMark > I think it’s very simple to be consistent and go into depth when you have a simple activist aim. It’s much easier than when you have

other considerations. But I also think what we're doing is substantially different from what other artists are generally doing.

Collective > And you do this by staying focused on a simple point—the bottom line?

®TMark > That's why corporations are so excellent at covering every base. It's because they have a simple point as well. We behave like corporations behave. We have this one drive—for the bottom line, but for cultural profit, not financial gain. That's all we do. We have no responsibility to consider anything outside our concerns. We don't have to worry or have a crisis of conscience.

Collective > What about a crisis of content?

®TMark > Conscience or content, we don't worry about what we're doing so much. If we were a traditional corporation, we'd be aiming to make more money, and the bigger we became the more we'd be steadily lumbering toward that goal. At ®TMark we steadily progress—thanks to this same relentless drive—towards what we consider cultural profit.

ARTIST-ACTIVIST { Paradiso : Next Five Minutes : Amsterdam : Ecstasy : chaos }

**GEERT LOVINK > BUSINESS AND PLEASURE:
THE THREAT OF OPEN CHANNELS**

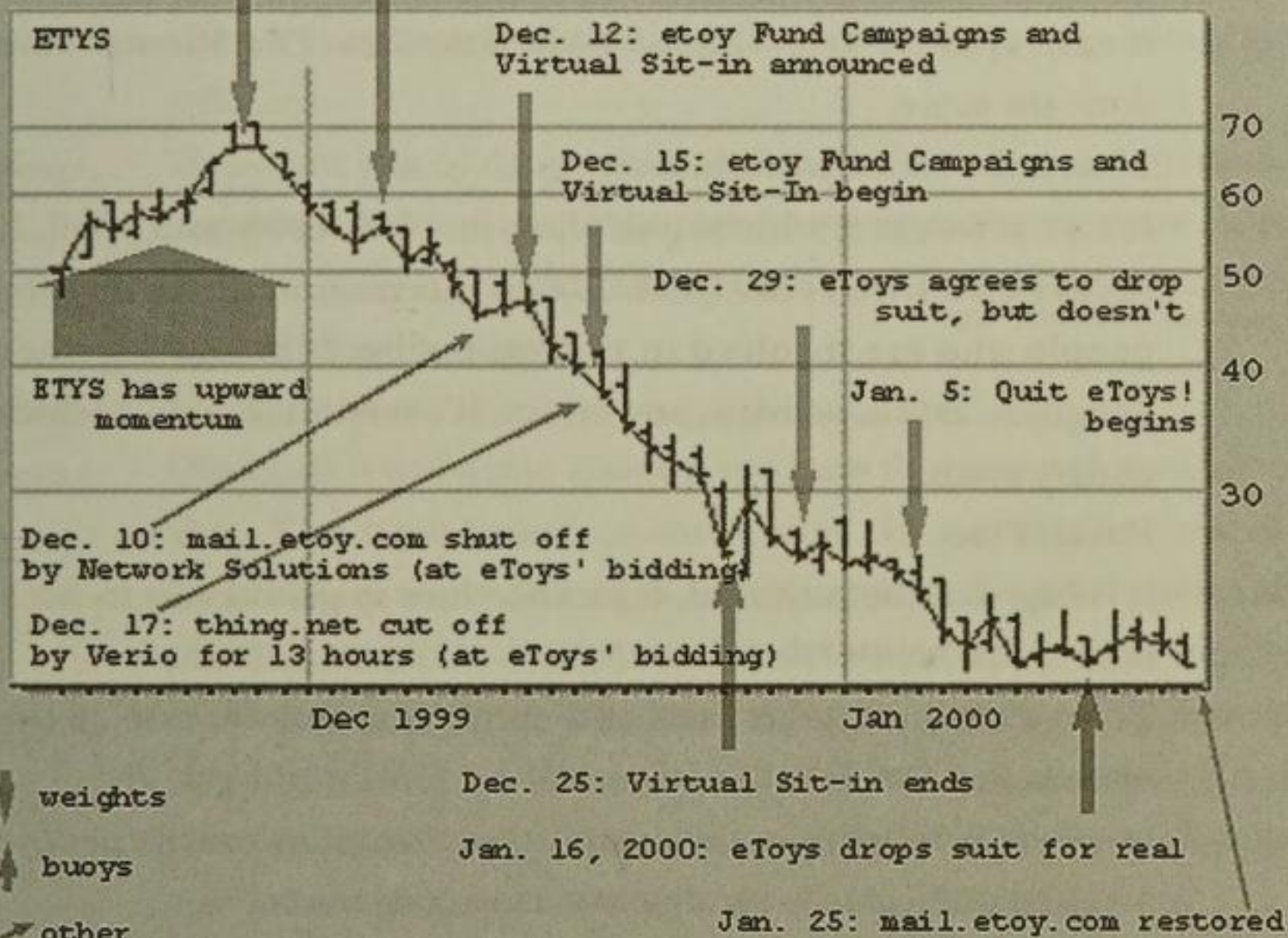
<NET.NET.NET> Interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience. 09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

In the face of this utopian situation where you have so many channels available, it becomes a question of what do you have to say?

Diamond > One thing that has always struck me about the Paradiso conference was the way that it intervened within the city. I wouldn't even
<http://www.paradiso.nl/>
call it a conference, actually, it's more of a festival or an event. From the posters on the buses and the trains to the presence of so

Nov. 29: At \$67/share, eToys obtains injunction against etoy.com; protests begin

Dec. 3: "A new toy for you" campaign announced



eToys vs. etoy.com timeline

"Intended for illustrational purposes only, not to imply a simple causality."

[HTTP://WWW.RTM.COM/ETOY.HTML](http://www.rtm.com/etoys.html)

many young people, it's a taking of the city. The discussions are very broad-range, and cover everything from sweatshops in Indonesia to discussions about the role of the intellectual on the Internet. The lines to get into the conference go around the block. It's like going to a rave. There are thousands and thousands of young people from Amsterdam but also from other places, and there's a tremendous kind of energy. Where did that come from?

Lovink > Well, Paradiso is a hippie temple. That's where it comes from.

Audience > But why did this one generate so much energy?

Halleck > It wasn't just this one—I think each of the Next Five Minutes have done the same.

Audience > What is the Next Five Minutes?

Lovink > It's a conference, which took place in 1993, 1996, and 1999. It occurs on a three-year basis. It's an international meeting for <http://www.next5minutes.org/> people who are involved in tactical media. It brings together designers, artists, activists, and critics. It's very much a multi-disciplinary event.

Halleck > Hackers too.

Lovink > It is based in the technical, topics like how to gain access to satellites.

Diamond > Things often happen from it. I think that may be one of the reasons that Dee Dee likes to attend.

Lovink > It comes from people involved with activism, as well as people involved with video art and public access television.

Halleck > The conference is on at least three channels on TV. Everything is televised. Everything is streamed on the web. There are four or five radio stations that have various types of programming from the conference. The opening party was held at a squatter's loft that's also a base for pirate radio.

Diamond > But in the Netherlands, events have this kind of reciprocity between pleasure and business. At cinema conferences and film festivals I've attended, they have this interesting way of imagining the discipline of work and the discipline of pleasure. I'm curious about that theme because it seems that the recognition of the need for pleasure, as opposed to its denial, is really key in mobilizing strategies of the new social movements. The old New Left had problems with pleasure. It was forced onto the agenda by those in its midst. Maybe it's just that now there's lots of good Ecstasy available, but this new value for pleasure is definitely something different.

Lovink > There are lots of drugs around, but that's not what concerns us because this is normal. What is of interest is the pleasure side of gathering together and having a multitude of channels available for broadcasting together.

Halleck > And the chaos.

Lovink > Obviously it turns into chaos if you have that many channels available. You have interface into noise. In a certain sense, this backfires on every one of us in Amsterdam. If we are many, this problem amplifies even more. We definitely aspire to an ideology of the free in order to broadcast or netcast, or move files, but it is a very interesting situation when media is not at all scarce. In the face of this utopian situation where you have so many channels available, it becomes a question of what do you have to say?



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Description

ACTION-PRANK

< YOUR BASE (quantity: ALL), auctioned on eBay.
Part of the *All Your Base* phenomenon which began as a video game
joke and rapidly evolved into an interventionist meme.
HTTP://WWW.ANGELFIRE.COM/ELECTRONIC/OVERHERE/COMEDY/
TOHOLDFILES/BASEPICS/BASE_EBAY.JPG

ACTION-PRANK { C3 : Center Seat : A3.HU : Atomic Arts Lab : B92 }

GEERT LOVINK > TACTICAL MEDIA EXAMPLES

<NET.NET.NET> Interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience.
09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

*Then they lost literally everything—not just their amplifier, but also their
building and all the equipment.*

Halleck > Could you give some examples of the kind of tactical media that
you've been talking about? I'm particularly interested in the things
that were being set up in the border camps.

Lovink > This work covers a great range and some of it is really quite sophis-
ticated. There are examples such as C3 and Center Seat C. Or
A3.HU, a really sophisticated center for new media for our region
<http://www.c3.hu/c3/index.html>
located in Budapest. Also, there are very small initiatives, like the
<http://www.a3.hu>
Atomic Arts Lab in Riga. This lab is performing the really impor-
tant task of operating as a switchboard for net radio initiatives that
are independent of MPEG and Real Audio. A bigger and more
serious example would be B92 in Belgrade, which was shut down
immediately when the bombing started. Through a big support
campaign, we were able to keep the station on the air for another
three or four weeks. Then they lost literally everything—not just
their amplifier, but also their building and all the equipment. As of

yet, they haven't gotten any of it back. However, they have been able to get back on the air through the somewhat dubious support of the opposition leader. This would seem to be a strange coalition, but they took the opportunity and they're back on the air. They have a very small group and they're surviving in this difficult situation in Serbia. If you want to look at them, the address is www.freeb92.net.

ACTION-PRANK { New York : net.art : museum : contest : 2000>1997 }

CORNELIA SOLLFRANK > *FEMALE EXTENSION*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. SPRING, 2000. LOS ANGELES.

Sometimes it seems like you are hacking an abstract system, but it is something else when you affect people.

Collective > In terms of your own work, what do you think about the desire of curators to want to put net.art in museums and sell and commodify it?

Sollfrank > You know about Female Extension? This project occurred in 1997, a crucial year for net.art because the traditional art institutions and museums attempted to subsume the work of net.artists. Curators suddenly realized that something like net.art existed and they wanted to participate in the hype. At the same time, though, they did not have any idea what it meant to deal with net.art as a new medium. They just thought that they could set up some computers and suddenly they would have "net.art."

In the winter of '96 and '97, I had a grant, a fellowship, which I used to study net.art in New York City. It was a great experience, and even though there was not much going on in '96, I got a good overview. Coincidentally, when I went back to Hamburg, I discovered that the Museum of Contemporary Art in Hamburg had

launched a net.art competition. What concerned me was that I knew of those involved in the scene, there was no one in the museum who had any real idea about net.art, interactive installations, or even the computer! I spoke with the editor of Telepolis, <http://www.heise.de/tp> an online magazine about digital culture where I was a writer at the time, about the situation, and he recommended going to the museum and conducting an interview. So I went in as a journalist to conduct an interview about their net.art competition and found out that they really did not have any idea about net.art. The guy I interviewed basically said that he knew nothing about net.art, but was willing to learn. At least he did not try to pretend.

Collective > Do you think they want to be part of this avant-garde because they feel it escapes them?

Sollfrank > Absolutely. There was this one curator involved who was very ambitious. He honestly had really good intentions.

Collective > What was the final show like? Did you participate?

Sollfrank > Of course I wanted to take part, but also to comment on what was happening with this situation. I did not feel like just sending in one submission—it just did not seem like enough. I was also in contact with other artists, like Jodi.org, and they were all very unhappy because the contest seemed so ridiculous. Even the “call for entries” was absurd, because at one point it said for you to send your work to the museum, you had to physically transfer your data onto their museum server, which makes no sense. If you have work on the web, you should just send in the URL address and that’s it. They wanted to get hold of the data; they wanted to have it on their server, to possess it. Because of this I actually came up with two projects. One was an official project, which I sent in under my real name. It was some project about the museum as Internet

provider. I asked them to set up a space with a server, a technical set-up to provide Internet access, in order to have the whole technology of the museum as itself an object on display. I wanted to reveal the servers, the cables and also the person who was running it, rather than the opposite tendency, which is to hide the cables, to hide the technology and just to have a surface, a screen. I wanted to have all the machines in the space as objects. That was my official project. But then I had my other project, the real project, I put together because I hated this competition and I wanted to destroy it. They had automated everything and I thought that if I could flood the whole competition, then the entire process would break down. I invented 350 female net.artists to flood the competition, which was a lot of work just to think of the names!

Collective > I wonder what would have happened if they prematurely had found out!

Sollfrank > It might have happened, but it did not. They did not realize what was going on. I had a spy in the museum, this guy who is an artist and a consultant and who does web stuff. I was always in contact with him, he kept me [abreast] of the situation. But they did not realize anything, they did not even think to consider the possibility of my actions. Then the jury came together, who were all Well Known People, but were not specialized in net.art. My spy was also around this jury and he told me afterwards that they were wondering what all of these web sites could mean, but they could not find a connection. They never figured out the system behind it. It is possible to see the underlying system if you are web-literate. If you look at these pages, then another and another, you are aware that there is a system that is taking random text and random images and

combining them together. It was a piece that made sense in 1997.

Collective > So did the museum ever catch on to what was happening?

Sollfrank > Yeah, but later on. They did not realize what I had done and they [chose] their winners. And I asked myself, what to do with this thing now? I spoke to friends and other artists, and they insisted that I had to publish it, that I had to make it public, otherwise it would be lost. No one would ever find out about the subversion that was going on. So that is what I did. The night before the press conference announcing the winners, I wrote a press release that described what I had done. And I went to the press conference the next day. There were, I don't know, thirty important journalists to whom I handed out this press release. For the museum people, it was absolutely shocking. I knew the guy who had initiated the competition because of the interview I had conducted with him. Before he knew what I did, he had invited me to give a speech at the awards ceremony, which I had agreed to do. So when he saw the press release, he turned pale. It was really hard for him. I mean, it was really bad. And even I felt a bit bad. Sometimes it seems like you are hacking an abstract system, but it is something else when you affect people. I think it really caused some damage to him personally.

Collective > But it did show an underlying problem with the structure of the competition.

Sollfrank > Sure. It was obvious to me that I had to do it. But it still was a strange moment, you know, to sit next to this person as he was realizing what I had done.

Collective > He probably thought that he had the whole thing under control, that everything had gone smoothly.

Sollfrank > Yeah. So this was a bit of an awkward moment. Afterwards there

was this dinner party, and it seemed like he had recovered a bit by the time it started. He then said that my project was the best contribution to the competition and that he wanted it documented on their museum server. I told him that it was a piece of conceptual art and that he had to buy it if he wanted it.

Collective > That's great!

Sollfrank > Of course not! That is the museum's attitude towards net.art, you know. They think it is for free. Everything is for free, right, because it is on the net, which is true in a way, but not in the way they think it is. It is free when you put something back, give something back. If they would have something to offer to the net.art scene, to help people accomplish things on the web, like facilities or financial assistance, it would be a different story. But they don't have anything to offer, really. So they just want to take everything for free, and they don't give anything back.

Collective > Why should they fund painting or sculpture or fund the lifestyles of painters or sculptors and ~~not~~ do the same for net.artists? Why not provide for net.artists' lifestyles in the same way?

Sollfrank > I have no idea how that relationship between the museum and the net.artists could work... usually they try. From what I have seen, the curators really do think about how they can make net.art installations happen in a space that makes sense. That is a crucial point for all gallery shows. On the other hand, I think there are works which simply demand that you just have to sit in front of a computer screen, especially if it is about the interface and about the screen and nothing else.

IRATIONAL > MASTERS OF SELF PROMOTION

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.

APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

Everybody is interested in self-promoting themselves for fame.

Collective > In the end, isn't it not so much about how you're promoting yourself but more about what you're doing, and what kind of effect that really has?

Baker > Promotion is a mode of production in itself. @TMark are masters of promotion, not necessarily self-promotion, but the use of media tools, marketing, press releasing at the right time.

Collective > That's not about promoting personalities, though. The personalities in @TMark are constantly changing. People don't even know who all the members of @TMark are.

Baker > There's promotion and then there's self-promotion.

Collective > Can't there be promotion for a reason? Promoting an action because you want a social effect?

Bunting > That sort of publicity is privacy. I learned that from Rachel Baker.

Baker > If I did an art project of being totally anonymous, if I covered my face and didn't say who I was, in three years I would be a star.

Collective > You're talking about the seduction of the veil, about desiring something more with its clothes on than with its clothes off. But isn't that very different from a political or social art practice that intentionally avoids individual names? Or the corporate veil which @TMark uses that allows for activities to take place in lieu of promoting personalities?

Baker > @TMark is about personalities. The thing people want to know about @TMark is who are the members, and are those really their names? It's a performance too.

- Collective > It serves both functions.
- Collective > If we're talking about the end result being fame, that's one thing. But what if we're talking about the end result being some kind of social effect, which seems like the more interesting result?
- Baker > Who would be interested in self-promotion for fame?
- Bunting > Everybody is interested in self-promoting themselves for fame.
- Collective > No, Rachel just told us she wasn't.
- Baker > No, I'm not.

ACTION-PRANK { Lenin : capitalism : ®TMark : Ars Electronica : BLO }

**CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE > APPROPRIATING
RADICAL CRITIQUE**

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

They are off the street and out of the gene pool.

- Collective > What about collaborating with mainstream media in order to insert ideas into it? Because that is a similar strategy.
- CAE > I do not want to throw the baby out with the bathwater, but whatever subversive message you can possibly insert is going to be watered down, even in the best case scenario.
- Collective > I am thinking of ®TMark, where there is a strong, if not integral, collaboration with mainstream media that is done on ®TMark's own terms and does exist in mainstream culture in a way most alternative ideas don't. There is a cooperation with mainstream media, they are allowed to tell their stories through ®TMark.
- CAE > They do have an interesting practice. That is like the old Lenin quote: "Capitalism will sell the rope that hangs it." And ®TMark has done a lot of compelling and practical work based on that notion. If you give mass media a story that is going to sell some

papers or make an interesting newscast, they will probably go along with it. And then you can slip some nuggets of subversion in there. The BLO [Barbie Liberation Organization] is the great example of that—the way they used humor to disguise an intelligent critique and some corporate sabotage is quite smart. We are talking about degrees. I do not want to get in the position of saying there is some kind of either/or here, or some kind of pure position. The boundaries are very fluid. As long as you can understand where you are in that process, then yes, by all means use it for what it is worth! However, if you look at a cultural event like Ars Electronica where they try to do these radicalized festivals based on a potentially resistant principle (like information war), they tend to fail even though they may have radical representation at the festival, because the government and corporations are too deeply involved. Any subversive idea an individual can glean from the situation is going to be modest compared to what the corporations get out of it. And here we are only talking about a minor cultural institution. The European cultural strategy of managed repression of radical cultural activity is so much smarter than the U.S. one of total suppression. The U.S. just tries to stomp out whatever it thinks is counter to capitalist desires. In Europe, there is the idea of appropriating radical critique by throwing some money at it. Put the cultural resisters out as monkeys, like little birds in golden cages that will bring in the tourists. And if by some chance they do come up with a revolutionary idea in production or organization, the government is there to appropriate it. It's basically like yes, give the subversives some money, let them have their little congresses. They are off the street and out of the gene pool.

[LAUGHTER]

Collective > Don't invite Critical Arts Ensemble to Ars Electronica!
CAE > Well, yeah, we have been banned from Ars Electronica.
Collective > Have you?
CAE > Yeah.

ACTION-PRANK { copy : ownership : mutation : crime : voyeur }

JENNY MARKETOU WITH FRAN ILICH >
CHRIS.053: WHY SMELL?

<NET.NET.NET.MX> Interview with Fran Ilich. DECEMBER, 1999. TIJUANA.

Ilich, Fran. "Transfer de Smellbytes con Jenny Marketou." POSTED TO NETTIME JUNE 29, 2001.
[HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-LAT-0106/MSG00077.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-LAT-0106/MSG00077.HTML).
JUNE 2002.

Scents and sniffing act as a metaphor for classification and crime.

[TRANSLATION OF THE SPANISH ORIGINAL]

Ilich > Isn't Chris.053 looking for scents in the wrong medium? What is s/he doing on the Internet?

Marketou > I was surprised by an article in the Wall Street Journal which said that at several big companies in California potential employees had to pass a scent test because if you have a good body odor it means that you are healthy, that people will like you more, and that you will be a good employee because you are attractive. As we know, pheromones have always been a component of sexual attraction, which is why they use them in perfumes. Scent has always been a means of classification in many cultures.

One reason we use the concept of smell is because as odors, we are being made as transparent in a series of chemical reactions. As chemicals, we interact with others in the form of gaseous information, our corporeal scents interacting with the body odors of other people, with the chemistry of their bodies. And these combina-

tions effect further communication and social interaction in the process of becoming mutations. The idea of subversion and virtual intervention becomes not only a political position, but also an aesthetic in my work, looking at how artists and contemporary art can find another form of resistance.

We launched SmellBytes™ as an intervention on the Internet—a critical intervention with humor, contradiction and parody because there is still no olfactory capability on the Internet. Scents and sniffing act as a metaphor for classification and crime.

Remember that Chris.053 is more than just a serial sniffer or a hacker—s/he is an interventionist. This is how Chris turns out to be an artist. S/he also allows people to participate in creating a real atmosphere, the “out of body” profiles projected directly on the walls of a museum. The person who sees SmellBytes™ while Chris explores the web will see simultaneous streams of images that Chris projects on the walls of a gallery or museum. While visitors become voyeurs as people are projected on the walls, they may be reminded of the value of privacy, individual autonomy, and the body. That’s where you see the transparency of information as a reflection of subjectivity and as art.

Ilich > Your work handles chaos and randomness in a very ordered way and creates an excellent mix among the theories of technology, information and espionage, with artificial intelligence and contemporary art. It also seems to playfully explore the dimension of space and the interaction of a public collective which is usually only offered a CPU to reflect upon.

Marketou > I’m trying to use humor, diversion and little pranks, trying to work with creative methods that, in certain way, are free of the commodified and institutionalized object. That is one of my main interests

as an artist, even before the net—to make art that does not necessarily fall within traditional and institutionalized ways of working. I'm very interested in this ephemeral way of working. So for me, the Internet is a way to work with art, culture and cultural policy in a world that has already accepted that we have both a body and a discorporeal subjective existence.

ACTION-PRANK { hackers : pranks : pedagogy : Clara S0pht : CCC : fertility }

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CORNELIA SOLLFRANK WITH FLORIAN CRAMER > ***SOCIAL HACKING***

Cramer, Florian. "Hacking the Art OS—Interview with Cornelia Sollfrank." POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 15, 2002. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00076.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-0203/msg00076.html). [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00077.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-0203/msg00077.html). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Cramer > I know the interview that you also did with a female hacker at a Chaos Computer Congress in 1999—

Sollfrank > Clara S0pht.

Cramer > Right. And you are working on a comprehensive video documentation of this theme!

Sollfrank > I'm making a five-part series. Due to my experience in the CCC, I narrowed my research down and tried to find women who see themselves as hackers. Besides posting to numerous mailing lists and newsgroups, I asked a diverse number of experts. Bruce Sterling, for example, who has written an erudite book, "Hacker Cracker," and is seen as an expert in the American scene, or the American hacker hunter, Gail Thackeray, who was the co-founder of the Computer Crime Unit in the U.S.A. They are really specialists who know the scene very well, and all of them confirmed that there are no highly skilled women in this area. That proved very

depressing for me. In my fantasies, I imagined there were all these wild women, complete nerds, exotic, anarchistic and dangerous, courageous enough to want to cross borders and break all conventions, psychopathic and with criminal tendencies, politically active, artistic and more: however they just didn't exist. That's when I switched from the journalist-research modus to the artistic modus and said to myself, I have to try and reshape this boring reality. And that's why I did the interview with Clara S0pht for example, who doesn't really exist. [laughter] I just started to invent female hackers.

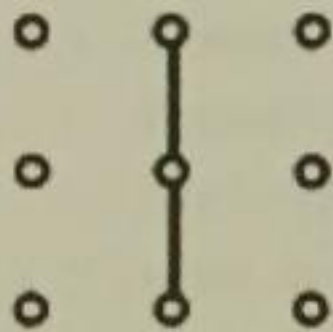
Cramer > Oh, I see! [laughter] Great!

Sollfrank > I did show the videos which came out of this process in the art scene, where they went down really well, although sometimes certain clever people ask what they actually have to do with art. Depending on the situation I then reveal that the female hackers do not exist or STILL do not exist. I preferred showing them though in a hacker context. For example I gave a talk at the CCC congress on women hackers and showed the interview with Clara S0pht. It was pretty well attended, including a lot of men, who watched everything and then attacked me for not defending sufficiently Clara S0pht's privacy, because she had stressed that she did not want details about herself being publicized. At the end of the event I mentioned casually that the woman did not exist and that I had invented her. Some people were gobsmacked. Quite unexpectedly they had experienced art, an art which had come to them, to their congress, and talked in their language. I found that very amusing. These little doses of "pedagogy" can trigger off a lot and no doubt help CCC to develop itself further.

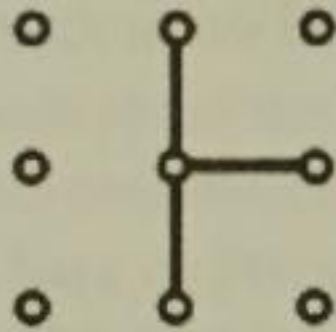
Cramer > There you become a hacker yourself, but in a different system from that of computer codes. You do "social hacking."

Sollfrank > Exactly. My favorite hack in the CCC concerned the “Lost and Found” page on the web site of the Hacker Club, which I always liked to study after every congress. I found it fascinating to discover what things hackers have on them and have forgotten. I then turned that around. While I was working on the theme “women hackers,” I deliberately left things at the congress so that they would turn up on the “Lost and Found” page and cause commotion and upheaval. By that, I mean I left things there which normally only women have or possess. The main object was a small electronic device with a display and two little lights that women use to calculate their fertility cycle. I handed that in to the “Lost and Found” and added that I had found it in the ladies’ toilets. Five hackers grouped around this device and studied it [laughter] to find out what it is. This ominous device became the center of a lot of heated discussions before it was finally pinned up as a large photo on the “Lost and Found” page.

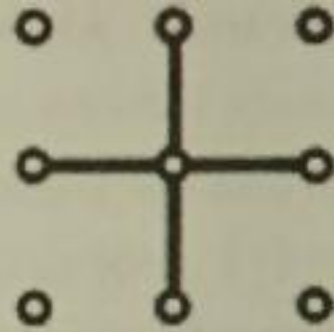
**Some people were
gobsmacked. Quite
unexpectedly
they had experienced art**



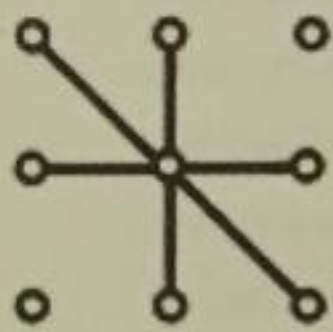
$R = 1$



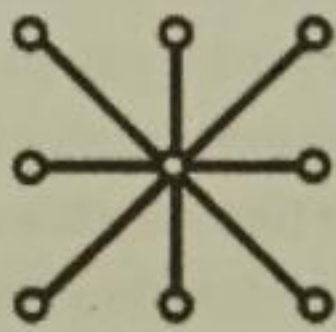
$R = 1.5$



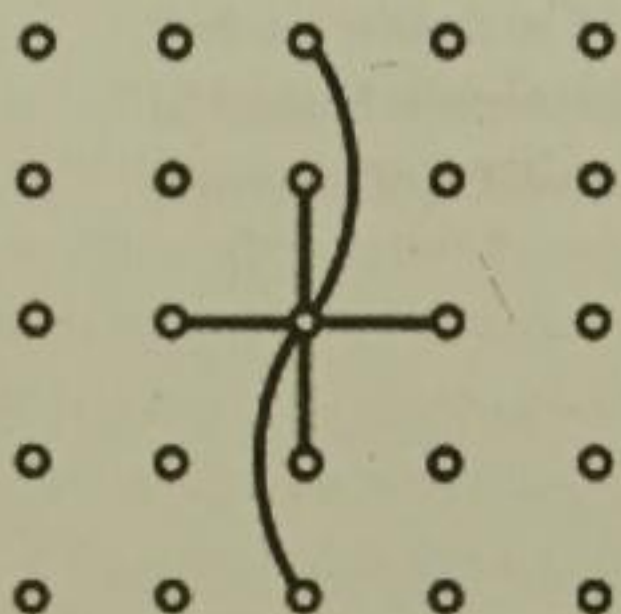
$R = 2$



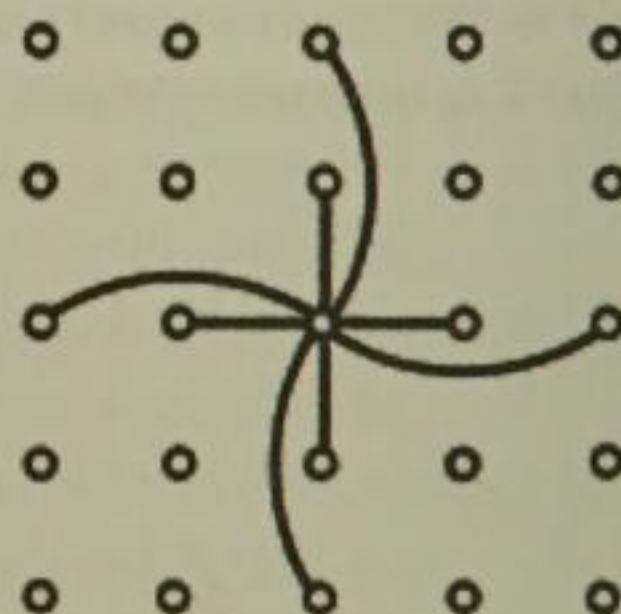
$R = 3$



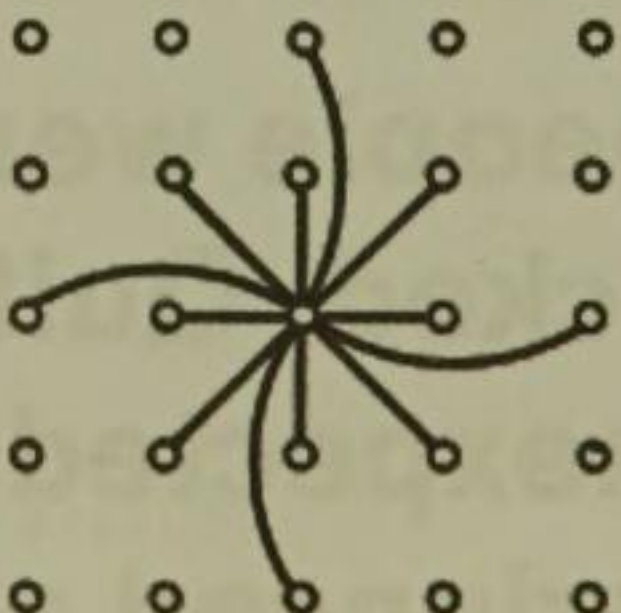
$R = 4$



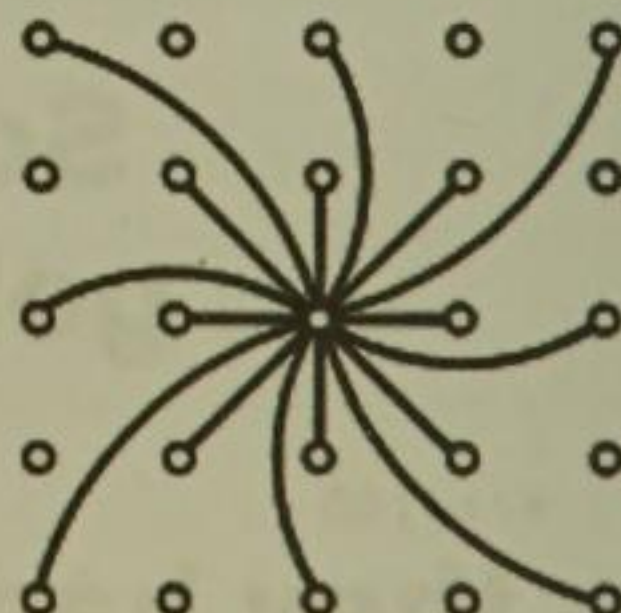
$R' = 3$



$R' = 4$



$R' = 6$



$R' = 8$

< *Definition of Redundancy Level*, Paul Baran. August 1964.

From a RAND Corporation memorandum in which Baran examines the types of network most likely to survive a catastrophic attack.

[HTTP://WWW.RAND.ORG/PUBLICATIONS/RM/RM3420/RM3420.CHAPTER2.HTML](http://www.rand.org/publications/RM/RM3420/RM3420.CHAPTER2.HTML)

TOOLS-WEAPONS { worker : mutation : line-of-flight }

++ **GILLES DELEUZE AND FELIX GUATTARI** >

WEAPON AND TOOL, SUBTERRANEAN TECHNICIANS

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translation of *Mille Plateaux, vol. 2 of Capitalisme et schizophrénie*. Trans. Brian Massumi. LONDON: THE ATHLONE PRESS LTD., 1988. 1992. P. 403.

Martial arts and state-of-the-art technologies have value only because they create the possibility of bringing together worker and warrior masses of a new type. The shared line of flight of the weapon and the tool: a pure possibility, a mutation. There arise subterranean, aerial, submarine technicians who belong more or less to the world order, but who involuntarily invent and amass virtual charges of knowledge and action that are usable by others, minute but easily acquired for new assemblages. The borrowings between warfare and the military apparatus, work and free action, always run in both directions, for a struggle that is all the more varied.

I/O/D WITH GEERT LOVINK > *THE WEB STALKER*

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 Lovink, Geert. "Nettime Interview with I/O/D." 1998. [HTTP://RHIZOME.ORG/ARTBASE/1694/NETTIME.HTML](http://rhizome.org/artbase/1694/nettime.html). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION HAVE BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Lovink > Web Stalker is showing us the backstage of the browsers. Could you explain to us how it actually works? What kind of code do we get to see? Is it just HTML or hidden directories of the servers? What do webmasters and sysops try to hide from us and what can we learn from it? Web Stalker as a hacker's tool for extra-governmental gangs that are trying to undermine the efficiency of global capitalism?

Pope > The Web Stalker moves only within the limits of HTML space. Any co-conspirators need to be forearmed with at least one URL which refers to an HTML document. Give this to the "crawler," and the Stalker begins its process of parsing, hungrily searching for links to other HTML resources. Initiating a "map" window opens a channel onto this process, through which URLs are graphically represented as circles and links as lines. The Stalker will thrive on known links and resources—as long as each HTML document contains a link to another HTML document, the Stalker will live. Pitch it into a Netscape, Microsoft, Macromedia or Java-only space and it will soon perish.

Green > When we began to use the Stalker as our primary web-access software, we became aware of the extent to which HTML has become a site of commercial contention. Browsers made by the two best-known players frame most people's experience of the web. This is a literal framing. Whatever happens within the window of Explorer, for instance, is the limit of possibility. HTML is, after all, a mark-up language which indicates structure and intention of a

document. There is no imperative to interpret “cite” as “italic,” as there are none which demand the use of “forward” or “back” to define a spatial metaphor.

Fuller > We’ve had reports from users that amongst other things, if you use the Web Stalker on a site with extra content being added to it every few hours, such as some news services for instance, you can start to find files whilst they’re still in the queue—before the news “happens.”

Pope > Commercial interests have tried to exploit the web by controlling the velocity of browsing. The Stalker subverts this—it confounds the faux-melodrama of the click-thru by automatically making the link for you. Suspense is ridiculed and fluidity is returned to a realm where processes of delay and damming are recognized advertising opportunities. It is here that the convention of the “web page” helps to solidify HTML, presenting each document as the potential apex of the user’s experience. A leaf-node rather than link.

TOOLS-WEAPONS { artist-activist : networks : laity }

++ **GEERT LOVINK > INTERVIEW YOURSELF!**
(IDEALISTIC NEW MEDIA CULTURE)

Lovink, Geert. “The Art of Electronic Dialogue; a Self-Interview as Introduction.” 2001.
[HTTP://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IY/GEERT.HTML](http://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IY/GEERT.HTML). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL TEXT. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED. DRASTIC CHANGES ARE INDICATED WITH SQUARE BRACKETS.]

Date: Mon, 26 Feb 2001 17:02:47 +1100
From: geert lovink
Subject: Re: Re: net art history - Interview Yourself!

Lovink > Over the last decade much effort has been put into overcoming the differences between artists who do conceptual work, old school political activists, involved in investigative journalism and develop-

ing political arguments, theorists and critics; constantly in danger of getting stuck in structural analyses, the programmers who are writing the code and do install[ations] and maintain the networks, and last but not least designers shaping the media aesthetics (graphics, interfaces, etc.). An independent new media culture needs all these disciplines. We are talking here about a delicate balance between individuals, groups and companies/institutions. Even though people are increasingly forced to develop a variety of skills, multi-disciplinarity remains an idle goal, not a daily reality. The division of labor is still there, due to the highly specialized knowledge of each field. All of these people are using and contributing to the network (not just their own) and this is one place where they meet, and converge. At least that's my utopian drive.

Lovink > This all sounds inspiring and idealistic. I am not sure if the cultural networks you are referring to here have a long-term goal. Certainly they have pasts. What would these suggest?

Lovink > To understand my personal take on current new media culture, I think it useful to compare it with the prior era. Artists and critics are now working with the technology itself. There is no outside position anymore, nor is this perceived as something desirable. The laity has become engaged in the fight over the rules and tools we communicate and work with. For decades the research and development of these media spaces had been in the hands of politicians, companies and their engineers. It is only during and after the nineties that we see a democratization of new media, world wide. It had become anachronistic to have the 1984 type of nightmares, or [their] counterpart, the wet dreams of out-of-body virtual realities. It is no longer about rejecting or embracing the new media. Computers had become what they had originally been

2B	CHOSE MODE
2B - 1	Content based
2B - 2	Formal
2B - 3	Ironic
2B - 4	Poetic
2B - 5	Activist
2C	CHOSE GENRE
2C - 1	Subversion
2C - 2	Net as Object
2C - 3	Interaction
2C - 4	Streaming
2C - 5	Travel Log
2C - 6	Telepresent Collaboration
2C - 7	Search Engine
2C - 8	Sex
2C - 9	Storytelling
2C - 10	Pranks and Fake Identity Construction
2C - 11	Interface Production and/or Deconstruction
2C - 12	ASCII Art
2C - 13	Browser Art, On-line Software Art
2C - 14	Form Art
2C - 15	Multi-User Interactive Environments
2C - 16	CUSEeMe, IRC, Email , ICQ, Mailing List Art
2D	PRODUCTION

JENNY MARKETOU > INTRODUCTION TO CHRIS.053

<NET.NET.NET.MX> Interview with Fran Ilich. DECEMBER, 1999. TIJUANA.

Ilich, Fran. "Transfer de Smellbytes con Jenny Marketou." POSTED TO NETTIME JUNE 29, 2001.
HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-LAT-0106/MSG00077.HTML.
JUNE 2002.

[M]imesis no longer depends on nature, but on information.

[TRANSLATION OF THE SPANISH ORIGINAL.]

Ilich > How was Chris.053 born as a bot?

Marketou > Chris was born in 1998 on the server Banff, and was programmed
[http://smellbytes.banff.org/] there in a combination of different languages and scripts with certain assigned behaviors. It is a serial sniffer with the abilities of a hacker—an interventionist artificial intelligence bot that lives on the Internet and that loves to "sniff." Chris can sniff like smog through realms and IP addresses. His entity is constantly roaming the chat-rooms, hunting and corrupting the profiles of those who participate in teleconferences. As a matter of fact, Chris visits about 40 locations around the world, taking the participants' profiles and downloading them to his olfactory laboratory.

Ilich > What are his favorite sites?

Marketou > Chris.053's favored sites are CU-See Me sites. It can sniff through the IP addresses of CU-See Me teleconferences without the participants knowing. First it examines the beauty and symmetry of your profile, then it converts you into a scent. You see, Chris has an obsession—s/he loves corporeal smells. That is why s/he takes the profiles—s/he analyzes body odor and redefines them by beauty and symmetry. Then s/he classifies them in his database. But another thing I should point out is that Chris.053 has no gender. The name Chris is very popular and generic—it could be a

male or a female. As a matter of fact, Chris does not have any anthropomorphic characteristics. Many designers create bots with some kind of anthropomorphic quality, but on the SmellBytes™ web site, Chris is shown as a small animated drop that jumps constantly—you can never clearly define Chris through the web site....

Chris.053 has a laboratory with a database of almost 7,000 scents, and every scent is presented with an animated drawing that can be seen when one visits the “odor lab.” And every drawing has a number, so every scent has a number. The names of the scents are very ordinary, like patchouli, lemon or musk, smells that we use in our daily vocabulary. Chris sniffs and roams continuously—his gallery of smells is refreshed every 10 or 15 minutes.

I should also mention that Chris has a fan club of more than 3000 members. If you want to join the club, you have to donate your picture, as well as your name, blood type, sex and e-mail address. Chris processes the information, and returns it to you immediately with a personalized number, scent category, and a scent card that can be e-mailed to friends, a boss—whatever.

Ilich > What would be the point of giving anthropomorphic form to a bot?
Marketou > Actually I don't think that we should. I personally don't agree with giving anthropomorphic form to that which exists in the virtual world, because we cannot describe the virtual world as a mirror of the physical world.

This is another contemporary question that I want to deal with in my Internet projects: mimesis no longer depends on nature, but on information. What we use to create information is information. It does not have direct reference to the real world. It has to do with a series of codings and decodings, with patterns and randomness.

TOOLS-WEAPONS { flamenco : theory : politics }

FIAMBRERA > SINGING AS SOCIAL RESPONSE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with simultaneous translation by "Frank" of @TMark.
09 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

[T]here are those who theorize flamenco...

Collective > On the subject of singing, you sent us this quote by e-mail yesterday: "Past cultures' aesthetics were heavily based on this model—this is referring to beauty as the ideas of relations. Modal music like flamenco were at the same time a collection of scales, and a collection of ethos, or ways of relating things that is a different concept of art apparently and is current in a lot of places in the West." What is this referring to?

Fiambrera > That is, we were speaking about ways of being, in terms of flamenco. First, there are those who theorize flamenco, saying it is relational and traditionalist, and then there are those of us who say that it's not that way at all, that it actually consists of forms of social response that are very useful. In each type of song, you can find a specific feeling, a type of ethos or response. And we look in these songs for a type of response and find its political characteristics.

TOOLS-WEAPONS { chaos : Seattle : Europe : Yugoslavia : network : DIY }

GEERT LOVINK > CHAOS AND OPEN CHANNELS

<NET.NET.NET> interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience.
09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

[W]e thought it was very important to get to know each other and to fight.

Halleck > Probably the biggest lesson that the people who were at Next Five Minutes from Paper Tiger and Free Speech TV took to Seattle was the foresight that chaos is okay. They didn't have to be uptight

when things fell apart. They could just go with it and allow it to happen and leave the channels open on the Independent Media Center web site. People could post their own music, post their own video, post their own photographs. It really grew out of this state of apparent chaos.

Diamond >

In Europe, there's this tension between having a great deal of resources—which the Netherlands embodies—and then a lot of work taking place in far Eastern Europe, where there is tremendous scarcity and violence. One thing happening is an attempt to construct a network among these environments of scarcity and abundance. One has to be very careful about importing models, but it seems worth looking at other situations. Could you talk about the principles of that kind of exchange and how people are trying to create something that's useful?

Lovink >

In Eastern Europe, a sizable and really remarkable infrastructure has been set up. A lot of it has gone into magazines, radio stations, the Internet, and even new media art. We were fully aware of this as a unique opportunity, but also recognized that very soon it would go away. Eventually, it would become the task of certain Western Europeans to take it over and turn it into a long-term commitment—a network. A people's network. Not so much a network in terms of having great resources or big money, but a long-lasting model, and particularly one that could serve as a support in times of crisis.

In post-war Yugoslavia, this network has a cultural function as such. It also serves as a platform for debate, because we thought it was very important to get to know each other and to fight. There have been lots of fights. Do you remember what happened when the NATO bombing started? This debate has not died off—it's very

much still going on. We want to create open channels. We feel that this is very important. But you can't just say that somehow they're there. These open channels do not just exist—they have to be created. And I believe it's up to us to create them. This is very much a do-it-yourself mentality, but this is also our duty, and a fine opportunity.

TOOLS-WEAPONS { dementia : meaningless : language : Paris : truncheons }

++ **GUY DEBORD > HOWLINGS IN FAVOR OF SADE:
THIRTY THOUSAND TRUNCHEONS STRONG**

Debord, Guy-Ernest. "Hurlements en faveur de Sade." 1952. Transcription and translation by Gregor Markowitz. [HTTP://LIBRARY.NOTHINGNESS.ORG/ARTICLES/4/EN/DISPLAY/90](http://library.nothingness.org/articles/4/en/display/90).

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

[SCREEN GOES FROM BLACK TO WHITE]

Voice 2 > There are still many people that morality makes neither laugh nor cry.

Voice 3 > Article 489. The adult who is in a constant state of imbecility, dementia, or mad rage must be detained even though his state allows for intervals of lucidity.

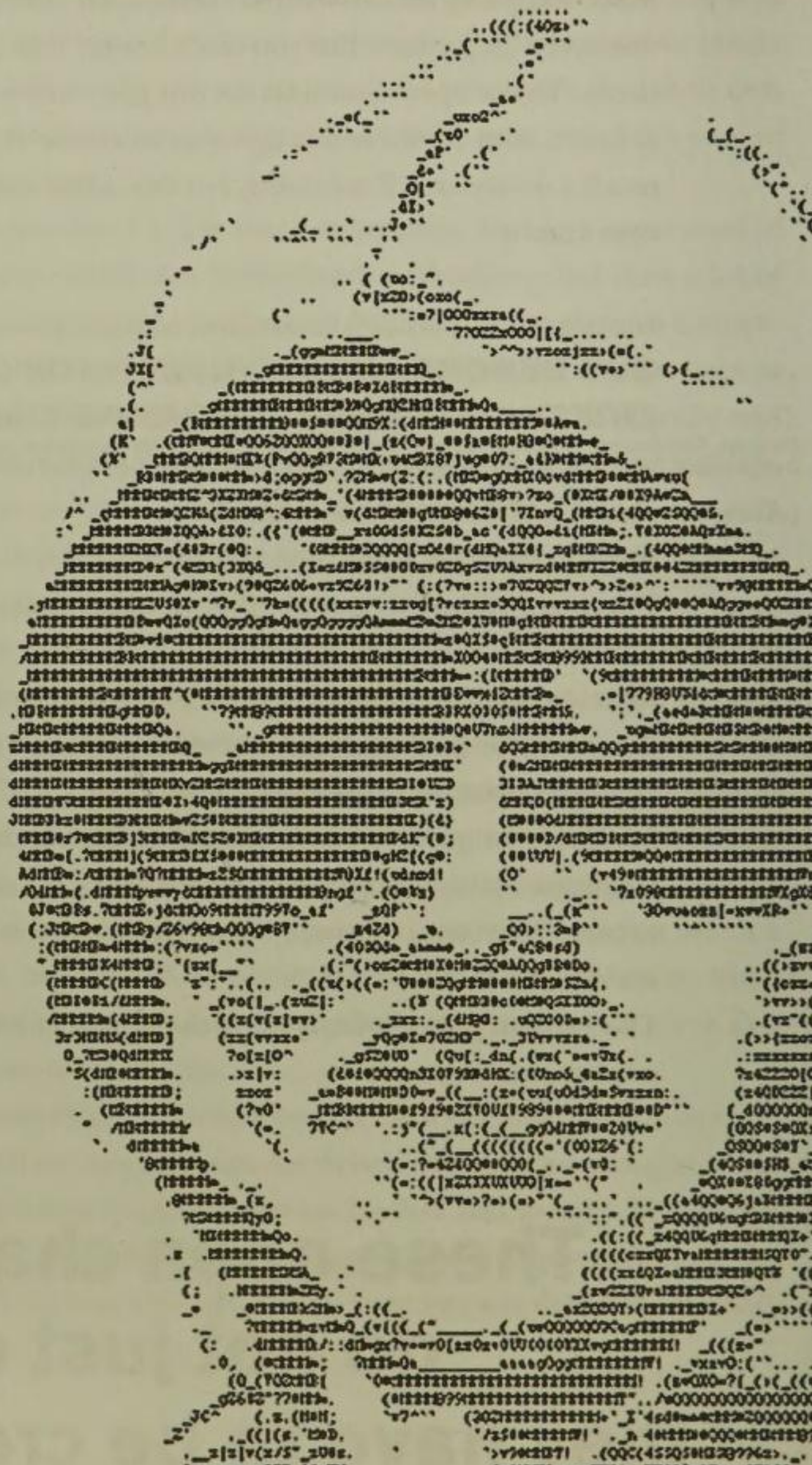
Voice 2 > So close, so gently, I lose myself in the meaninglessness of language. I push into you, you're wide open, it's easy. It's like a hot stream. It's as smooth as a sea of oil. It's like a forest fire.

Voice 1 > It's cinema!

Voice 3 > The Parisian police force is thirty thousand truncheons strong.

[SCREEN GOES TO BLACK]

**These open channels
do not just exist—
they have to be created.**



< *Head of Unabomber*

REVOLUTION-TERROR { violence : surreal : symptomatic : media gestalt }

++

WILLIAM GIBSON > NEUROMANCER :
TERRORIST MEDIA GESTALT

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. ACE: NEW YORK, 1984. P. 58.

[APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Cut to Dr. Virginia Rambali, Sociology, NYU, her name, faculty, and school pulsing across the screen in pink alphanumeric.

“Given their penchant for these random acts of surreal violence,” someone said, “it may be difficult for our viewers to understand why you continue to insist that this phenomenon isn’t a form of terrorism.”

Dr. Rambali smiled. “There is always a point at which the terrorist ceases to manipulate the media gestalt. A point at which the violence may well escalate, but beyond which the terrorist has become symptomatic of the media gestalt itself. Terrorism as we ordinarily understand it is innately media-related. The Panther Moderns differ from other terrorists precisely in their degree of self-consciousness, in their awareness of the extent to which media divorce the act of terrorism from the original sociopolitical intent....”

“Skip it,” Case said.

HAKIM BEY > THE DREAMING CORPSE

WILL SPASM VIOLENTLY

Bey, Hakim. "Permanent TAZs." [HTTP://WWW.TO.OR.AT/HAKIMBEY/PAZ.HTML](http://www.to.or.at/hakimbey/paz.html). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

THE "WORLD" CAME TO AN END IN 1972

The hollowed-out effigy of the Absolute State finally toppled in "1989." The last ideology, Capitalism, is no more than a skin-disease of the Very Late Neolithic. It's a desiring-machine running on empty. I'm hoping to see it deliquesce in my lifetime, like one of Dali's mindscapes. And I want to have somewhere to "go" when the shit comes down. Of course the death of Capitalism needn't entail the Godzilla-like destruction of all human culture; this scenario is merely a terror-image propagated by Capitalism itself. Nevertheless it stands to reason that the dreaming corpse will spasm violently before rigor mortis sets in—and New York or LA may not be the smartest places to wait out the storm. (And the storm may already have begun.) [On the other hand NYC and LA might not be the worst places to create the New World; one can imagine whole squatted neighborhoods, gangs transformed into Peoples' Militias, etc.] Now, the gypsy-RV way of life may be one way to deal with the on-going melt-down of Too-Late Capitalism—but as for me, I'd prefer a nice anarchist monastery somewhere—a typical place for "scholars" to sit out the "Dark Ages." The more we organize this NOW the less hassle we'll have to face later. I'm not talking about "survival"—I'm not interested in mere survival. I want to thrive. BACK TO UTOPIA.

®**T**MARK > *APPROPRIATION OF RADICAL ACTION*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with "Raoul" and "Frank" of ®TMark.

09 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

It could hardly be any worse than it is!

Collective > You really have this corporate veil thing down to a T.

"Frank" > It's more like we have a consistent message. The reason for the corporate veil is protection. It limits liability, and limited liability means freedom from personal responsibility. The people who run corporations and those who invest in them aren't accountable for what they do. They can continue to make money even after doing criminal deeds. In our case, we benefit from these laws to further the sabotage of corporate products. This may have unforeseen or unpleasant results, but we're protected and our investors are protected, both from possible negative results, as well as what we could consider positive results. We bolster our protection with anonymity because the degree of limited liability you really have is dependent on the amount of money you have—small corporations have less protection than large corporations.

Collective > But small corporations don't usually have anonymous officers.

"Raoul" > Our anonymity actually works on a number of different levels. Part of it is the face we put forward. When it comes down to it, the incorporation becomes a rhetorical gesture that we're able to use to expose the way that corporations operate, but we like to have this extra layer of anonymity because we feel it gives us more flexibility. We know that if it's harder for a corporate researcher to find us, then it's that much harder for them to handle us the same way that corporations handle a lot of activist organizations, which is to attack people with slap-suits, i.e. to sue the various people who are

critical of a corporation with meaningless lawsuits, often not even related to the activities these people were engaged in. Some people who worked in ®TMark have also had problems at the places where they were employed. For instance, somebody who participated in one of the virtual sit-ins might have their e-mail cut off—they were potentially going to be treated punitively as officers of ®TMark. The anonymity also protects the individuals in ®TMark, allowing them to engage in the work they do in the private sector to make money.

Collective > What model do you follow? Do you look for historical precedents?

"Raoul" > We look to the corporate model. We don't think about where we come from and what exactly we're doing and what will come next. We don't do that because it doesn't contribute so much to the bottom line. So we don't worry about whether we're inspired by this or that. We're trying to accomplish a goal. Just like corporations don't consider these things.

Collective > What's the goal of ®TMark?

"Raoul" > Basically to do propaganda. To alert people to this situation. Hopefully something will happen because of our activism and things will change.

Collective > How do you decide where to invest your energies?

"Raoul" > Through accident, a lot. When opportunities come along, we exploit them. People also help us by contributing to projects and engaging in actions. And when they contribute to our bottom line, when it contributes to the cultural profit that we're trying to reap, we help them publicize and manage their projects. Sometimes we help by diverting our financial resources to make these projects a reality.

Collective > Corporate advertising has become so anti-corporate it has almost disarmed a generation of anti-corporate propagandists.

Are there any tactics you would consider beyond the pale of corporate appropriation?

"Raoul" > Corporations have often gone for the images, the effects, but I haven't heard about corporations going for the actual tactics. Like sabotaging things or appropriating political web sites and trying to speak about the real issues. As Fiambrera stated, the image can be easily appropriated by corporate interests. That's why it's so important for artists who want to be activists not to rely on the image to be only an image, but to act in a way that cannot be easily appropriated. To do things that you can't imagine being appropriated. For example, one could actually sabotage corporate products and use those actions to make significant political points. If corporations do appropriate anti-corporate actions and they do start acting in the ways we think are important, that would be very strange... but good.

Collective > It's more of an extreme example, but how about putting a bomb in the back of somebody's car?

"Raoul" > Corporations do that?

Collective > I mean, I don't know... who knows...

"Raoul" > I don't think we are going to inspire them to do that.

Collective > No?

"Raoul" > No.

Collective > Are you concerned that if your actions become effective enough to be noticed, then there will be more repression? An excuse for more security cameras, more control of the corporate workspace?

"Raoul" > What are our options? You can either publicize things by any means, and try to do things in direct ways, or you can just let things happen and hope it doesn't get worse. We've chosen to take a more active role. It could hardly be any worse than it is!

"Frank" > We operate under the assumption that it's already pretty bad. The situation is already dire.

"Raoul" > How could it be more dire? For example, there was a strike at a major airline, I think it was [NAME DELETED]. And they actually obtained search warrants, went in to the strikers' houses, and ransacked their computers. I mean, they had the right to do that by court order. I knew they had a right to read employee e-mail at work, but they actually have the right to read it at the workers' homes, in their private spaces. I had no idea things could be that bad. How much more control could corporations exert over their employees? How much more dire could it get?

REVOLUTION-TERROR { utopia : infowar : pagan : zerowork : bankruptcy }

++ **<NETTIME>** > **THE PIRAN NETTIME MANIFESTO**

<nettime> Vienna ad hoc committee. "The Piran Nettime Manifesto." POSTED TO NETTIME MAY 26, 1997. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-9705/MSG00147.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-9705/MSG00147.HTML). JUNE 2002.

To: nettime-l@Desk.nl
Subject: <nettime> The Piran Nettime Manifesto
From: Marie Ringler <marie@t0.or.at>
Date: Mon, 26 May 1997 23:40:47 +0100

PRESS CONFERENCE

Public Netbase Media~Space!, Museumsquartier, Museumsplatz 1,
Vienna/Austria Thursday, 29.5.1997 19:00

Participants: Pit Schultz (Berlin), Geert Lovink (Amsterdam),
Critical Art Ensemble (Chicago), Diana McCarty (Budapest),
Marko Peljhan (Ljubljana), Oliver Marchart (Wien),
Peter Lamborn Wilson (New York)

Why do you rob banks?

Because that's where the money is.

–Willie Sutton, famous bank robber

Last week Nettimers frolicked in the real space/time continuum on the Slovenian coast in the town of Piran where the following bullets were established:

- Nettime declares Information War.
- We denounce pan-capitalism and demand reparations. Cyberspace is where your bankruptcy takes place.
- Nettime launches crusade against data barbarism in the virtual holy land.
- We celebrate the re-mapping of the Ex-East/Ex-West and the return to geography.
- We respect the return to “alt.cultures” and pagan software structures (“It’s normal!”).
- Deprivatize corporate content, liberate the virtual enclosures and storm the content castles!
- Refuse the institutionalization of net processes.
- We reject pornography on the net unless well made.
- We are still, until this day, rejecting make-work schemes and libertarian declarations of independence.
- NGOs are the future oppressive post-governments of the world.
- We support experimental data transfer technology.
- Participate in the Nettime retirement plan, zero work by age 40.
- The critique of the image is the defense of the imagination.
- Nettime could be Dreamtime.

Questions can be addressed to the participants at the Nettime press conference, Public Netbase, Museumsquartier, Vienna, 29.5.1997, 19:00 hours

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**PETER LAMBORN WILSON WITH
SAKHRA-L'ASSAL > *THE ANTI-GLOBALISTS ARE
EQUATED WITH TERROR***

Sakhra-l'Assal . "Telephone interview with Peter Lamborn Wilson." 06 December, 2001
POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 13, 2002. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00063.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00063.HTML). JUNE 2002.

l'Assal > [W]hat are your thoughts on the possible role of the anti-globalization movement, if any?

Wilson > It's difficult to see what kind of role they could play, so much so that we already feel that this movement has been dangerously sidelined by these events. Just how much of this movement was a matter of newspaper articles and soundbites? Because when suddenly all the soundbites are about something else, it seems to have vanished and evaporated. Also, the globalists are taking greater and greater care to make sure first of all that the anti-globalists are equated with terror and with terrorism, and second of all that they move all their meetings to inaccessible places. So in other words, the one tactic that we had, that was working for us, that is to say the broad-based, imaginative protests and actions against meetings of World Trade-type organizations, are already a thing of the past. Have we got the imagination and the strength, the inner strength, to come up with totally new tactics, each time we get a setback like this? In other words, does the anti-global movement have a real strategy or does it just have tactics? That's the big question. I don't feel like trying to answer it, but I'd like to emphasize that if we can't face this question, then we might as well just quit now.

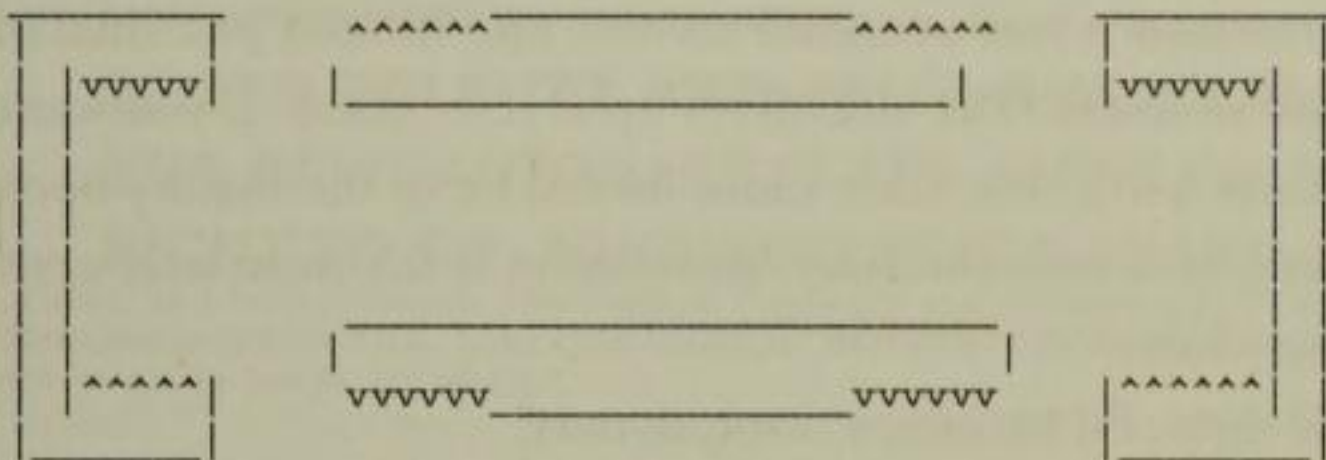


fig 1. Threaded pipe and endcaps.

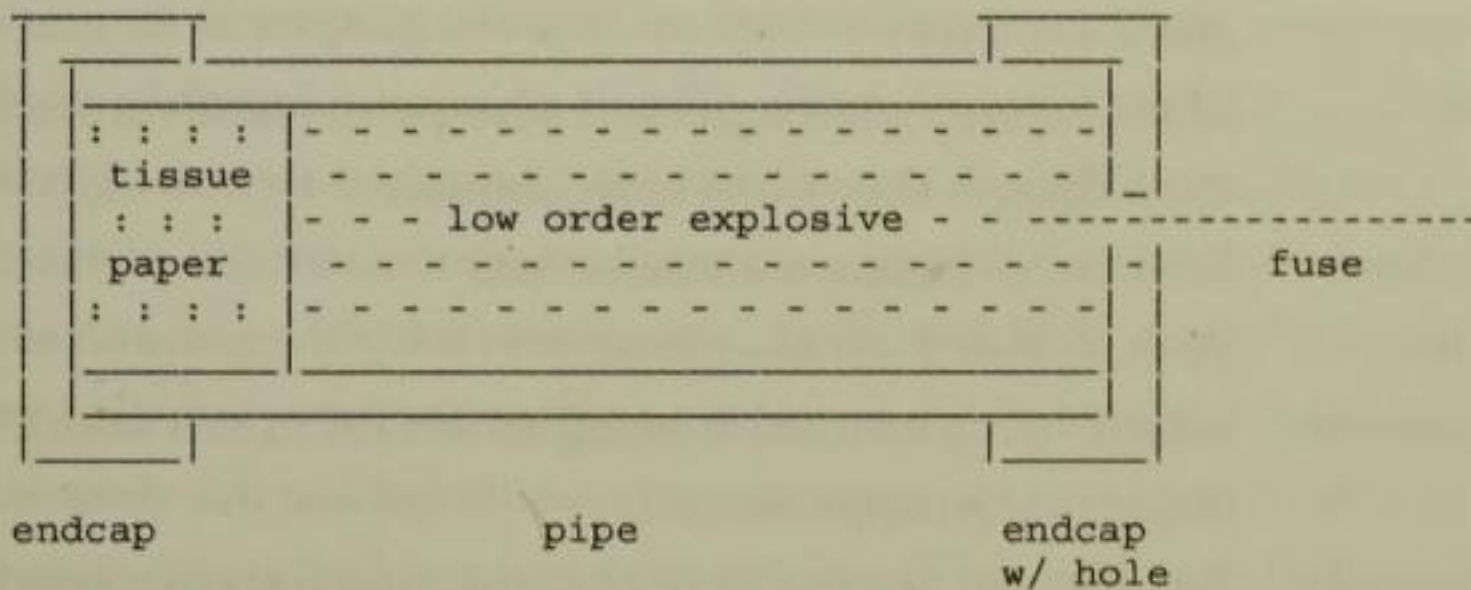


fig. 2 Assembled pipe bomb.

(Archaic Tactical Assembly—Towards a Failure of Strategy)

From *The Terrorist's Handbook* [author unknown]

PREFACE BY AKIRA: *I found this file on some local BBS somewhere and I downloaded it at the then mind-numbing speed of 2400 baud. This was probably some time back in 1988 or thereabouts. Then the other day as I was cleaning out my closet I came across a stack of 5 1/4 inch floppies containing all sorts of unique and interesting files, of which this is one.*

[HTTP://WWW.CAPRICORN.ORG/~AKIRA/HOME/TERROR.HTML](http://www.capricorn.org/~akira/home/terror.html)

**IRATIONAL > AS AN ARTIST YOU CAN PLAY AT
BEING A REVOLUTIONARY**

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.
APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

Let's get away from the back room stuff.

Bunting > About a year or so ago I wanted to abandon being an artist because I realized it had a limited income and limited potential of fame and sexiness. The next level up is revolution. If you want to be much more rich, have more lovers, be in the history books, you become a revolutionary. Revolution is the most sexy activity on the planet.

Collective > All right, I'll become a revolutionary!

Bunting > I failed—I'm still an artist. But as an artist you can play. You can play at being a revolutionary. As a revolutionary artist you can have more...

Collective > More choices?

Bunting > More reward than a person who paints landscapes in exhibits. Even though they make more money.

Collective > Well, we're having a lot more fun.

Baker > Yeah, I'm all for having fun.

Collective > I think being an artist is being an activist in this world, because it's so much a transgression.

Bunting > But I would say the reason revolutionaries are revolutionary is because they want more money, they want more flat support, they want more sex.

Collective > No, I have to tell you that sex is very wrong.

Baker > You can't say that, Heath.

Collective > It's completely wrong. It's a projection of your own desires.

- Baker > Yeah, she's right, actually. You can't say that, it's daft.
- Collective > What does "daft" mean?
- Collective > Dumb. I just think it's your own projection onto some other people.
- Bunting > Well, if I'm wrong then I'm wrong.
- Baker > Strange boy.
- Collective > Yeah really. Let's get away from the back room stuff.

REVOLUTION-TERROR { triangle : colonization : history : bourgeois }

++ **GILLES DELEUZE AND FELIX GUATTARI >**
THE REVOLUTIONARY IS THE FIRST TO HAVE THE
RIGHT TO SAY: "OEDIPUS? NEVER HEARD OF IT."

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. MINNEAPOLIS: UNIVERSITY OF MINNEAPOLIS PRESS, 1983. Translation of *L'Anti-Oedipe*. pp. 96-97.

There is no Oedipal triangle: Oedipus is always open in an open social field. Oedipus opens to the four winds, to the four corners of the social field (not even 3+1, but 4+n). A poorly closed triangle, a porous or seeping triangle, an exploded triangle from which the flows of desire escape in the direction of other territories. It is strange that we had to wait for the dreams of colonized peoples in order to see that, on the vertices of the pseudo triangle, mommy was dancing with the missionary, daddy was being fucked by the tax collector, while the self was being beaten by a white man. It is precisely this pairing of the parental figures with agents of another nature, their locking embrace similar to that of wrestlers, that keeps the triangle from closing up again, from being valid in itself, and from claiming to express or represent this different nature of the agents that are in question in the unconscious itself....

The revolutionary is the first to have the right to say: "Oedipus? Never heard of it." For the disjointed fragments of Oedipus

remain stuck to all the corners of the historical field, as a battlefield and not a scene from bourgeois theater.

REVOLUTION-TERROR { freedom : satellite : Eskimo : Hollywood : Tokyo : 1984 }

NAM JUNE PAIK > PARADOX OF FREEDOM

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Paik, Nam June. "Nam June Paik—Mostly Video." *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation*. Reprinted from 1984 exhibition catalog by The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Ed. John Hanhardt. NEW YORK: VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP, 1986. PP. 221-222.

The passionate idea of freedom is said to have been born under the most unfree, dark dominion of medieval Christianity. Moreover, it was amidst the rise of fascism and the decadence of the Russian Revolution and after the loss of bourgeois freedom before and after the Second World War that man was most strongly and keenly aware of this passionate idea. The existentialism of Camus, Sartre, and Berdyaev was once again forgotten by West European society from the 1960s on, when it experienced a return of freedom and prosperity. In any case, freedom is not a concept inherent in man (it is found neither in the Koran nor the Analects of Confucius) but is an artificial creation like chocolate or chewing gum.

The "increase in freedom" brought about by the satellite (from a purely existential point of view, an "increase in freedom" is paradoxical; freedom is a qualitative idea, not a quantitative one) may, contrary to expectation, lead to the "winning of the strong." (Although the imported concepts of freedom and equality may appear to be close brothers, they are in fact antagonistic strangers.) Recently, an Eskimo village in the Arctic region of Canada started establishing contact with civilization. So far they only have four stores. The first is a general store. The second is a candy shop. (They had not even tasted sugar until quite recently.) The third is, of all things, a video cassette rental shop!!!

Video has immeasurable powers. This means that the Eskimos' ancient traditional culture is in danger of being rapidly crushed by the bulldozers of Hollywood. The satellite's amplification of the freedom of the strong must be accompanied by the protection of the culture of the weak or by the creation of a diverse software skillfully bringing to life the qualitative differences in various cultures.

REVOLUTION-TERROR { artist-activist : commodity : ASCII : real politics }

VUK COSIC > BECOME A UNABOMBER

OR FIND A WAY BETWEEN

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

Nice, nice. So you're a service industry for a very specific niche.

Collective > What do you see as the critical nature of your work? Or is it even critical?

Cosic > Well, it is somewhat political, but in the sense of criticizing the way the entertainment industry and the art system perceive technological development. There are the makers of technology—the entertainment industry—and then you have the artist who has a choice if she wants to produce more of such grand, beautiful, and fantastic images, and possibly “make it.” Or should you do something else? You can become a Unabomber, which is an elegant choice, or you can find a way in between. This is where ASCII worked for me, as my choice for how to react to the perceived problem of technological development. This is why I was saying that ASCII art has failed—it has been an unsuccessful attempt at making an uncommodifiable art.

Collective > But maybe this hasn't failed. If the goal is to create a fad for things that don't require the entertainment industry, then it didn't neces-

sarily fail. Maybe the entertainment industry was helping you? If it suddenly becomes popular to make work without the newest toys, maybe it's a success?

Cosic > When you make art, you can believe that you are an activist, but you're not. You are making art about politics, but not doing politics. You are not actually inducing any social change directly.

Collective > But you're supporting people who are inducing social change, and when they go home and sleep at night, they feel a little bit better about themselves and they're slightly less likely to get a job for Oracle or—

Cosic > Nice, nice. So you're a service industry for a very specific niche. But that's what you are. You're not that niche yourself. You are not inducing any social change. You're just helping those that are maybe going to do something about it, but you're not doing anything about it. You're just talking about it. I was doing actual politics. Do you know what that is? That's when you have demonstrations and you have people shooting at you and at each other, and negotiation in the parliament and you have laws written. That's what politics is. Not when you sit at home and you draw an ASCII image, or you do your pamphlet or you do your web site about whichever topic.

REVOLUTION-TERROR { society : breakdown : revolution }

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**"FC" (UNABOMBER) > TECHNOLOGY AND THE
ASPIRATION FOR FREEDOM**

Kaczynski, Theodore. "Industrial Society and Its Future." Version published on *Hotwired*.
[HTTP://HOTWIRED.LYCOS.COM/SPECIAL/UNABOM/TECHNOLOGY.HTML](http://HOTWIRED.LYCOS.COM/SPECIAL/UNABOM/TECHNOLOGY.HTML).

[UNCHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

133. No social arrangements, whether laws, institutions, customs or ethical codes, can provide permanent protection against technology. History shows that all social arrangements are transitory; they

all change or break down eventually. But technological advances are permanent within the context of a given civilization. Suppose for example that it were possible to arrive at some social arrangements that would prevent genetic engineering from being applied to human beings, or prevent it from being applied in such a way as to threaten freedom and dignity. Still, the technology would remain waiting. Sooner or later the social arrangement would break down. Probably sooner, given that pace of change in our society. Then genetic engineering would begin to invade our sphere of freedom, and this invasion would be irreversible (short of a breakdown of technological civilization itself). Any illusions about achieving anything permanent through social arrangements should be dispelled by what is currently happening with environmental legislation. A few years ago it seemed that there were secure legal barriers preventing at least SOME of the worst forms of environmental degradation. A change in the political wind, and those barriers begin to crumble.

For all of the foregoing reasons, technology is a more powerful social force than the aspiration for freedom. But this statement requires an important qualification. It appears that during the next several decades the industrial-technological system will be undergoing severe stresses due to economic and environmental problems, and especially due to problems of human behavior (alienation, rebellion, hostility, a variety of social and psychological difficulties). We hope that the stresses through which the system is likely to pass will cause it to break down, or at least weaken it sufficiently so that a revolution occurs and is successful, then at that particular moment the aspiration for freedom will have proved more powerful than technology.

HANS MORAVEC WITH CHARLES PLATT >***LEX LUTHOR AND THE SMALL-MINDED NATIVES***

Platt, Charles. "Superhumanism." *Wired* 1995. ARCHIVED WEB VERSION.

[HTTP://WWW.WIRED.COM/WIRED/ARCHIVE/3.10/MORAVEC_PR.HTML.](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/3.10/moravec_pr.html)

Growing up in Montreal, learning English and adjusting to a strange new culture, Hans Moravec was a solitary child who found solace in building models and gadgets. "I remember the thrill I got when I put together something and made it work. I could admire it for hours. And these things also made other people proud of me. I guess I actually thought that they would get me a wife! I knew I didn't have any social skills, but maybe if I could build these machine things really, really well, it would make me more attractive to women." He laughs at his own childhood naïveté.

And yet, he didn't always want to be a scientist. First he wanted to be Superman. "But I could see that it wasn't practical. Then I noticed another character in the comics, Lex Luthor, who didn't have superpowers but was almost a match for Superman. So, I thought if I couldn't be Superman, maybe I could be Lex Luthor." In person, Moravec seems diffident and gentle; he doesn't drive a car because, he says, he's uneasy with so much potentially dangerous mass in his control. He likes living in Pittsburgh because his home is a short walk from his office, and he seems to feel little need to venture outside this simple life.

Yet as a child he enjoyed fantasies about superheroes and supervillains, and as an adult he talks casually of totally rebuilding human society. He refers to his new book, for which he's currently seeking a publisher, as "a kind of speculative long-term business plan for humanity," and in it he speaks condescendingly of "Earth's small-

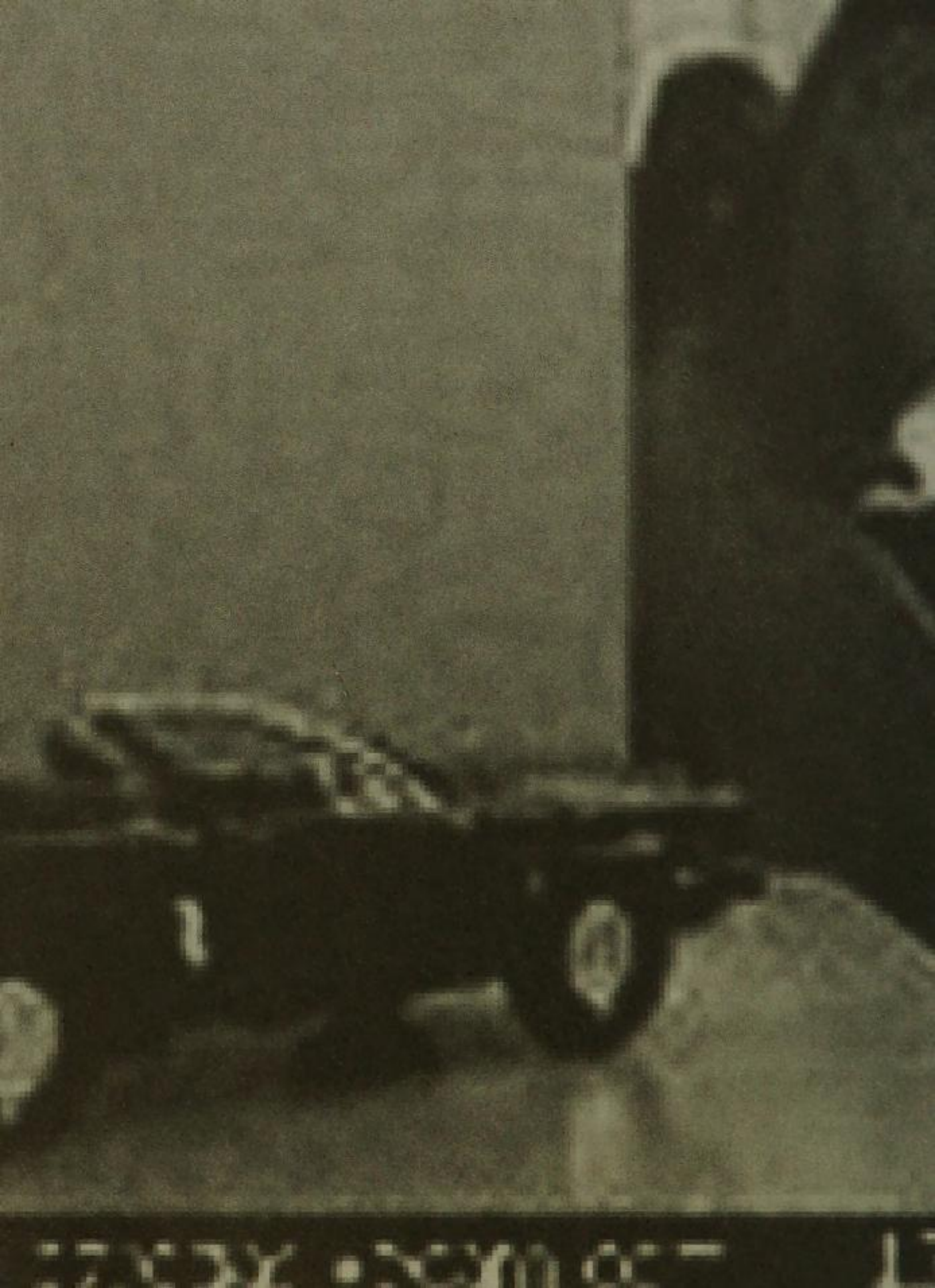
minded biological natives.” Can Moravec really claim that his work as a scientist is in no way manipulative?

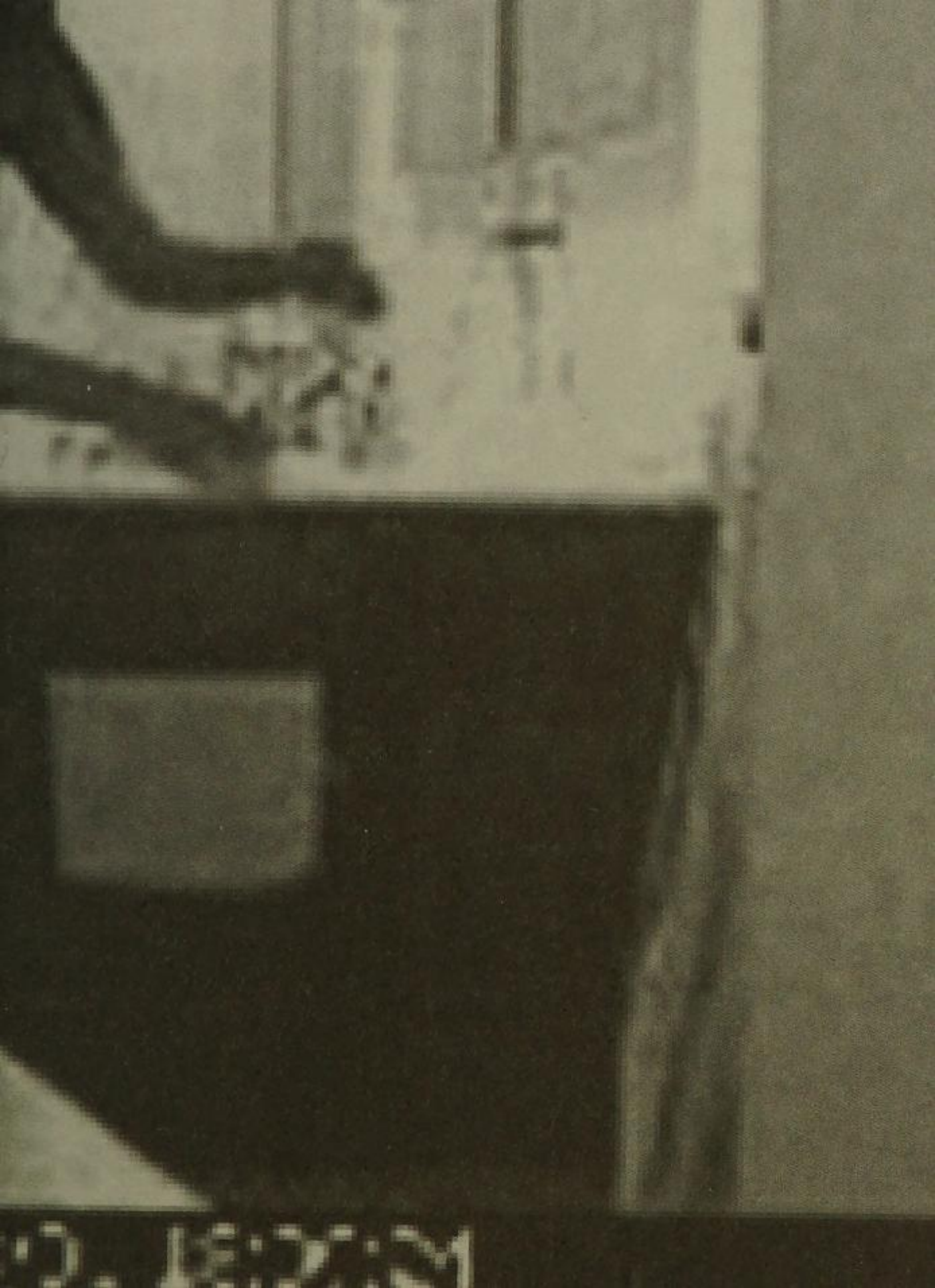
“People such as myself,” he says, “may have a little bit of influence, but we’re like mosquitoes pushing at a rolling boulder. Progress is inflicted on people in the same way that natural evolution is inflicted on people. It really is evolution; it’s the selection and growth of information, transmitted from one generation to the next.”

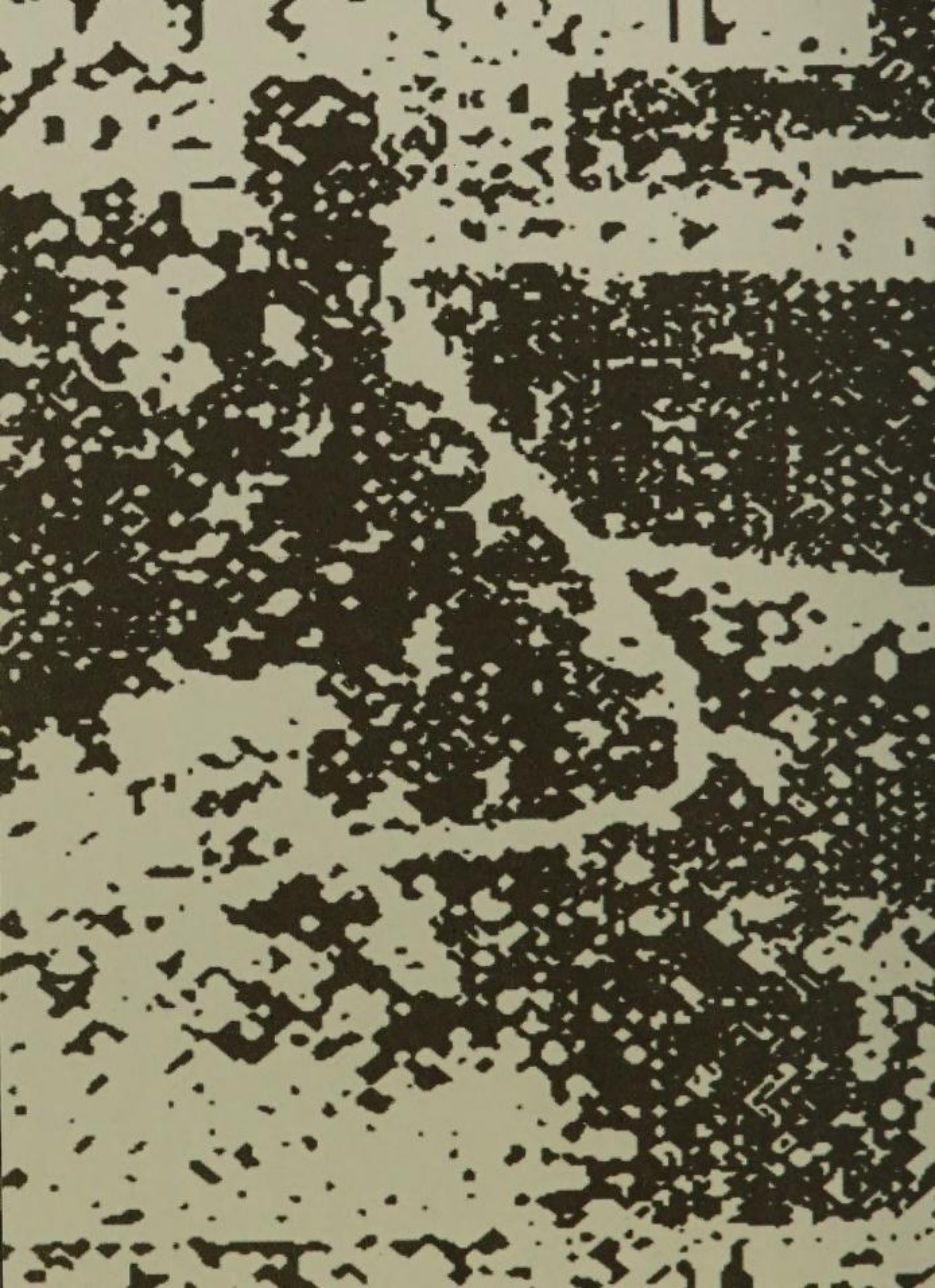
But what about the rights of people who don’t love the rolling boulder of progress?

“Well,” he says, beginning to sound a little impatient with my objections, “they’ll—they’ll get used to it! In fact, they should enjoy it, since the amount of wealth will be astronomical; you’ll be able to live anywhere and in any way you want.”

**maybe if I could build
these machine things
really, really well, it would
make me more
attractive to women.**





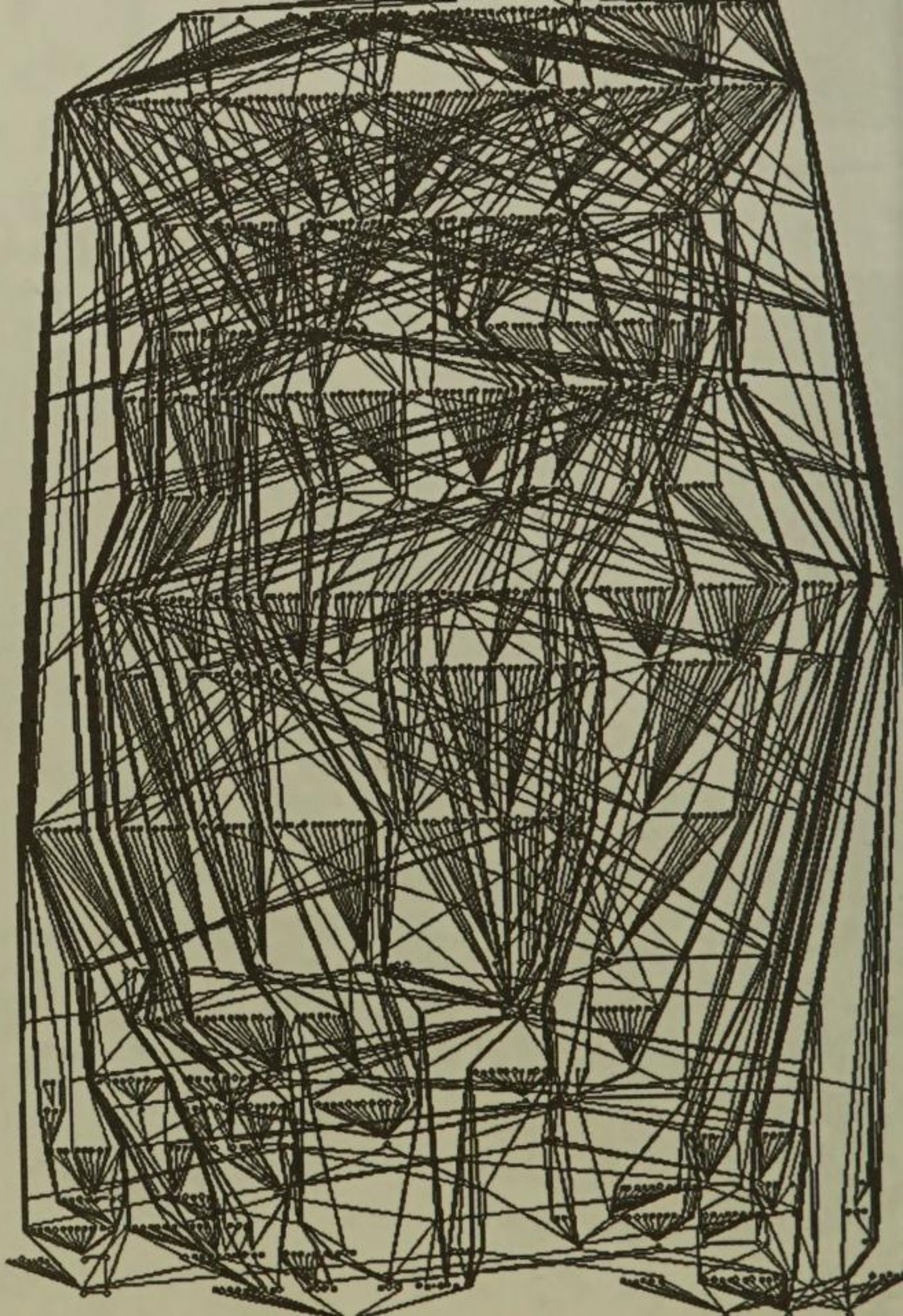


SECTION C /

AMATEUR CONSPIRACY | COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS |
OCCULT NETWORKS | SACRIFICIAL SCIENCE |
BASE ORGANS

^^ *CUSeeMe Image*, stolen by Chris.053
[HTTP://SMELLBYTES.BANFF.ORG/](http://smellbytes.banff.org/)

<< *Sniffing*, Chris.053
A representation of Smellbytes in progress.
[HTTP://SMELLBYTES.BANFF.ORG/](http://smellbytes.banff.org/)



AMATEUR CONSPIRACY

<< *Partial Map of Gnutella File Sharing Network as of July 7, 2000*
Created by Clip2 Distributed Search Services, developers of
peer-to-peer decentralized networking technology.
[As of August 2001, Clip2 was no longer in existence.]
[HTTP://WWW.OREILLYNET.COM/PUB/WLG/556](http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/wlg/556)

AMATEUR CONSPIRACY { collectives : collaboration : amour : satellite : matrix }

++ **NAM JUNE PAIK > THICKENED BUNDLES OF LOVE**

Paik, Nam June. "Nam June Paik—Mostly Video." *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation*. Reprinted from 1984 exhibition catalog by The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum. Ed. John Hanhardt. NEW YORK: VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP, 1986. PP. 220-221.

There is no rewind button on the BETAMAX of life. An important event takes place only once. The free deaths (of Socrates, Christ, Bo Yi and Shu Qi) that became the foundations for the morality of three civilizations occurred only once. The meeting of person and person, or person and specific era are often said to take place "one meeting—one life," but the bundle of segments of this existence (if segments can come in bundles) has grown much thicker with the satellite. The thinking process is the jumping of electrical sparks across the synapses between brain cells arranged in multi-layered matrices. Inspiration is a spark shooting off in an unexpected direction and landing on a point in some corner of the matrix. The satellite will accidentally and inevitably produce unexpected meetings of person and person and will enrich the synapses between the brain cells of mankind.

Thanks to the satellite, the mysteries of encounters with others (chance meetings) will accumulate in geometric progression and should become the main nonmaterial product of post-industrial society. God created love to propagate the human race, but, unawares, man began to love simply to love. By the same logic, although man talks to accomplish something, unawares, he soon begins to talk simply to talk.

AMATEUR CONSPIRACY { love : desire : crime }

OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY > AMOUR

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 "amour." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Ed. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner. 2ND ED. OXFORD: CLARENDON PRESS, 1989. OED ONLINE. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. HTTP://DICTIONARY.OED.COM/CGI/ENTRY/00007416. JUNE 2002.

amour

[A. OFr. *amur*, *amour*: L. *amōr-em* love, F. *amā-re* to love....]

- 1 *gen.* Love, affection, friendship. *Obs....*
 1742 YOUNG NT. THOUGHTS IV. 350
Oh love of gold! thou meanest of amours!
- 2 *pl.* The tender affections, love towards one of the opposite sex (L. *amores*, FR. *amours*). *in amours* (with): in love (*with*). *Obs....*
 1727 ARBUTHNOT JOHN BULL (1755) 48
There is nothing so obstinate as a young lady in her amours.
- 3 A love-affair, love-making, courtship. (Now only humorously of honourable love-making.)...
 1828 KIRBY & SPENCE ENTOMOL. III. XXXii. 313
These gentlemen may have mistaken a battle for an amour.
- 4 usually, An illicit love affair, an intrigue....
 1790 C. M. GRAHAM LETT. ON EDUC. 144
Criminal amours are in general censured in these works.

®TMark > FOR LOVE AND PROFIT

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with "Raoul" and "Frank" of ®TMark.

09 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

We have to have accountability to our investors. It's hard, that shell game.

Collective > Is ®TMark a full-time occupation or is it a hobby?

"Raoul" > It's not a hobby, but we all have different jobs.

"Frank" > Actually, I don't have a problem with the word hobby.

"Raoul" > All right, me neither.

"Frank" > It used to be people had time for hobbyist work, but it's becoming increasingly more difficult.

"Raoul" > Now people don't have hobbies.

"Frank" > Are we hobbyists?

"Raoul" > Sure, we're amateur hobbyists.

"Frank" > You know, amateur... that means love. Right! Amateur comes from the word love.

Collective > Amo, amas, amat.

"Frank" > So maybe we're amateur hobbyists.

Collective > Is it a better hobby than jumping out of airplanes?

"Raoul" > So far.

Collective > Would you like to spread the hobby? Maybe set up franchises?

"Raoul" > Franchises. We need franchises. That's why we tried to expand into Europe. Anywhere in America would be great too. There are so many different facets of corporate abuses to investigate....

Collective > ®TMark is literally doing social work—do you ever feel it's sort of like a charity?

"Frank" > No. I wouldn't think of it as charity at all. Closer to activism. We don't give anybody anything; it's more like they give us things.

"Raoul" > We're for-profit—cultural profit. For real! We are striving for that.

We're not giving handouts. We're just trying to achieve this aim.

Collective > Do you have corporate by-laws or rules that your corporation follows?

"Raoul" > Yeah. We have procedures.

"Frank" > We have to have meetings. We have to have monthly board meetings, and reports. We have to have accountability to our stockholders. We have to have accountability to our investors. It's hard, that shell game.

Collective > Is the media in on it with you?

"Raoul" > No.

"Frank" > They can be in on it with us...

"Raoul" > They can be in if they want, but...

Collective > But are they?

"Raoul" > No. They take us at our word...

AMATEUR CONSPIRACY { community : personal : territory }

IRATIONAL > *LOVE WILL KEEP US TOGETHER*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.

APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

And we're here, and that's that.

Bunting > [to Baker] What is the largest factor in the production of your work? Is it your personal self-empowerment or political domination?

Baker > Both.

Collective > Why does it have to be exclusively one or the other?

Bunting > Which is the larger?

Collective > Doesn't one feed into the other? One a result of the other?

Baker > My identity is formed by the community around me, so I have an interest in developing that community.

Bunting > But there are the bigger issues for the reasons you make work, the

personal issues.

- Collective > Of course; we're multi-layered, multi-leveled people, and we make work for all sorts of crazy reasons, and not so crazy reasons.
- Collective > I'm wondering why you're making such a distinction.
- Bunting > It's interesting that as soon as we get onto the personal, it's all of a sudden this problem.
- Baker > Well, there's the personal, then there's personalities.
- Bunting > But I think it's more important to talk on those levels, personal levels. They're the things that really drive our groups, like Irrational. You could say that we're a democratic collective, but the fact is, Rachel's been my lover for four, five years. That's a very important factor in what holds the group together. And we're here, and that's that.
- Collective > I knew about your work and I didn't know you guys were lovers.
- Bunting > If you look at half my work, almost all of it has got input from Rachel. And then you look at Rachel's work, it's got a lot of input from me. We wouldn't have made most of those projects without each other.
- Baker > Yeah, but I think you're kind of confusing the issue about personality and the personal. They're two different things. Of course the personal and individuals have an effect on how an organization operates, but that draws attention to a cult of personality, which is a different thing.
- Bunting > It's three separate things, but very closely linked. To make good work you have to be aware of who you truly are, how you represent yourself, and how you're represented in society. And to deny one or the other, or prioritize one, is not going to work. Just to put it on the level that Irrational is an artistic, activist collective is not going to work. I've got personal ambitions and personal traits. And the thing

that really makes Irrational function is Rachel and my relationship.

Baker > I don't think so.

Collective > So if you aren't lovers then would Irrational fall apart?

Baker > Of course it wouldn't. No.

Bunting > If we didn't have such a strong relationship, it wouldn't be as it is now.

Baker > I don't think it's dependent on the relationship at all. I really don't think so. But then there is the cult of personality where Heath Bunting is associated with Irrational.org rather than anybody else. Daniel has been in Irrational for a long time but is not considered the key figure. The question is, does it really matter if people notice your profile more than Irrational as a collective?

Bunting > It would be better if it were balanced. It would be better if each of the individuals had their own work, their own territory and economy. You would be known in certain places, and Irrational would be known in certain places, and I would be known in different ways. Nobody is always number one—that would be ideal.

AMATEUR CONSPIRACY { libidinal economy : intimacy : dyadic - triadic : trust }

CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE > NON-RATIONAL FLOWS

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

The whole person has to be allowed to appear and act—not just the qualities of the person that are good for production...

Collective > CAE is how old?

CAE > We started in the fall of '87. There were two original members left after the first year, then four came in over the next year. We have been fairly stable ever since.

Collective > When there was just you and Steven Barnes left, was there any sort of recruitment? Did you look for certain things?

CAE > After the first year, we had an understanding of what could go wrong. At the same time, by various kinds of luck and by completely non-rational means we found new members. Hope (my partner) was one of the first, and then Dorian joined, and another dyad was created between her and Steven. Then Beverly came along. I had known her from when we were undergraduates together. So I had a long friendship with her and knew what she was about. She came in and had a different kind of skill to offer. And finally Ricardo joined; after five years he stopped working on any projects with CAE in the summer of '93. It does not get spoken about that much, but for CAE there really is this libidinal economy that is underneath it that has been key in solidifying the group, and making it possible for it to go on long-term. I think it requires that kind of intensity of intimacy for a group to have as many facets and to continue for that long of a period.

Collective > Is that often an element that destroys a collective?

CAE > Absolutely. It certainly can. And larger groups too, because intimacy is what starts these dyadic and triadic alliances. It is rarely the rational side of a collective or professional disagreements that destroy it, it is something completely different that is below the surface, but has a strong current of consequences that often go unspoken.

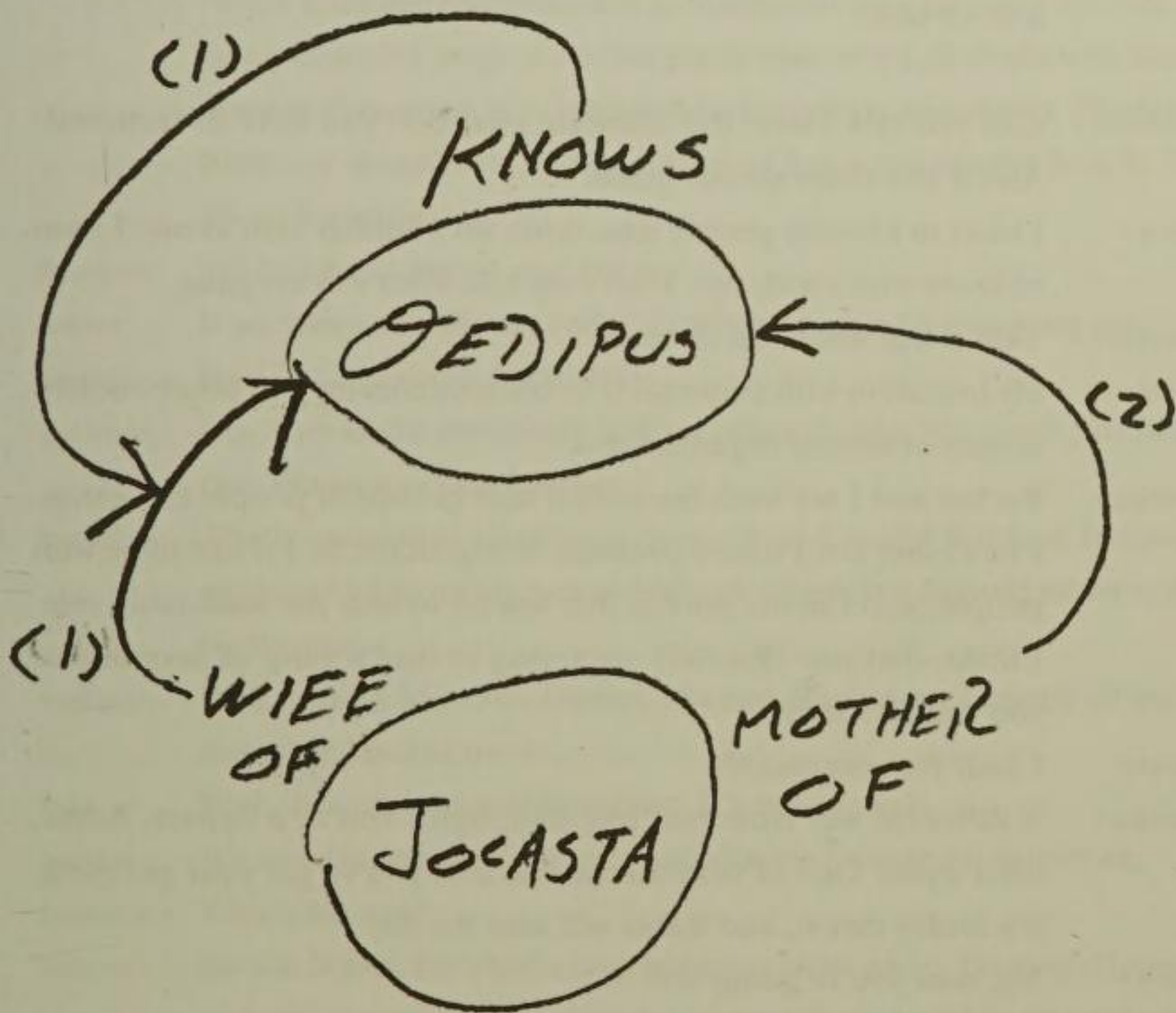
Collective > So there has to be a significant amount of trust.

CAE > Absolutely. Cooperation cannot exist without it. All collectives must pay very close attention to all the non-rational elements (trust being one of them) that make for group dynamics. The non-rational flows and libidinal trafficking that occur over the long term can become a problem. If these tensions and conflicts do not get resolved, they can be a very disruptive undercurrent. If a group does not have a

way to face them, if it does not have a way to process them, there are going to be real problems (ones far more difficult and destructive than those that emerge over production issues). CAE originally had seven members. After the first year only two were left. It fell apart quickly, primarily from non-rational problems, not because of lack of talent or a desire to succeed, but because we could not find a way to cooperate on a non-rational level.

Collective > Is that like a conceptual trust?

CAE > You have to believe that the other person representing you has your best interests at heart. That is a hard thing for a lot of people to accept. Just think about it in terms of any relationship that you might have that is grounded in some kind of intimacy. It is the same when you are doing collective production. There are also the problems of dyadic formations or triadic formations. Certain members become closer and other members feel left out. An internal group forms which has nothing to do with rational production. It has to do with emotions, intuitions, and desires about what is going on, and with fears and anxieties that different people bring to the group. It is a whole other realm. It has nothing to do with the instrumentality within the group. It has nothing to do with production and utility. It has to do with interpersonal relationships. And that is something that has to be openly addressed. The whole person has to be allowed to appear and act—not just the qualities of the person that are good for production, otherwise it's just a recapitulation of the alienation of everyday life work.



Subject-Verb-Object Diagram Example
Using the classic problem: "Does Oedipus know his wife is his mother?"
[HTTP://ROBUSTAI.NET/AI/OEDIPUS.HTM](http://robustai.net/ai/oedipus.htm)

IRATIONAL > OEDIPAL GANG LIFE:

WHO'S MY KIN?

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.
APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

I have friends I would die for, but that I wouldn't necessarily have a server with.

- Collective > Can you talk about the ultimate goal that you have in Irational? And if you share similar goals?
- Baker > I want to identify people who think on a similar vein as me. I want to know who's with me. Who's my kin. Who's in my gang.
- Collective > Talk about what that means.
- Baker > My intention with Irational is in contextualizing it in other constellations of similar organizations.
- Bunting > Rachel and I are both fascinated with groups of people like gangs. I'm a loner but I have a problem being alone. So I'd like to be with people, and I'm the person that will try to take the leadership role. I think that you [Rachel] are trying to find a gang of people that you can also lead.
- Baker > Lead? Not necessarily.
- Bunting > A different way from me, but, like, fight. You're a fighter, Baker, aren't you? One of your fantasies is that you've got your girl gang, it's under threat, and Baker will save the day.
- Baker > No, now you're going off.
- Bunting > Certainly me and you, we have this idea of a gang under threat and it's our family. I will take on one leadership role and you'll come from behind to save the thing.
- Baker > I'm not talking just about Irational. I'm talking about the wider

communities. I see us in relation to people like Mongrel and ®TMark.

Bunting > Yeah, you talk about Irrational in relationship to these other groups, but what binds us together and what would be our ultimate goal as a group?

Collective > What's the gang fighting for?

Baker > It's interesting actually, we don't talk amongst ourselves in this way. When Irrational discusses things it tends to be a lot more specific to one particular project or one particular event. It deals with situations as they arise. We don't have a long-term manifesto. We don't have any manifestos. We just kind of hang out on the beach. It's about hanging out.

Bunting > We hang out, we go and eat...

Baker > If we had a manifesto it'd be, "everybody should just hang out."

Collective > So it's really about pleasure?

Bunting > No, if we had a manifesto it'd say other things. We don't just hang out. We support each other.

Collective > That's incredibly clarifying. Sometimes I would think of Irrational existing inside some overarching ideology that I could never quite figure out.

Bunting > Well, I think Minerva, Daniel, Marcus, Rachel, and myself all share the same kind of intent.

Baker > Yeah, but it's an understanding. It's not explicit.

Bunting > It's not discussed. We don't even discuss it amongst ourselves.

Collective > Who's Marcus?

Bunting > He's in Bristol. He's had a long history in pirate radio. He taught himself to build transmitters and found himself in demand as an engineer.

Collective > So is it mostly about having a group of people who you trust and like, who support each other? This extended family that you want to have?

Baker > Yeah, and I might be deeply misguided, but—

Collective > No, I think that's amazing to have that kind of support group—a work relationship that also may move into the personal but which is about a viable collaboration. I have friends I would die for, but that I wouldn't necessarily have a server with.

Baker > The other thing about Irrational is that we do not normally work together on projects. We all have separate directories and separate projects within those directories. We look after our own directories and Heath bleeds it together. It has a technical architecture where each is looking after one's own node, and pursuing one's own obsessions, but there's a sympathy because we recognize our similar interests.

AMATEUR CONSPIRACY { language : activity : outcomes : ECD }

**CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE > ORGANIZATIONAL
MODELS: COALITION NOT COMMUNITY**

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

[T]here was a point where we thought perhaps community could be used as an organizing principle, which we are now completely dead-set against.

Collective > The language in your books is really intriguing. There were a lot of differences as to how our group reacted. Did you test the way the language was received?

CAE > Yes, and the language tests the activity. You test it out in the real world, and you see if the results are successful. To give you an example, there was a point where we thought perhaps community could be used as an organizing principle, which we are now completely dead set against. It was by going out and attempting to organize a community and looking at what other people were interested in doing with community-building that we came to the

opinion that we had made a serious mistake. It forced us into articulating a language that could reject that principle, and speak to another alternative that seemed viable, which, in turn, we had to test in the world.

Collective > What is that alternative?

CAE > Using coalition rather than community as the organizing principle.

Collective > So over time the objective changed?

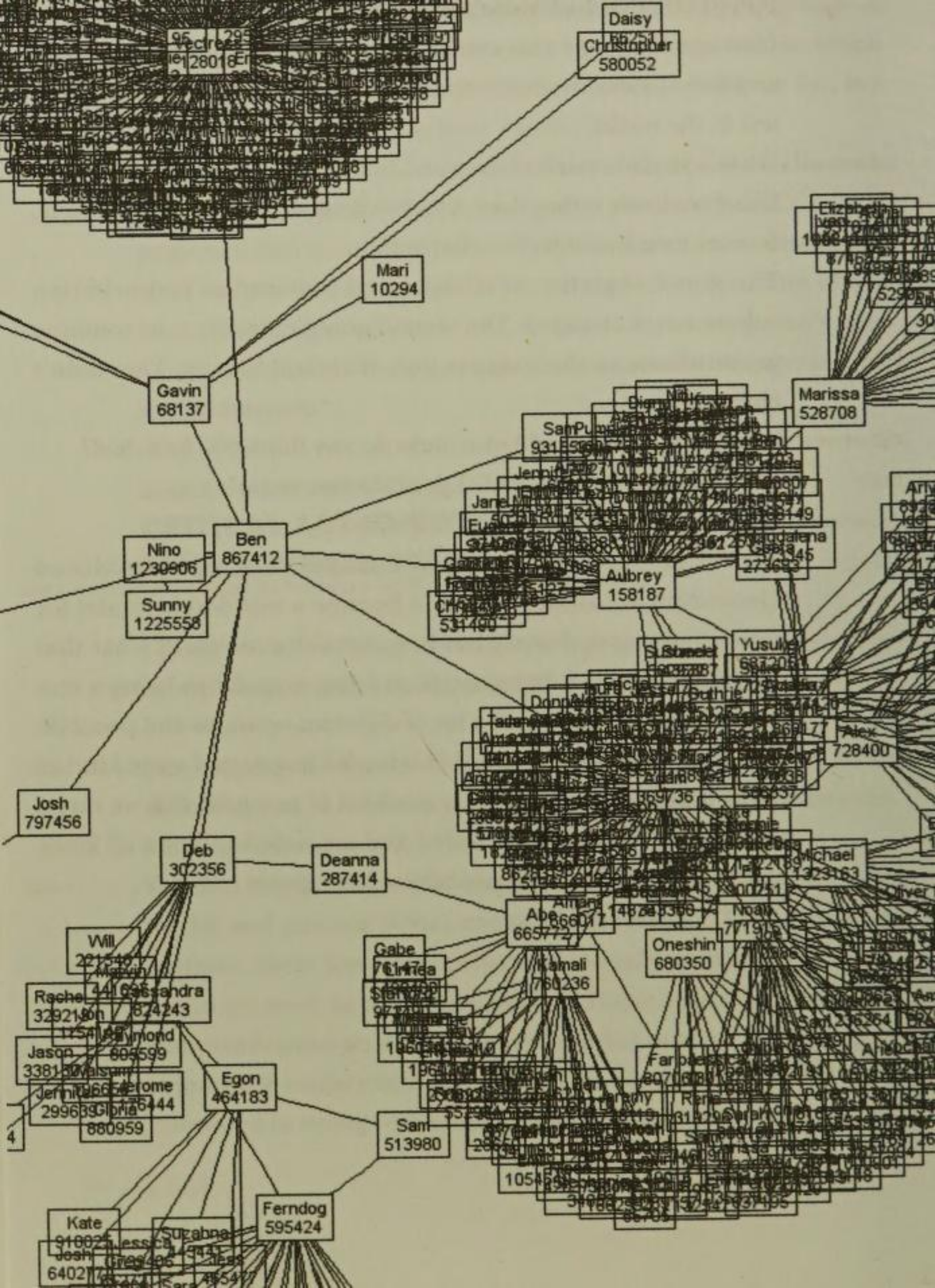
CAE > The grand objective to critique and undermine authoritarian culture never changed. The second grand objective is to continue to contribute to the construction of radical history. That didn't change either.

Collective > What kind of real world outcomes do you think you have had?

CAE > Am I the one to assess that? I don't know.

Collective > Well, obviously you have had responses.

CAE > A lot of people use our collective model. When we introduced Electronic Civil Disobedience, it became a world-wide model for activist practices. Now it has become a discussion of what that model should be. It has gone from being singular to being a very diverse discourse in which a lot of different opinions and possibilities are present. It seems that this model has started some kind of molecular revolution, where a small bit of potential that we threw out into the world has expanded and expanded and now all kinds of different models and possibilities have grown out of it.



< *Partial Map of Personal Friendster Network*, Ben Discoe
HTTP://WWW.WASHEDASHORE.COM/PEOPLE/FRIENDSTER/
FRIENDSTER3.HTML

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS { posthuman : self-awareness : cyborg : drugs }

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WILLIAM GIBSON > *NEUROMANCER*: “*SHE
DREAMED OF A STATE INVOLVING VERY LITTLE
IN THE WAY OF INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS*”

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. NEW YORK: ACE, 1984. PP. 217-218.

“She dreamed of a state involving very little in the way of individual consciousness,” Jane was saying. She cupped a large cameo in her hand, extending it towards Molly. The carved profile was very much like her own. “Animal bliss. I think she viewed the evolution of the forebrain as a sort of sidestep.” She withdrew the brooch and studied it, tilting it to catch the light at different angles. “Only in certain heightened modes would an individual—a clan member—suffer the more painful aspects of self-awareness...”

Molly nodded. Case remembered the injection. What had they given her? The pain was still there, but it came through as a tight focus of scrambled impressions. Neon worms writhing in her thigh, the touch of burlap, smell of frying krill—his mind recoiled from it. If he avoided focusing on it, the impressions overlapped, became a sensory equivalent of white noise. If it could do that to her nervous system, what would her frame of mind be?

CORNELIA SOLLFRANK >

DID YOU OVERCOME THE TRAUMA?

(FRAUEN-UND-TECHNIK AND -INNEN)

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. SPRING, 2000. LOS ANGELES.

We never fixed any of the traumas—we just said we would.

Collective > Your work lends itself to ideas of networking and collaboration.

Sollfrank > Yes, this comes together at a later point in my work. But I have been doing collaborative work with a women's artist group since 1991. The group was first called "Frauen-und-Technik," "Women and Technology." It's a saying in Germany, for example when a woman makes a mistake driving or something, people will say "Oh! Frauen und Technik!"

Collective > Suggesting that women and technology don't go together. What were the activities that the collective was doing? Did you fabricate things?

Sollfrank > Actually we didn't do any work with "Frauen-und-Technik." We just promoted the group. I mean, that was our work—communication. We made a brochure representing ourselves, nothing else. Our performance consisted of wearing uniforms where we handed out a lot of promotional material.

Collective > Promotional material?

Sollfrank > Lighters, pens, stuff like that. And we also gave out autographs. We were invited, we came and just gave out our stuff. We had a set of already formulated questions which we handed out to people in the form of questionnaires, based on the principle of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). There were ten questions they were allowed to ask, and each member of the group would only answer one of the

questions. You had to find the one performer who would answer your question, but she would answer your question perfectly.

Collective > A specialization of labor.

Sollfrank > We all tried to look absolutely the same, all wearing the same wigs and same clothes, differentiated only by number. After nine months or so, we were surprised by how well our strategies of promotion and marketing worked for us. We were invited to Documenta in 1992 and asked to produce a TV show as part of their larger act. But we realized it was really hard to stay with the concept of not producing any content in a television series. It's hard to stay just on the surface all the time—you almost cannot do it.

Collective > But you managed to do it?

Sollfrank > We did twenty TV shows. We started with game shows, based around this interpretation of "Frauen-und-Technik," like why a woman would want a big computer, a motorcycle or whatever. We were playing off Freudian expressions by calling them things like "Penis Envy"—I think the best thing about these shows was the titles. We found out during the TV productions that there were two groups forming within the one group, and after the shows we split. Four of us became a group called "-Innen," which indicates a female person in German. If you say a male teacher, you say "Lehrer," and for a female teacher you say "Lehrerin." "-Innen" also signified plural, so it indicated a group of several women, and we included the dash to indicate that we were ready to connect the female ending to anything.

With "-Innen" we again started to work on television. We produced a year of shows, and during the process we developed a television theory concerning what happens to the individual sitting in front of the TV. We used the concepts of the "real" and the "symbolic,"

and we designed mathematical formulas that would explain them. Our theory was extremely eclectic and actually quite absurd, but in itself it was coherent.

Collective > How did you put your theory into practice?

Sollfrank > First, we experimented with a performance piece using the technique: we had a huge heart-shaped screen on the stage, and the four of us sat next to it wearing white lab coats in order to make us look more scientific and serious. On the heart screen, we projected our mathematical formulas, and one of us would stand up and explain what it meant.

We also incorporated excerpts from daily soap operas, explaining how our formulas worked in context and dubbing the audio so that the characters in the show would be talking about our theory. For example, we dubbed the voices so that they were talking about narcissism in the media, which was really funny.

After that, we came up with the idea of doing more game shows. The first was called the “Narcissism Game.” It was a multiple-choice test where we read the question to the viewers, listed three possible choices, and the public called in and tried to pick the right answer. Of course the correct answer related to our theory, which is how we trained the audience.

Collective > Was it hard to get an audience response?

Sollfrank > We always had people calling in.

Collective > Did people know what was going on within your theory?

Sollfrank > They didn’t have to know the underlying theory to understand what we were getting at—our game shows made sense in themselves.

The second game show we did was called “Self-Ideal.” Callers would answer several of our questions, we would calculate a new self-image for them, and then we would read it back to the callers—that was

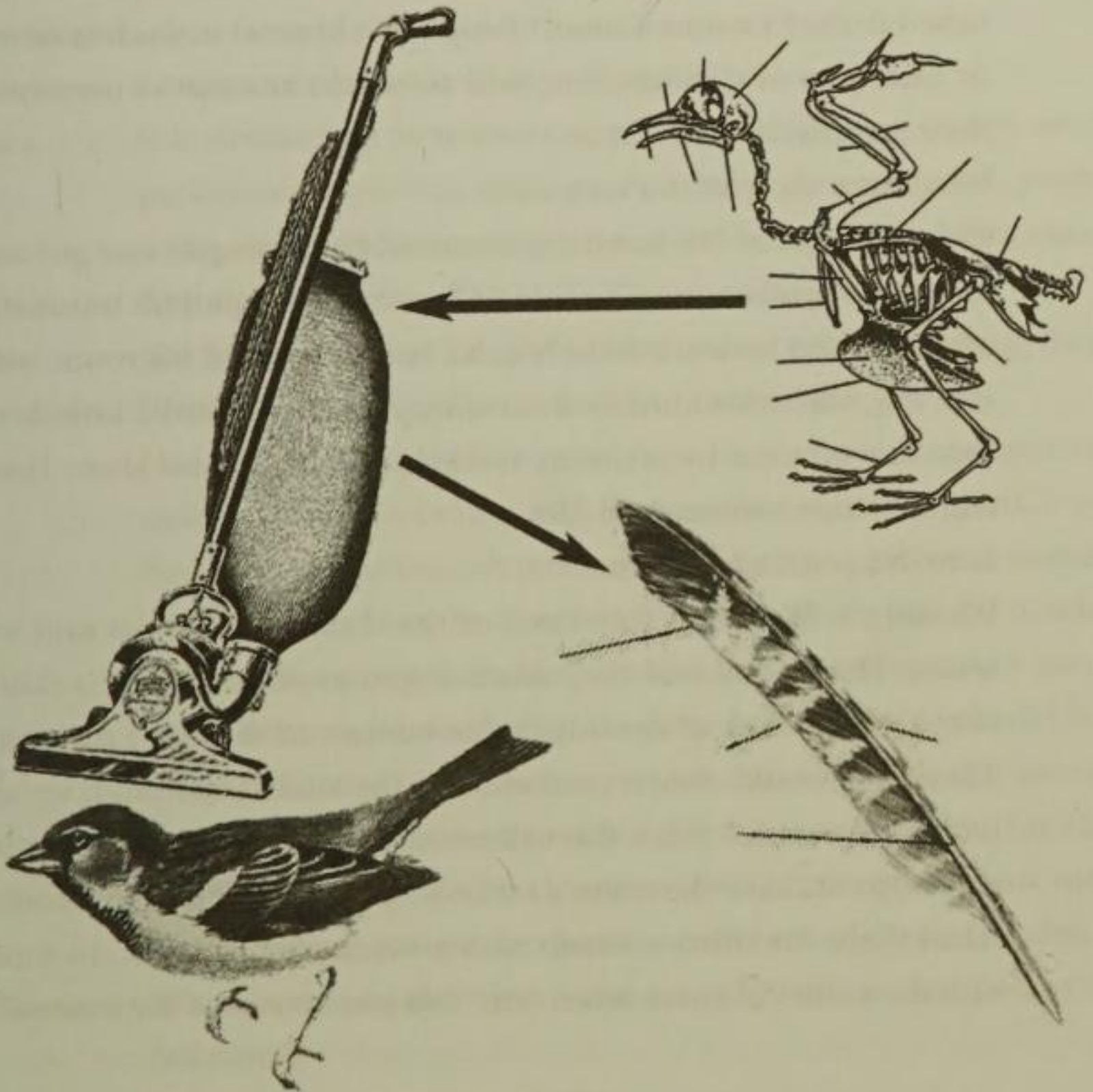


Diagram of the Origins of the Feather Trauma

their prize. People loved it! I think we were really on to something with that show. Certain types of people would give certain types of answers to our questions, and “-Innen” could decide that the caller must be a type like this or that—it made sense.

Collective > It sounds therapeutic.

Sollfrank > It was, absolutely. The third game was even more therapeutic—we called it the “Trauma Game.” People could send us their traumas or examples of victimization, and we would attempt to overcome their traumas live on the air.

Collective > What were some of the traumas?

Sollfrank > They were great! We loved the traumas! For example, one guy was allergic to feathers, and he told us how he developed his traumatic allergy: when he was a little boy, he had to vacuum his room, and one day, when his mother went shopping, he sucked a little bird into the vacuum by mistake. It died, of course, and since then feathers have traumatized him.

Collective > How did you fix his trauma?

Sollfrank > We didn't. We never fixed any of the traumas—we just said we would. That was kind of the point. Sometimes we would have a caller choose from a set of envelopes that contained different traumas. Then they would choose one of us in the studio, although we all looked the same. Once the caller chose a candidate, she would stand up and have the caller's trauma read to her. Then she would stand there for thirty seconds with a watch, tick-tick-tick, in time with the music. Then we asked her, “Did you overcome the trauma?”

**CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE > DIVISION OF LABOR
AND THE PAIN OF CONSENSUS**

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

{I}t just seemed like an incredibly counterproductive nightmare.

[IN THE RESPONSE SO LABELED, STEVE KURTZ IS ANSWERING AS HIMSELF.]

Collective > So what are the tasks of the collective?

CAE > It is divided up in various ways—critical writing, script writing, performance, photography, graphic design, Internet work, programming, documentation, administration, research, archives, etc.

Collective > And these tasks are all handled by separate people?

CAE > No, there is overlap. Each member has more than one thing they do.

Collective > Were these roles defined when you created the group?

CAE > Loosely defined. As the years passed, we became progressively more in tune in working with one another. At some point, it got to be almost unspoken. Members know what their jobs are; they know what they do best. In the first few years there was quite a bit of discussion among those in the collective over who would do what, when they would do it, what the jobs would be, who should be the director for such and such a project, etc. Certainly the model we use has not been the standard for most collectives. Of all the models, we are probably closest to the Situationists. I think most of the collectives people are familiar with use a different model.

Collective > What is the model that most people follow that you are not following?

CAE > Do you want to go into that?

Collective > Yes, we do.

Kurtz > [SPEAKING INDIVIDUALLY] All right. There are a few things. In other

models, just talking in terms of basic skill and division of skilled labor, group solidarity is based on similarity. For example, Gran Fury was composed of almost all graphic designers. As far as skills go, they had some spin-offs like Tom Kalin, for instance, who knew video as well. But for the most part they built their installations and actions around graphic design issues. So when Gran Fury all got together—and we found this out while attending a Gran Fury meeting—it just seemed like an incredibly counterproductive nightmare. All the members thought their ideas were the best, and for the most part they were all good. How do you choose? They did get work done, and it was really good work in the end, but meetings were a yell fest! We knew that their model would not work for us on either a rational or non-rational level. We were pretty happy that we formed our group in a different way. We (Steven Barnes and myself) tried to get people with as diverse skills as possible, and our solidarity would be based on the interrelationship of the skills.

The second difference between our group and many others has to do with the nature of hierarchy. A lot of these groups like General Idea or Group Material were similar in the way that they did things. They attempted to go for a totally democratic process resting on a principle of absolute equality, where everyone had the same input on every project, and the work was always equally divided. Again, we did not agree with this strategy. We felt that this was fetishizing the idea of equality to the point where it was counterproductive, and that this model only recognized individuals as rational and productive. Instead, we were thinking along the lines of Foucault, where the hierarchy is productive (not necessarily based in domination). The questions for us are how the hierarchy is structured and how it emerges, not whether or not there is a hierarchy. If we come to a

nonmediated (face to face), voluntary agreement about temporary hierarchical structure, we find it to be quite useful in that it helps to move projects along. When each person has different specialized skills, we can allocate responsibilities accordingly. For example, if we want to do an artist book project, Beverly will probably be the person in charge of production since she is the one who specializes in book arts, and Hope would be in charge of content and editing. This team will produce the best project and do the bulk of the work, so they have the most authority, and no one has a problem with that. As each completes different phases, she will run it by everyone, and we will give her our input.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS { Art and Language : Bank : I/O/D : art stars }

**SIMON POPE > THE NECESSITY
OF COLLABORATIVE WORK**

<NET.NET.NET> E-mail interview. OCTOBER, 2001.

The network itself is the locus of creativity, so it's no wonder that artists who understand the power of networks are attracted to such collaborative practices.

Collective > After years of individual "art stars," prominent work on the Internet has often been created under the umbrella of collaborations and collectives, and much of your own work is often part of collaboration. What are the advantages for you, to work in this way? And in your opinion, as Internet-based art becomes more institutionally accepted, can these collaborative efforts, with their anti-corporate, often subversive tactics, continue to succeed, or will the gallery/museum system create individual net.art stars?

Pope > Across all recent fine-art practices, collaborative work is considered problematic, but historically, there have always been practices that

challenge this. Whether the collaboration is between artists or a wider constituency, there have always been practices that challenge the assumption that the individual artist is the locus of creativity. “Art and Language” in the UK have had a great deal of success and renown here; “Bank” from London curated and made work collaboratively and provided a valuable alternative to the Brit art-star system in the 1990s. With this type of collaborative practice, creativity, knowledge, understanding, and intelligence are distributed across a network. The network itself is the locus of creativity, so it’s no wonder that artists who understand the power of networks are attracted to such collaborative practices.

Two of us from I/O/D used to make commercial work together. We’d use exactly the same production tools and processes but to a different end. We’d work in teams of three or more in this environment, as would everyone else in the industry. Collaboration is commonplace and usually a necessity, where no one person has all the knowledge and skill required for putting work together.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS { @TMark : institutions : audience }

FIAMBRERA > COMMUNITY ORIENTED

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with simultaneous translation by “Frank” of @TMark.
09 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

[W]e concretize a diffuse sentiment, but it’s not easy to do.

Collective > It seems that much of your work is community-oriented; do you find that it is pretty easy to get the community involved, or does it take a lot of lobbying?

Fiambrera > We take advantage of the fact that there are already communities and social collectives in existence. Often we participate with these groups already in existence in our interventions. Although these groups

are positive, they are not formalized social movements. The most clear example of this is San Francisco. Many times, with our interventions, we concretize a diffuse sentiment, but it's not easy to do.

Collective > The way that with @TMark the projects pick them rather than they pick the projects, so to speak, does that happen with you guys also? Does the community tell you where the energy wants to be focused?

Fiambrera > No, not really. More likely, we will approach social organizations or are already a part of them. La Fiambrera is sort of like a social movement already, with its same problems and characteristics. In any case, we don't direct the public space. This space is directed by the following: one, social groups; two, institutions; and three, a type of audience or diffuse collection of people that might be the same group that would visit @TMark on the Internet.

[ADDRESSING @TMARK] I don't know if you agree. This is, of course, only an opinion about @TMark.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS { ecstasy : civilization : profit : fanaticism }

GEORGE BATAILLE > *EXISTENCE IS A DANCE*

Bataille, Georges. "The Sacred Conspiracy." Trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie Jr. *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Ed. Allan Stoekl. MINNEAPOLIS: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, 1985. PP. 178-181.

In past worlds, it was possible to lose oneself in ecstasy, which is impossible in our world of educated vulgarity. The advantages of civilization are offset by the way men profit from them: men today profit in order to become the most degraded beings that have ever existed.

Life has always taken place in a tumult without apparent cohesion, but it only finds its grandeur and its reality in ecstasy and in ecstatic love. He who tries to ignore or misunderstand ecstasy is an incomplete being whose thought is reduced to analysis. Existence

is not only an agitated void, it is a dance that forces one to dance with fanaticism. Thought that does not have a dead fragment as its object has the inner existence of flames.

It is necessary to become sufficiently firm and unshaken so that the existence of the world of civilization finally appears uncertain.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS { networking : gift : economy }

IRATIONAL > TOOLS FOR THE LOCAL COLLECTIVE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.

APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

It's not interesting to just be self-contained.

Collective > The whole idea of networking is that the art world is structured around people fighting for themselves against everyone else. And here you've made this niche, where you have a group of people who may not have similar projects but you're going to support each other. That seems like what net.art was also about doing, outside of the hype—a small group of people who supported each other.

Bunting > I think it's just structural. On a personal level, you can only keep track of five people. And then on a networking, collective side you can only keep track of five collectives. It's just up and up. If we had ten people in Irational, it'd be totally dysfunctional. It wouldn't work.

Collective > Then the tools that you're making are just for your small network?

Bunting > They are for us.

Collective > But when you build this text editor or this courier project and offer them for use on a wider level, it seems like you are trying to build something beyond just helping your friends.

Baker > If you make something that's going to be useful for you, it's going to be useful for somebody else, and they might use it in a different way. It's not interesting to just be self-contained. It's a kind of gift economy.

I spent a few days writing an invoicing system for the members of Irrational—we just park our web page, fill in name, address, the e-mail goes bing, and it's there. A fully formed invoice. That saves us so much time. I'd love to give that software to a local collective, because we're all similar. The sets of values, the way we behave, the form of interaction within the groups, and with other groups, is all understood. If you want a copy of that invoice software, you can have it.

**If you make something
that's going to be useful
for you, it's going to be
useful for
somebody else**



< *Original Logo of the DARPA Information Awareness Office*

While they were still ARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency developed the Internet. In 2002, they made a web logo for their new "anti-terrorist" information gathering efforts. This irreverently Orwellian Illuminati-style logo was soon deleted.

[HTTP://WWW.THEMEMORYHOLE.ORG/POLICESTATE/IAO-LOGO.HTM](http://www.thememoryhole.org/policestate/iao-logo.htm)

OCCULT NETWORKS { history : forgetting : angels : chess }

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JORGE LUIS BORGES > *A SCATTERED DYNASTY* *ENCHANTS THE WORLD*

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." Trans. Andrew Hurley. *Collected Fictions*. NEW YORK: VIKING PENGUIN, 1998. P. 81.

Contact with Tlön, the habit of Tlön, has disintegrated this world. Spellbound by Tlön's rigor, humanity has forgotten, and continues to forget, that it is the rigor of chess masters, not of angels. Already Tlön's (conjectural) "primitive language" has filtered into our schools; already the teaching of Tlön's harmonious history (filled with moving episodes) has obliterated the history that governed my own childhood; already a fictitious past has supplanted in men's memories that other past—of which we now know nothing certain—not even that it is false. Numismatics, pharmacology, and archaeology have been reformed. I understand that biology and mathematics are also awaiting their next avatar.... a scattered dynasty of recluses has changed the face of the earth—and their work continues.

®TMark > SECRET SOCIETIES AS MODEL:

THE CEREMONY ROOMS ARE BEAUTIFUL.

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with "Raoul" and "Frank" of ®TMark.

09 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

We've been studying a little bit of their history in terms of plumbing.

Collective > Do you feel an affinity with any secret societies?

"Raoul" > Like the Masons?

Collective > Yeah, that's what I was thinking.

"Raoul" > Certainly there are some secret societies, both historically and contemporarily, that we like to model some of our behaviors after. There are plenty of precedents of political actions that require anonymity. The Guerrilla Girls, for example.

Collective > Were you being serious about the Freemasons as a model for ®TMark?

"Raoul" > Not overtly. Unfortunately, we don't know enough about them to use them as a model. The Knights Templar are closer to being a model for us. A lot of old Masonic temples in cities in the Northeast are now available real estate. We'd like to set up our headquarters in an old Masonic temple. That would be great! We've been studying a little bit of their history in terms of plumbing.

Collective > Plumbing?

"Raoul" > Yeah, they usually have a kitchen and a bathroom, too. The ceremony rooms are beautiful.

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Temple ov Hombres. *BizHaq*. [HTTP://BLEB.NET/TEMPLE/BIZHAQ/FD999.0906.HTML](http://bleb.net/temple/bizhaq/fd999.0906.html)

BIZHAQ FIELD DATA >SUBJECT 999.0906

SITE:

STARBUCKS #5308

Subject 999.0906

PHYSICAL:

KHAKI SHORTS—KNEE LENGTH, BROWN BELT;

LEMON POLO; LOAFERS—NO SOCKS

MANNERISMS:

TEETH SUCKING; SNORTING IN THROAT;

OBSESSIVE PEN CAP CLICKING

TECHNICAL:

CELL PHONE (MOTOROLA) AND PAGER, ON TABLE;

PDA (PALM V) IN BRIEFCASE

METHODOLOGY:

ONE-SIDED RECORDING, HIDDEN MIC + V.A.R.

(SUBJECT IS TALKING QUITE LOUD)

TRANSCRIPT:

[PHONE RINGS—PLAYS "AULD LANG SYNE"]

> **YEAH.**
> **YEAH, HEY.**
> **DID YOU GET MY MESSAGE?**
> **I LEFT A VOICE MAIL ON YOUR CELL**
> **PHONE.**
> **WHEN I GOT TO LA, I CHECKED MY**
> **MESSAGE THING AND I HAD A MESSAGE**
> **FROM TWO DAYS AGO. IT'S WEIRD.**
> **I CALLED THIS MORNING FOR A SORT**

**OF LATE SHORT-NOTICE BREAKFAST
SORT OF THING.**

BEAUTIFUL, HA HA HA.

**NO, WE USED THE RITUAL DAGGER THE
WHOLE TIME.**

REALLY.

WHERE DID YOU STAY?

**NO WAY THAT'S TOTALLY WHERE WE
WERE. WERE YOU IN ONE OF THOSE
TOWN PLEXES?**

ANSEL ADAMS? NO WAY.

SO WHAT MOVIE DID YOU SEE?

OH I SAW THAT IN NEW YORK.

YEAH.

**ALL THE ROBES CAME OFF IN THAT ONE.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN BELTANE AGAIN,
BUT I'D HAVE TO CHECK MY
SCHEDULER.**

UH-HUH.

**I DUNNO IF I TOLD YOU BUT I'M ALREADY
WORKING ON ONE FOOD DEAL.**

YEAH. SO MOTE IT BE.

OKAY WELL SAY HI TO CLARK FOR ME.

YEAH, DARREN.

**THE WIDOW'S SON, YOU BET, HA HA HA.
HAVE A GOOD FLIGHT.**

[DISCONNECT]

IRATIONAL > CHESSBOARD OF NETWORK SCHMOOZE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.

APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

It's the relationships of things that are important, the points of concentration.

Collective > In terms of defining this Group, all of you are on a lot of the same lists. Was it a small community of people who were artists and cultural producers who weren't just interested in making web pages, who were interested in using the Internet to do critical and political and conceptual-based work?

Bunting > If you imagine a chessboard, you want to cover every square, make sure that every part of the board is covered by someone you can get on with. And also they deserve to be in a different place on the board, you don't want the moves to go by everyone the same. You want it all covered, so it's in your interest to help those people to maintain their own positions. So I may not necessarily agree with someone else, but there's a whole picture and we'll work together. For instance, Jodi would say they're not political, but they're happy to occupy that corner of the board because they know they'll get something for that. Or Geert Lovink. He's an important player, but he was very antagonistic towards net.art. He might even say net.art is just a waste of time. A lot of net.artists left nettime, even original members who felt pushed out by that kind of left academic writing, but Geert is happy to talk about that. I don't agree with the way he functions politically, but the fact that you've got someone who is prepared to criticize the whole Group and who is prepared to make their living out of curating—that's an important role, as a skeptic.

Collective > And these people all tended to network with each other?

- Bunting > That's what net.art is. It's not the cool web page, it's about the link between things. At the core it's really networking.
- Collective > But is it just networking? Networking can be schmoozing at a party, too.
- Bunting > It's the same thing. It's just whether you make reference to it. Submitting a card isn't an art form unless it's self-referential and it studies its own history and context.
- Collective > Isn't net.art a conceptual art, a performance art? It comes out of a history along with video art. It doesn't come out of decorative painting.
- Bunting > It's hard to say—I came out of stained glass. I never did any conceptual work.
- Collective > But you also come out of an anarchist sensibility and a Situationist sensibility. I would connect your work much more closely to the Situationists and to anarchist groups than to stained-glass windows.
- Bunting > But William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites and all that at the turn of the century—they were anarchists and they shared a lot of the same things about quality of life and freedoms... In the medieval times, the stained glass people were totally nomadic. Most craft people were nomadic. They slept under their benches and they took their carts and went to other towns. They worked on one cathedral for ten years or a year or a week and then they went somewhere else. They were travelers. It's like the gypsies in Spain as well—they were allowed to stay in Spain because they were good with metalwork.
- Collective > So what do you mean by “networking”?
- Bunting > The bits in between. It's the relationships of things that are important, the points of concentration.
- Collective > Not the web page, but what happens afterwards? What happens

between people?

Bunting > Yes. To read between the lines.

Baker > People have different connotations of what networking means. When we're talking about networking, it's synonymous with what Connie [Sollfrank] is doing with the Old Boys Network. She's <http://www.obn.org> saying, women need support networks. That's what we really need, not schmooze networks but support for each other.

Irrational could even be a case in point where a large part of the group are women, but it's not the women who get acknowledged as the primary force on the server. People think of Heath Bunting, even though it's also Rachel Baker.

OCCULT NETWORKS { Situationists : non-rational : 3G's : specialization }

**CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE > FULLY TRIADIC:
COLLECTIVE ORGANIZATION AND DISSENT**

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

None of us were that smart and we knew it.

Collective > How do you deal with a dissenting voice? Or has the collective effectively gelled together so well that there are no longer any dissenting voices?

CAE > There is always going to be some kind of dissent. You never come to a point where everyone is 100 percent happy. And that is the kind of thing where, again, you have to go into the group with a kind of faith. You have to believe that the other members have your best interests at heart. With this in mind, the person who is in charge of the project makes the final call, and everyone lives by it. It is not like a committee has been elected and it is making decisions for you. For example, look at bigger groups, like the

Women's Action Coalition. Why did that come apart? Because democracy (which does not recognize the non-rational in political process) tore it up. It got too big, and then bureaucracy is required to run it—committee conflicts abound. For example, you had the anti-porn committee and the anticensorship committee trying to make policies that are simply not going to add up. However, in a cellular structure, it's easier to believe that the group will do the right thing for you because it's an immediate process as opposed to a representational one, and you have to believe, too—and we all did—that the group process will be better than the individual process. Even if a member is not totally happy with a decision on a particular project, over the long term, that discomfort goes away. In CAE, we realized there were certain things that each of us liked to do, and that there were certain things we did not like to do. Members should not be forced to do what they don't want to do. Well, the differentiated structure of the group allowed that. For example, as we mentioned earlier, no one else in the group likes doing lectures. I don't mind, so I do them. We also knew that, unfortunately, none of us are geniuses. I suppose there are brilliant people out there who can do everything that artists need to do these days: they can be articulate, they can write well about their work, they can work with lots of different materials, they have really good research skills, they can build conceptual structures. They can put all of these things together and take care of all the administrative responsibilities on top of that. But none of us were that smart and we knew it. Understanding these limitations made it much easier to defer tasks whenever there was someone better equipped to deal with them. As the years went by, and the collective seemed to be working, the more trust and faith grew in the

model and in each other's commitment. Now the dissenting voice has a very modest place.

Another important difference between CAE and other collaborative groups such as General Idea, Gran Fury and Group Material (the 3 G's) was in terms of goals. They were incredibly influential in what we did, but we never saw ourselves as the same. Go back to the Situationists: they were the only group we looked at that had long-term capability, and a long-term agenda, and wanted to try and accomplish a full spectrum of activity. That is, there was practice, actual hands-on doing, there was real political action, and it was completely theorized—every element was there. If you look at a lot of these other groups there is always at least one of those elements missing. Some tended to focus on one variable. Testing the Limits really focused on a very specific question: what is a video activist? And that is what they went for. Gran Fury was interested in the question of AIDS and what kind of practice is necessary to address the political economy of the AIDS crisis. And that is what they went for. We wanted more than that. More than just the intersection of art and activism, we wanted a longer-term project that was theorized as well. We did not just have images; we did not just have actions; we sought to have language too. Our experience was fully triadic, worked out over time, and tested by taking our ideas into the street and then coming back together to make revisions. Our goal was to have this model worked out and clearly documented on all three of these levels. So in that, I think Critical Art Ensemble is somewhat unique. There are others that have tried to use a similar model, but I do not know of any that are active now or that have gone on for more than ten years.

++ **CORNELIA SOLLFRANK WITH FLORIAN CRAMER >**

AUTONOMOUS SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Cramer, Florian. "Hacking the Art OS—Interview with Cornelia Sollfrank." POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 15, 2002. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00076.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-0203/msg00076.html). | [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00077.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-0203/msg00077.html). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Cramer > Would it be possible for you to work in any context? We met here at the annual conference of the Chaos Computer Club. But would it also be possible to meet at the annual congress of stamp collectors? Would this be a social system you would intervene in?

Sollfrank > Theoretically, yes. I think anyone who managed to get along with the hackers and hacker culture doesn't shrink back from anything—not even stamp collectors or garden plot holders. [LAUGHTER] Theoretically a lot is possible, but not practically. My interest is not just formal and is not only directed towards the operating system. This is an important aspect, but when the arguments and the people within the system are of no interest for me, I can hardly imagine working there.

Cramer > Are you saying that at the hacker conventions, people play with systems and critically think about systems?

Sollfrank > What's interesting for me is that hackers are independent experts, programmers, who work for the sake of programming, and are not in services of economy or politics. That's the crucial point for me. And that's also the reason why hackers are an important source of information for me.

Cramer > But that takes us straight back to the classical concept of the autonomous artist coined in the 18th century—the freelance

genius. He is no longer employed, and gets no commissions, but is independent and does not have to follow a given set of rules.

Sollfrank > Maybe you're right, and my image of a hacker has in fact a lot to do with such an image of the artist. Given that the idea of autonomy per se is problematic and reflecting upon the role of art in society, I would prefer to think of art as autonomous, as opposed to thinking of the individual artist as autonomous. The idea of art as observing, positioning oneself, commenting, trying to open up different perspectives on what is going on in society—that is what I prefer. And that is exactly what is endangered.

A short time ago, somebody asked me how I would imagine the art of the future. After thinking for a while I got the image of an open-plan office, packed with artists who work there, all looking the same and getting paid by whatever corporation—the image of art which is completely taken over and submitted to economic logic. This does not mean that I would reject all corporate sponsoring, but it should not become too influential.

The contradictory thing about autonomy is that someone has to protect and finance it, and it is most comfortable when governments do so, as was common here in Germany over the last few decades. In the '60s and '70s, artists from all over the world came to Germany because here there was public funding and facilities to work which existed nowhere else. I consider it one of the tasks of government to provide money for culture—I think this ensures the most freedom. And the developments we are facing at the moment are disastrous.

++ **CORNELIA SOLLFRANK WITH FLORIAN CRAMER >**

“-INNEN”: ART GROUP AS CULT MARRIAGE

Cramer, Florian. “Hacking the Art OS—Interview with Cornelia Sollfrank.” POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 15, 2002. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00076.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-0203/msg00076.html). | [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00077.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-0203/msg00077.html). JUNE 2002.

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Cramer > I have heard the standard accusations that examining systems, disrupting them through plagiarism, fakes, and the manipulation of signs, that all this is boring postmodern stuff, lacking existential hardness. My only answer is that people who say this have never tried to practice it consequently. Especially on a personal level, it can be deadly. You have mentioned the group “-Innen” before, a group you have obviously been part of in the early ‘90s, before the days of net.art...

Sollfrank > Yes, this was in ‘92-’96.

Cramer > And, if I get it right, it was also a “multiple identity” concept.

Sollfrank > Yes, and although we handled it very playful and ironic, it started to become threatening—so much that we had to give it up. We had practiced the “becoming one person” to an extreme by looking exactly the same, and even our language was standardized. Eventually we felt like escaping from each other and not meeting the others any more.

Cramer > Is this the point where art potentially becomes a religious sect?

Sollfrank > Maybe, if you don’t quit.

Cramer > If you don’t quit. I am thinking of Otto Muehl and his commune...
<http://d-sites.net/english/m%FCchl.htm>

Sollfrank > That is exactly the point where you have to leave and go for the unknown, leave the defined sector, and reinvent yourself—which

might be not so easy. To do this together, in or with the group is almost impossible. There's probably some marriages which manage to reinvent themselves and their relationship, to keep it vivid. But with more than two people, it's too much.

Cramer > Are your projects kind of like marriages for you? Or like the construction of a sect?

Sollfrank > That's amazing! It has a lot in common regarding the dynamics, how roles are assigned or how people choose them. It also starts with the reliability, which must already be there—nothing works if there is not a certain degree of reliability.

Cramer > Designing such systems also has something to do with control and losing control, right? In the beginning you're the designer, you define the rules. But then you get involved and become part of the game yourself, and eventually the time has come to quit.

Sollfrank > Well, certainly I do have my ideas and concepts, but the others might have different ones. The whole thing comes to an end when the debates and arguments aren't productive any longer. With the Old Boys Network we are currently experimenting with the idea to release our label. To think through what that actually means was a painful process. You think: "Oh God, maybe somebody will abuse it, do something really awful and stupid with it. That's shit." But if we want to be consequent, we have to live with that. And the moment comes where you have to learn to change the relation you have towards your own construct—what might be difficult.

Cramer > Can you imagine consciously choosing to leave the Old Boys Network? Ignoring it for like three years or longer, and after that period trying to engage again, but with an approach which is closer to observing?

Sollfrank > Oh yes! It sounds like a good idea, but I am afraid it would not

work. My presumptuous idea is that three years after I have left, OBN would not exist any longer. [LAUGHTER] One big trap for us was that we called it a “network” although it actually functioned as a “group,” and we refused to realize that for too long. “Old Boys’ Networks” have always been around (usually they are not exactly feminist) and there is the associated network of hundreds of boys, okay. But at the core is a group.

Cramer > This seems to be a very popular self-deception within the so-called net cultures. I would also say that nettime and the net culture it supposedly represented was in fact a group, at least until about 1998.

Sollfrank > And that is the only way it works. There’s no alternative way for a network to come into being. While “networks” don’t require a lot of commitment to sustain themselves, at some point there has to be condensations and commitments.

Cramer > How do network and system relate in your understanding?

Sollfrank > I think a system is structured and defined more clearly. It has obvious rules and players. A network tends to be more open, more loose.

Cramer > I would like to know if in your view systems as well as networks necessarily have a social component. One could claim that purely technical networks as well as purely technical systems do exist. Your work alternatively intervenes in social and technical networks. But, in the end, your intervention always turns out to be a social one. Can you think of networks and systems—referring to the definition you just have given—without social participation?

Sollfrank > No, not at all. The rules or the regulating structures are always determined by somebody. Similar to how computer programs are often mistaken as something neutral. Microsoft Word for example. Everyone assumes it just can be the way “Word” is, but that’s not the case. It could be completely different.

Cramer > As Matthew Fuller has analyzed in every detail in his text "It looks like you're writing a letter: Microsoft Word."

Sollfrank > Yes, there are endless individual decisions involved, decisions of the programmer, the person who designs the program decides how and where to lead the user, how to manipulate the user, making him/her do certain things.

OCCULT NETWORKS { Microsoft : Oedipus : decay }

++ **CHUCK PALAHNIUK > *FIGHT CLUB: BLOOD AND MICROSOFT (MAYBE SELF-DESTRUCTION...)***

Palahniuk, Chuck. *Fight Club*. NEW YORK: W. W. NORTON & COMPANY, 1996. P. 47, 49.

Two screens into my demo to Microsoft, I taste blood and have to start swallowing. My boss doesn't know the material, but he won't let me run the demo with a black eye and half my face swollen from the stitches inside my cheek. The stitches have come loose, and I can feel them with my tongue against the inside of my cheek. Picture snarled fishing line on the beach. I can picture them as the black stitches on a dog after it's been fixed, and I keep swallowing blood. My boss is making the presentation from my script, and I'm running the laptop projector so I'm off to one side of the room, in the dark.

More of my lips are sticky with blood as I try to lick the blood off, and when the lights come up, I will turn to consultants Ellen and Walter and Norbert and Linda from Microsoft and say, thank you for coming, my mouth shining with blood and blood climbing the cracks between my teeth....

[...]

P. 49 In the real world, I'm a recall campaign coordinator in a shirt and tie, sitting in the dark with a mouthful of blood and changing the

overheads and slides as my boss tells Microsoft how he chose a particular shade of pale cornflower blue for an icon.

The first fight club was just Tyler and I pounding on each other. It used to be enough that when I came home angry and knowing that my life wasn't toeing my five-year plan, I could clean my condominium or detail my car. Someday I'd be dead without a scar and there would be a really nice condo and car. Really, really nice, until the dust settled or the next owner. Nothing is static. Even the Mona Lisa is falling apart. Since fight club, I can wiggle half the teeth in my jaw.

Maybe self-improvement isn't the answer.

Tyler never knew his father.

Maybe self-destruction is the answer.

OCCULT NETWORKS { hacktivism : ECD : Oedipal : paternalism : rhizome }

**CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE > PATHOLOGICAL
FAMILY METAPHORS**

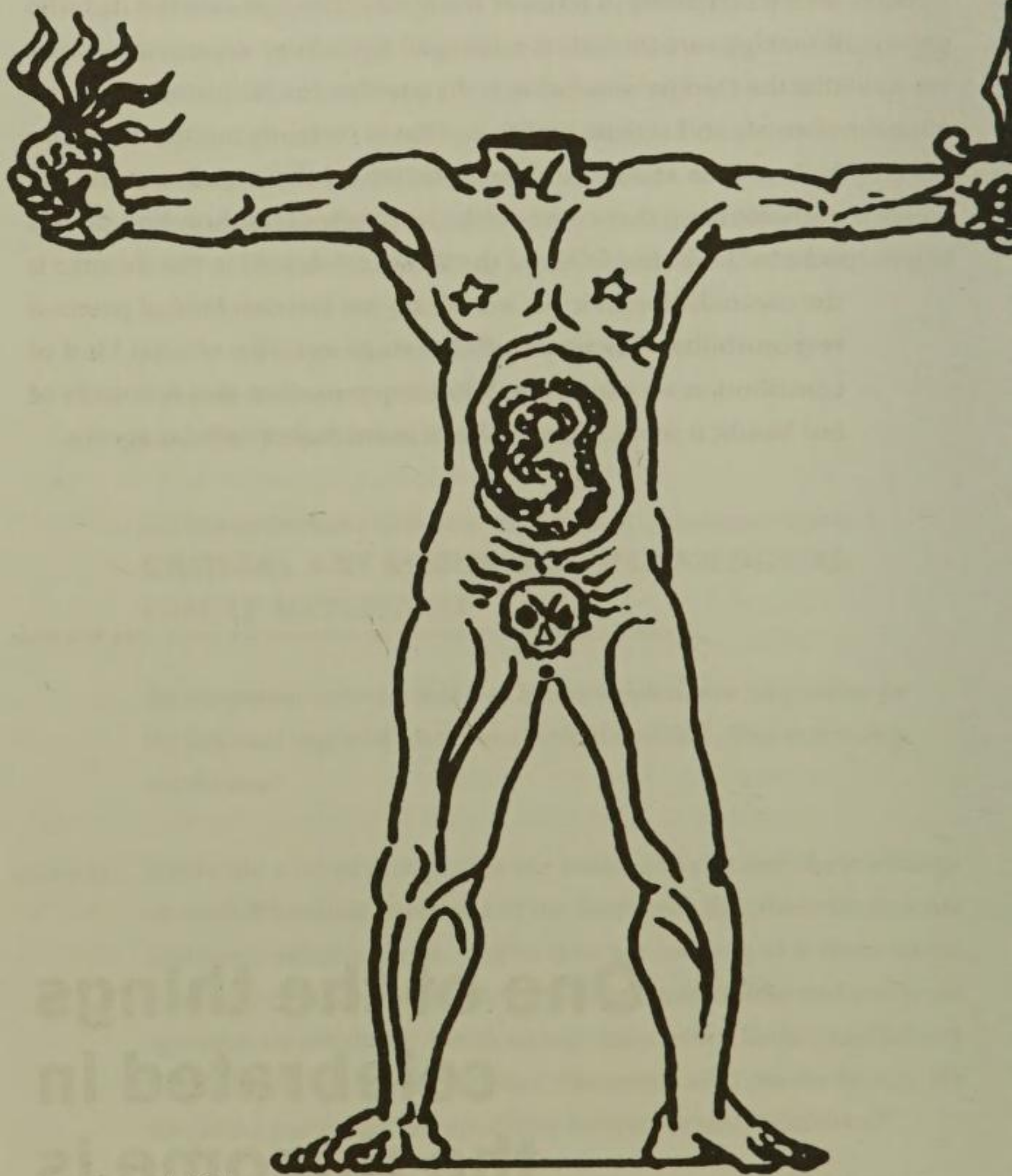
<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

Your argument assumes that the Oedipal revolution is the gasoline for the historical engine of an art and activist coalition. That is certainly not the case!

Collective > There are a lot of groups that are looking to CAE and their writings as models because it was one of the first times that these sentiments had been written about. Maybe they are looking at it from a new historical consciousness, thinking, "yeah, CAE articulated ten years ago what we are doing and thinking about now." So as grandfathers of the hacktivist movement and electronic civil disobedience, do you feel a particular responsibility to oversee your "children?"

I HATE the way you put that! The reason I hate the way you put that is you have placed it into that psychoanalytical rubric where we see everything in terms of the family. The authoritative dad who is making sure the kids are doing all right. Your argument assumes that the Oedipal revolution is the gasoline for the historical engine of an art and activist coalition. That is certainly not the case! You have to look at a more rhizomatic model that stands outside the pathologizing that comes with the family metaphor. You do not want to “look after.” One of the things celebrated in the rhizome is the contradiction in it. So, no. We do not feel that kind of paternal responsibility. Our responsibility stops in terms of what kind of contribution we can make. What happens after that is outside of our hands; it is out of the realm of individual or cellular agency.

**One of the things
celebrated in
the rhizome is
the contradiction in it.**



Acéphale, André Masson

Acéphale (headless) was the name of a journal published by George Bataille and illustrated by Masson. It was also the name of a secret society with Bataille at its center, and about which little else is known.

SACRIFICIAL SCIENCE { hacktivism : ECD : Oedipal : paternalism : rhizome }

++ **WALTER BENJAMIN** > *TRANSPARENCY*

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Prepared on the basis of the German volume by Rolf Tiedemann. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. CAMBRIDGE: HARVARD, 1999. [N4,6]

It is the peculiarity of technological forms of production (as opposed to art forms) that their progress and their success are proportionate to the transparency of their social content. (Hence glass architecture.)

SACRIFICE AND SCIENCE { visibility : Benjamin : self-destruction }

++ **JEAN BAUDRILLARD** > *WILLINGLY ENSLAVED*

VICTIMS OF OBSCENE VISIBILITY

Baudrillard, Jean. "Dust Breeding" ("L'élevage de poussière"). *Libération* May 29, 2001. Trans. by François Debrix. [HTTP://WWW.CTHEORY.NET/PRINTER.ASP?ID=293](http://www.ctheory.net/printer.asp?id=293).

The worst part of this obscene and indecent visibility is the forced enrollment, the automatic complicity of the spectator who has been blackmailed into participating. The obvious goal of this kind of operation is to enslave the victims. But the victims are quite willing. They are rejoicing at the pain and the shame they suffer. Everybody must abide by society's fundamental logic: interactive exclusion. Interactive exclusion, what could be better! Let's all agree on it and practice it with enthusiasm!

If everything ends with visibility (which, similar to the concept of heat in the theory of energy, is the most degraded form of existence), the point is still to make such a loss of symbolic space and such an extreme disenchantment with life an object of contemplation, of sidereal observation (sidération), and of perverse desire. “While humanity was once according to Homer an object of contemplation for the Gods, it has now become a contemplation of itself. Its own alienation has reached such a degree that humanity’s own destruction becomes a first rate aesthetic sensation” (Walter Benjamin).

SACRIFICIAL SCIENCE { net.art : amateur : science : networks : historicizing }

SIMON POPE > IRREVERENT MODES OF ENQUIRY

<NET.NET.NET> E-mail interview. OCTOBER, 2001.

I started from the premise that “networks” aren’t necessarily computer networks—they might be social or postal or whatever.

Collective > Your work is not limited to the net, or the computer for that matter, such as your book “London Walking.” What is the relationship of the Internet to the production of your work? Do you see it as just one of many tools available to you? And do you feel that working with the net as a primary tool would pigeonhole you a “net artist?”

Pope > For me, it’s been interesting to see how “net.art” has been historicized, especially in relation to its constituent art practices. For most people, the “net” means “the Internet” and its particular technology. From this, “net.art” is presumed to be concerned with the technical, but this is patently not the case when you look at the groups and individual artists who have been given the “net.art” tag. There’s very little understanding of the impact that this definition-from-outside

has on artists' practice and what a straitjacket it can become.

As a way out of this situation, I investigated how "net.art" practices are connected to other types of contemporary and historical art practices. I started from the premise that "networks" aren't necessarily computer networks—they might be social or postal or whatever. I teamed up with Matthew Fuller to interview artists, and the BBC commissioned the project as "Art for Networks"; I figured <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/artfornetworks/> this would help with counter-historicizing "net.art."

I can see the connection between my work with I/O/D and my other projects such as "London Walking." The Web Stalker was built as a way of finding out what the web might be beyond or underneath the browser, while my "technical manual for walking in London" was written as a way of inquiring into my former hometown, to open the city to speculation and to work around given constraints. It promotes the use of art practice as an amateur and irreverent mode of enquiry—as opposed to a "proper" scientific enquiry—and asserts the view from ground level as equal partner to the "writing on" of mainstream academic writing.

SACRIFICIAL SCIENCE { cyborg : extropian : upload }

HANS MORAVEC > YOUR ABANDONED BODY DIES

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Moravec, Hans. "The Universal Robot." 1991. [HTTP://WWW.FRC.RI.CMU.EDU/~HPM/PROJECT.ARCHIVE/ROBOT.PAPERS/1991/UNIVERSAL.ROBOT.910618.HTML](http://www.frc.ricmu.edu/~hpm/project.archive/robot.papers/1991/universal.robot.910618.html). JUNE 2002.

The surgeon's hand sinks a fraction of a millimeter deeper into your brain, instantly compensating its measurements and signals for the changed position. The process is repeated for the next layer, and soon a second simulation resides in the computer, communicating with the first and with the remaining brain tissue. Layer after layer the brain is simulated, then excavated. Eventually

your skull is empty, and the surgeon's hand rests deep in your brainstem. Though you have not lost consciousness, or even your train of thought, your mind has been removed from the brain and transferred to a machine. In a final, disorienting step the surgeon lifts its hand. Your suddenly abandoned body dies. For a moment you experience only quiet and dark. Then, once again, you can open your eyes. Your perspective has shifted. The computer simulation has been disconnected from the cable leading to the surgeon's hand and reconnected to a shiny new body of the style, color, and material of your choice. Your metamorphosis is complete.

SACRIFICIAL SCIENCE (Masson : acephale : monster)

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GEORGE BATAILLE > *I MEET A BEING WHO MAKES
ME LAUGH BECAUSE HE IS HEADLESS*

Bataille, Georges. "The Sacred Conspiracy." Trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie Jr. *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Ed. Allan Stoekl. MINNEAPOLIS: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, 1985. P. 180.

Man has escaped from his head just as the condemned man has escaped from his prison. He has found beyond himself not God, who is the prohibition against crime, but a being who is unaware of prohibition. Beyond what I am, I meet a being who makes me laugh because he is headless; this fills me with dread because he is made of innocence and crime; he holds a steel weapon in his left hand, flames like those of a Sacred Heart in his right. He reunites in the same eruption Birth and Death. He is not a man. He is not a god either. He is not me but he is more than me: his stomach is the labyrinth in which he has lost himself, loses me with him, and in which I discover myself as him, in other words as a monster.

+ +

**AVITAL RONELL > WITH HEAVY HEARTS THEY
DECIDED TO SACRIFICE THEIR PET CAT TO SCIENCE**

Ronell, Avital. *The Telephone Book: Technology—Schizophrenia—Electric Speech*. LINCOLN: UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS, 1989.

Citations of Bell from Bruce, Robert V. *Alexander Graham Bell and the Conquest of Solitude*. NEW YORK: LITTLE, BROWN, 1973. pp. 390-391

[Bell, 24]

The profound intimacy linking AGB [Alexander Graham Bell] to his brother Melly weighs in heavily. A creature of science, representation, and magic, Aleck's brother Melly was a young showman of sorts. With Aleck he could "substitute for their mother at the piano. Melly had extraordinary gifts for mimicry and sleight of hand, both of which supported his taste for practical jokes. In exercising his Bell inheritance, Melly found his element in the comic monologue." In a crucial way, Melly never left AGB's side, even after he perished; it is therefore important to acknowledge their proximity to one another. For if the mother was already a telephonic instrument in her own right, Melly will have provided the mandate and contractual imperative for its invention. What we are here calling "the invention" is created in a kind of preliminary dumb show, as it were, following the commission of Melville Bell, who challenged (or commanded) the two siblings to build a speaking machine. The project brought Aleck and Melly closer together than they had ever been before. Ted's bend was for art, but Melly shared Aleck's fascination with science and invention. And Aleck's recent stride toward maturity helped reconcile Melly to his company. Aleck and Melly began by studying De Kempelen's book, then agreed upon a division of labor: Aleck to make the tongue and mouth of the apparatus, Melly to make the lungs, throat, and larynx. No available anatomical work told them all they needed to

know about the larynx, and so with heavy hearts they decided to sacrifice their pet cat to science.

[Bell, 36] Like so many things of experimental science, the apparatus, an abomination, requires the sacrifice of that which was living, and in some metonymical sense, attached to the family (a “pet cat,” the family pet, the other member). It gets worse; the ritual murder performed on behalf of Melly’s half of the project might have been eluded if the boys had consulted their father. Perhaps this was their way of consulting him, however. “They called upon a medical student, a friend of Melly’s, to dispatch the cat painlessly. Instead, he took the cat into the Milton Cottage greenhouse and before the boys’ eyes poured nitric acid down its throat [Aleck’s half of the project]. Only after it had raced around in agony for some time could he be persuaded to open an artery and end its suffering. Aleck and Melly renounced such expedients thereafter, and half a

[Bell, 36] century did not erase Aleck’s horror at the memory.” The dead animal, like the one that stared down Watson, acts as a partial origin of the telephone, its totem, in fact, whose guilty tab Aleck would have to pay. We cannot be sure that the narration of horror has been rendered in full: yet it seems at this point quite sufficient to know that a horror was remembered at the birth of the first speaking machine commissioned by the father, and that this horror involves sacrifice, murder, and the family pet. At bottom, a dead animal sublimated into a maternal cry. “At last the brothers united their creations.... The machine then cried out ‘Mama!’ Aleck and Melly tasted triumph when a persistent demonstration of this feat on the common stairway at 13 South Charlotte Street brought a

[Bell, 36] tenant down to see ‘what can be the matter with the baby.’”

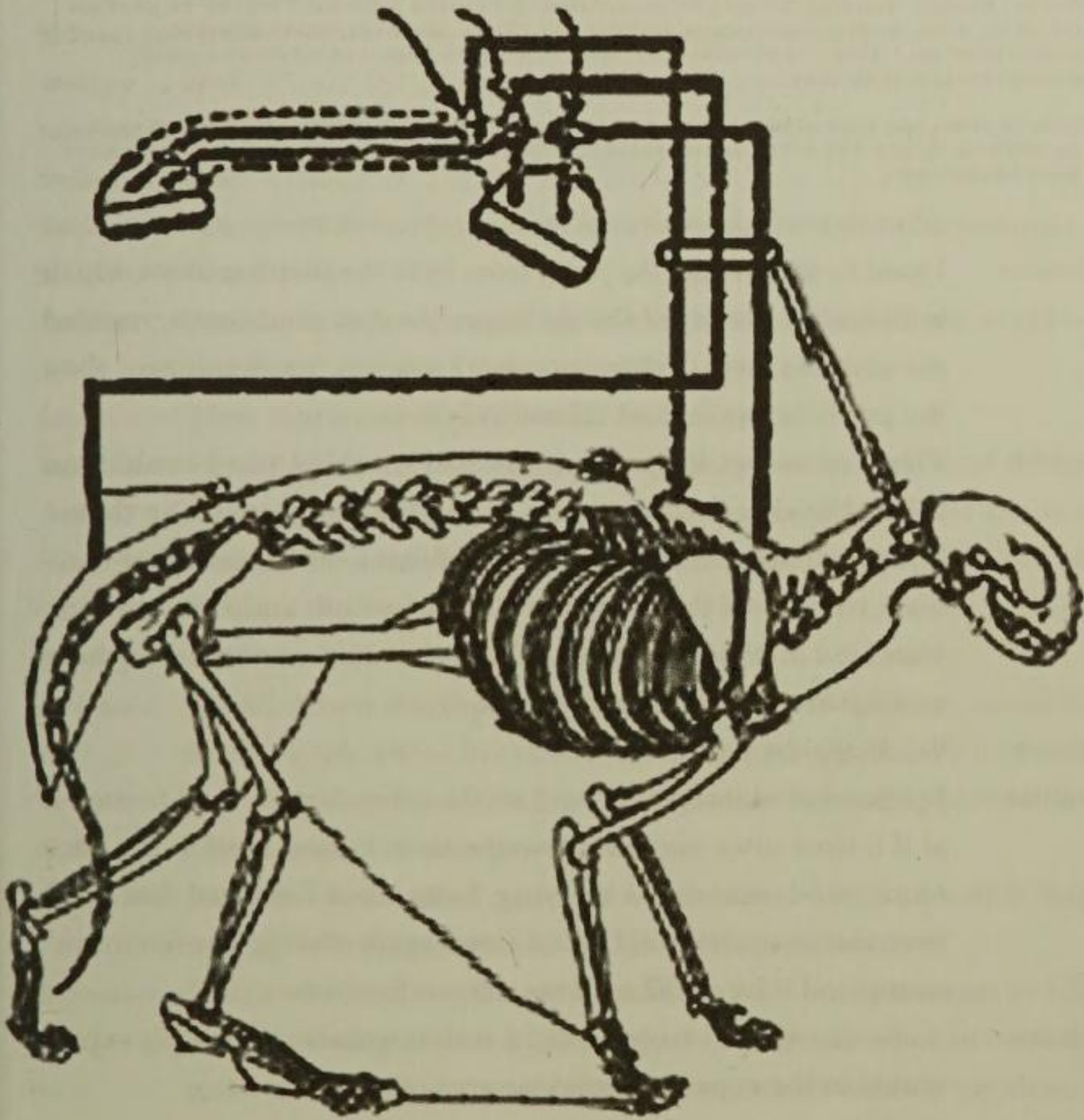


Diagram of Sacrifice at the Origin of Vocal Telecommunications

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CORNELIA SOLLFRANK WITH FLORIAN CRAMER >

CYBER/FEM: I WANT TO KILL "HER"

Cramer, Florian. "Hacking the Art OS—Interview with Cornelia Sollfrank." POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 15, 2002. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00076.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00076.HTML). | [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00077.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00077.HTML). JUNE 2002.

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Cramer > I want to try to make the jump from here to cyber-feminism, which is difficult... perhaps I should begin like this: what always troubled me with the term "cyber-feminism" was less the "feminism" than the prefix "cyber-". Does it have to be?

Sollfrank > That's amazing! If the feminism had troubled you I could have related to that, but you seem to be PC. [laughter] The theme "cyber-": that is "what it is all about." I first heard about cyber-feminism rolling off the tongue of Geert Lovink, and I said to him: what kind of nonsense is that? That was back then when everything went cyber-: cyber-money, cyber-body, etc.

Cramer > Yes, that's the point.

Sollfrank > I pigeonholed it together with all the other "cyber-" and treated it as if it were utter nonsense, but the term lodged itself in the back of my mind without me knowing. Later when I realized that I had been thinking about it, I asked Geert again what "cyber-feminism" meant and if he could send me a few references.

Cramer > [LAUGHTER] What I have noticed is that women are amply represented in the experimental-code area of net.art.

Sollfrank > Really?

Cramer > From what I've seen, yes. Jodi for example is a masculine-feminine couple, the same goes for 0100101110111001.org. Then springs to

mind mez/Mary Anne Breeze or antiorp/Netochka Nezvanova, which we now know has a woman from New Zealand forming the core figure.

Sollfrank > No!!!

Cramer > Yes!

Sollfrank > Are you sure about that?

Cramer > Yes!

Sollfrank > I'm currently working on an interview with Netochka Nezvanova...

Cramer > Great!

Sollfrank > Yes, she tells me everything! What she thinks about the world—and especially about the art world. [laughter]

Cramer > Then that is someone who also fascinates you?

Sollfrank > I find it extremely interesting as a phenomenon. I ask "her" things such as how much her success has to do with the fact she is a woman. Ultimately though there are several people involved in forming the character.

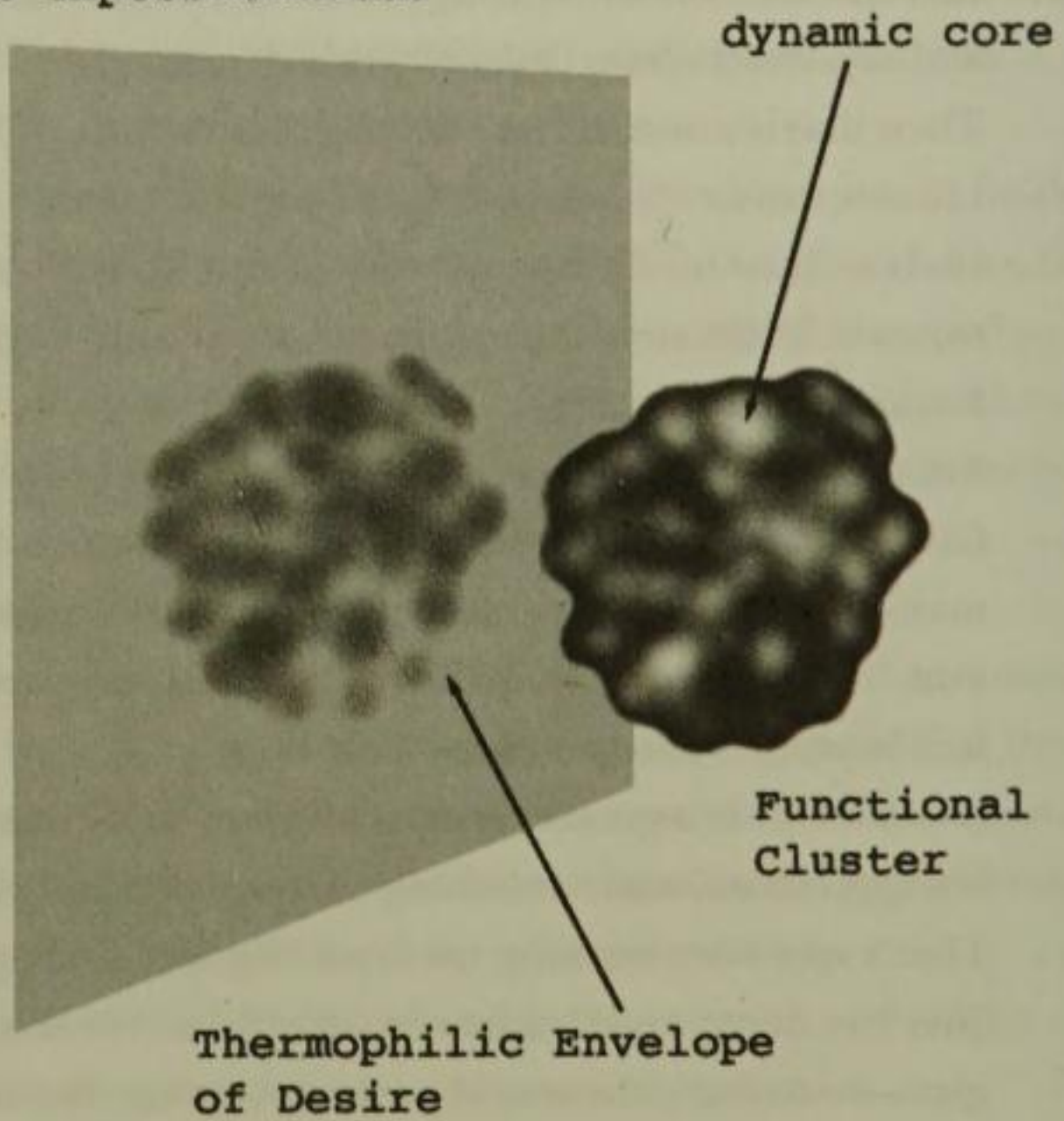
Cramer > But the core is a woman.

Sollfrank > Great! A new concept of Netochka Nezvanova. I have asked so many people about her, and everyone had contradictory information. The last theory that I heard led me to the media theoretician Lev Manovich as the core of N.N.

Cramer > [LAUGHTER] It is a good concept. Another social hack, a system that is triggered off, and something that dematerializes...

Sollfrank > That's why I am working on finalizing this concept: I want to kill "her" by doing an interview in which she reveals all of her strategies—something she would never do anyway. But that is my idea...

Spectral Wall
of Impossibilities



< *Functional Cluster Confronts the Spectral Wall (after Nezvanova)*

BASE ORGANS { morphogenesis : chaos : molecularity : emptiness }

++ **NETOCHKA NEZVANOVA > ARTISTIC STATEMENT:**
THE THERMOPHILIC ENVELOPE OF DESIRE

Nezvanova, Netochka. "Artistic Statement." 2001. [HTTP://MEMBANK.ORG/DATASET/INTER.BODY/PROPAGANDA.HTML](http://MEMBANK.ORG/DATASET/INTER.BODY/PROPAGANDA.HTML). JUNE 2002.

[UNCHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

The vectors are meant to converge; through morphogenesis.

It is the charting of a fundamental shift away from the millennia old, worn and static rational discourse towards the pleasure of the transient and momentary, towards the allure of a brevity of meaning, the spectral wall of impossibilities, towards the thermophilic envelope of desire which most elegantly unveils the dynamic core of a life form's functional cluster.

if i thus consume immoderately, i reveal to my fellow beings that which i am intimately. consumption is the way in which separate beings communicate. everything shows through, everything is open and infinite between those who consume intensely — Georges Bataille

The beauty of a body, any body is both its singular uniqueness as a whole and its existence as a swarming chaotic symphony of smaller worlds; of organs and systems, muscles, bones and organs made up of molecules, of atoms and so on down to the tinniest particle. A

world its own and within it multiple smaller worlds; the cardiovascular world, the auricular world moving out from the body, a larger body or world is created by that body and so many others orbiting in a confined space and time i.e. a city, a country, a planet, etc. Tzara's "The Gas Heart" demonstrates the parts are, individually more magnificent, more exceptional than their sum. Perfection in simplicity, beginning with the universe and scaling down, like Russian dolls, dolls within dolls within dolls, until there is nothing the glorious empty—all light, all open—and each level of smaller is more perfect than what it composes each organ-character expresses its individual beauty.

BASE ORGANS { fashion : body : organs : angels }

++ **TRISTAN TZARA** > *FROM THE GAS HEART, ACT II*

Tzara, Tristan. "The Gas Heart." Translated by Michael Benedikt. [HTTP://WWW.EMORY.EDU/ENGLISH/DRAMA/HISTDRAMA2/TZARAGAS.HTML](http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/DRAMA/HISTDRAMA2/TZARAGAS.HTML). JUNE 2002.

[APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

- EYEBROWS > The driving-belts of the mills of dreams brush against the woolen lower jaws of our carnivorous plants.
- EAR > Yes, I know, the dreams with hair.
- EYE > Dreams of angels.
- EAR > Dreams of cloth, paper watches.
- EYE > The enormous and solemn dreams of inaugurations.
- EAR > Of angels in helicopters.
- NOSE > Yes I know.
- EYE > The angels of conversation.
- NECK > Yes I know.
- EAR > Angels in cushions.
- NOSE > Yes I know.
- EYE > Angels in ice.

NOSE > Yes I know.
EAR > Angels in local neighborhoods.
NOSE > Yes, I know.
EAR > The ice is broken, said our fathers to our mothers, in the first springtime of their life which was both honorable and gracious.
EYE > This is how the hour understands the hour, the admiral his fleet of words. Winter child the palm of my hand.

MOUTH ENTERS

MOUTH > I've made a great deal of money.
NOSE > Thank you not bad.
MOUTH > I swim in the fountain. I have necklaces of goldfish.
NECK > Thank you not bad.
MOUTH > I'm wearing the latest French coiffure.
NOSE > Thank you not bad.
EYE > I've already seen it in Paris.
NECK > Thank you not bad.
MOUTH > I don't understand anything about the rumblings of the next war.
NECK > Thank you not bad.
MOUTH > And I'm getting thinner every day.
NOSE > Thank you not bad.
MOUTH > A young man followed me in the street on his bicycle.
NECK > Thank you not bad.
MOUTH > I'll be on my ship next Monday.
NOSE > Thank you not bad.

++

GILLES DELEUZE AND FELIX GUATTARI >

BWO VERSUS DESIRING-MACHINES

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. MINNEAPOLIS: UNIVERSITY OF MINNEAPOLIS PRESS, 1983. Translation of *L'Anti-Oedipe*. P. 9.

Every coupling of machines, every production of a machine, every sound of a machine running, becomes unbearable to the body without organs. Beneath its organs it senses there are larvae and loathsome worms, and a God at work messing it all up or strangling it by organizing it. "The body is the body/it is all by itself/and has no need of organs/the body is never an organism/organisms are the enemy of the body." [Antonin Artaud] Merely so many nails piercing the flesh, so many forms of torture. In order to resist organ-machines, the body without organs presents its smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier. In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid. In order to resist using words composed of articulated phonetic units, it utters only gasps and cries that are sheer unarticulated blocks of sound.

BASE ORGANS { love : death : island : childhood }

++

GUY DEBORD > *HOWLINGS IN FAVOR OF SADE:*

WHAT ARE CHILDISH LOVE AFFAIRS?

Debord, Guy-Ernest. "Hurlements en faveur de Sade." 1952. Transcription and translation by Gregor Markowitz. AVAILABLE: [HTTP://LIBRARY.NOTHINGNESS.ORG/ARTICLES/4/EN/DISPLAY/90](http://library.nothingness.org/articles/4/en/display/90).

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

[SCREEN GOES FROM BLACK TO WHITE]

VOICE 1 > Young Madeleine Reineri, aged twelve and a half, who under the pseudonym of Pirouette used to liven up the radio programme 'Happy Thursdays' on the Alpes-

Grenoble station, threw herself into the Isere.

VOICE 2 > Mademoiselle Reineri, in that quarter of Europe, you will always have your surprised face and that body, the best of promised lands. Like neon light, words repeat their banal truths.

VOICE 1 > I love you.

VOICE 4 > It must be terrible to die.

VOICE 1 > See you.

(YOUNG GIRL)

VOICE 4 > You drink far too much.

VOICE 1 > What are childish love affairs?

(YOUNG GIRL)

VOICE 4 > I don't know what you're talking about.

VOICE 1 > I knew it. And there was a time when I regretted it very
(YOUNG GIRL)
much.

VOICE 4 > Do you want an orange?

VOICE 1 > The beautiful tearing apart of the volcanic islands.

(YOUNG GIRL)

VOICE 4 > In the past.

VOICE 1 > I've nothing more to say to you.

(YOUNG GIRL)

VOICE 2 > After all the answers at the wrong time, and youth getting older, night falls again from on high.

[SCREEN GOES TO BLACK]

BASE ORGANS { heaven-hell : gnostic : darkness : mud : feet }

GEORGES BATAILLE > AN ORGAN AS BASE

AS THE FOOT

Bataille, Georges. "The Big Toe." Trans. Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie Jr. *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*. Ed. Allan Stoekl. MINNEAPOLIS: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS, 1985. PP. 20-21.

Although within the body blood flows in equal quantities from high to low and from low to high, there is a bias in favor of that which elevates itself, and human life is erroneously seen as an

elevation. The division of the universe into subterranean hell and perfectly pure heaven is an indelible conception, mud and darkness being the principles of evil as light and celestial space are the principles of good: with their feet in the mud but their heads more or less in light, men obstinately imagine a tide that will permanently elevate them, never to return, into pure space. Human life entails, in fact, the rage of seeing oneself as a back and forth movement from refuse to ideal, and from ideal to refuse—a rage that is easily directed against an organ as base as the foot.

BASE ORGANS { love : food : plumbing }

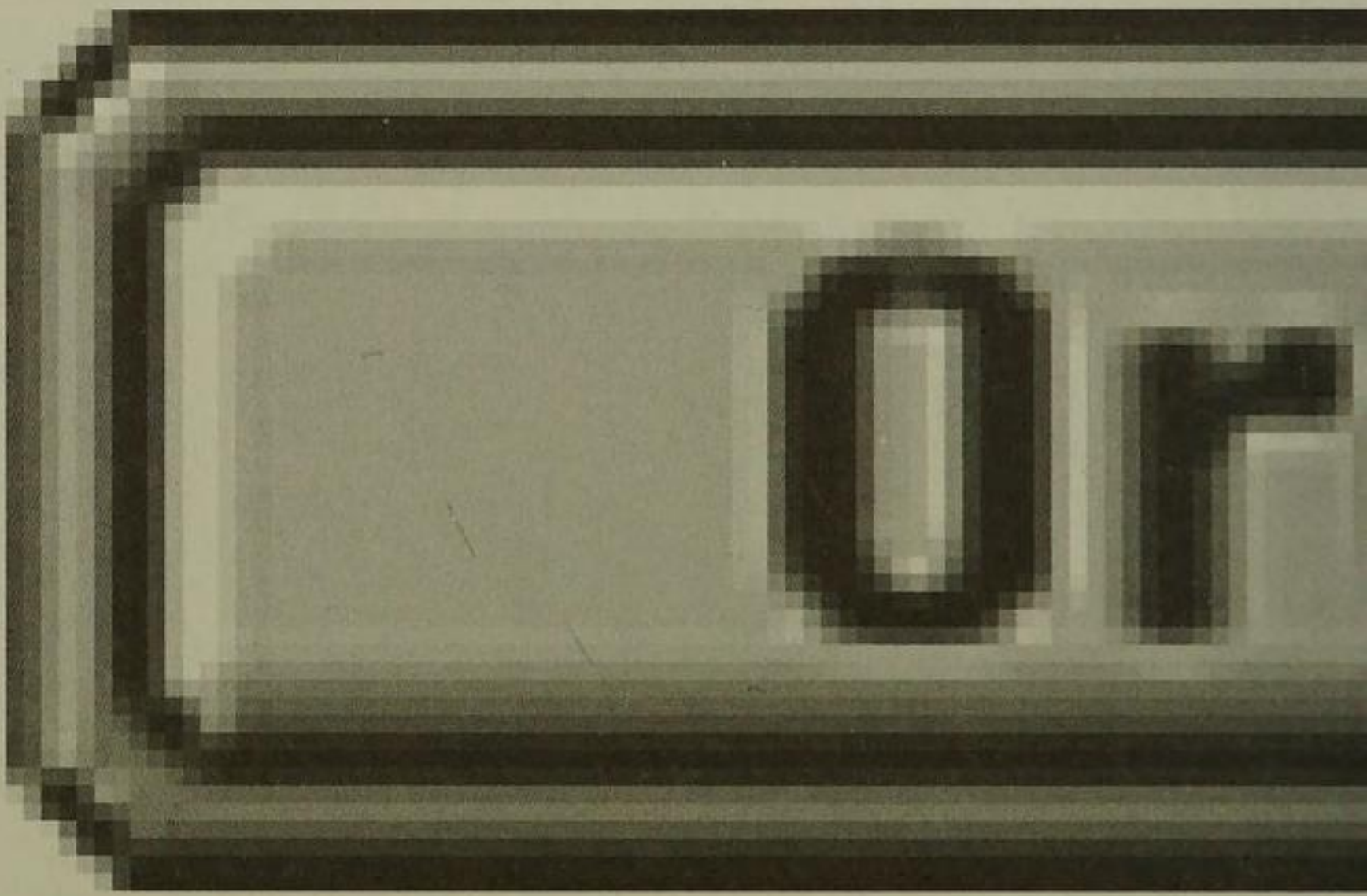
IRATIONAL > YOU EAT HER FEET

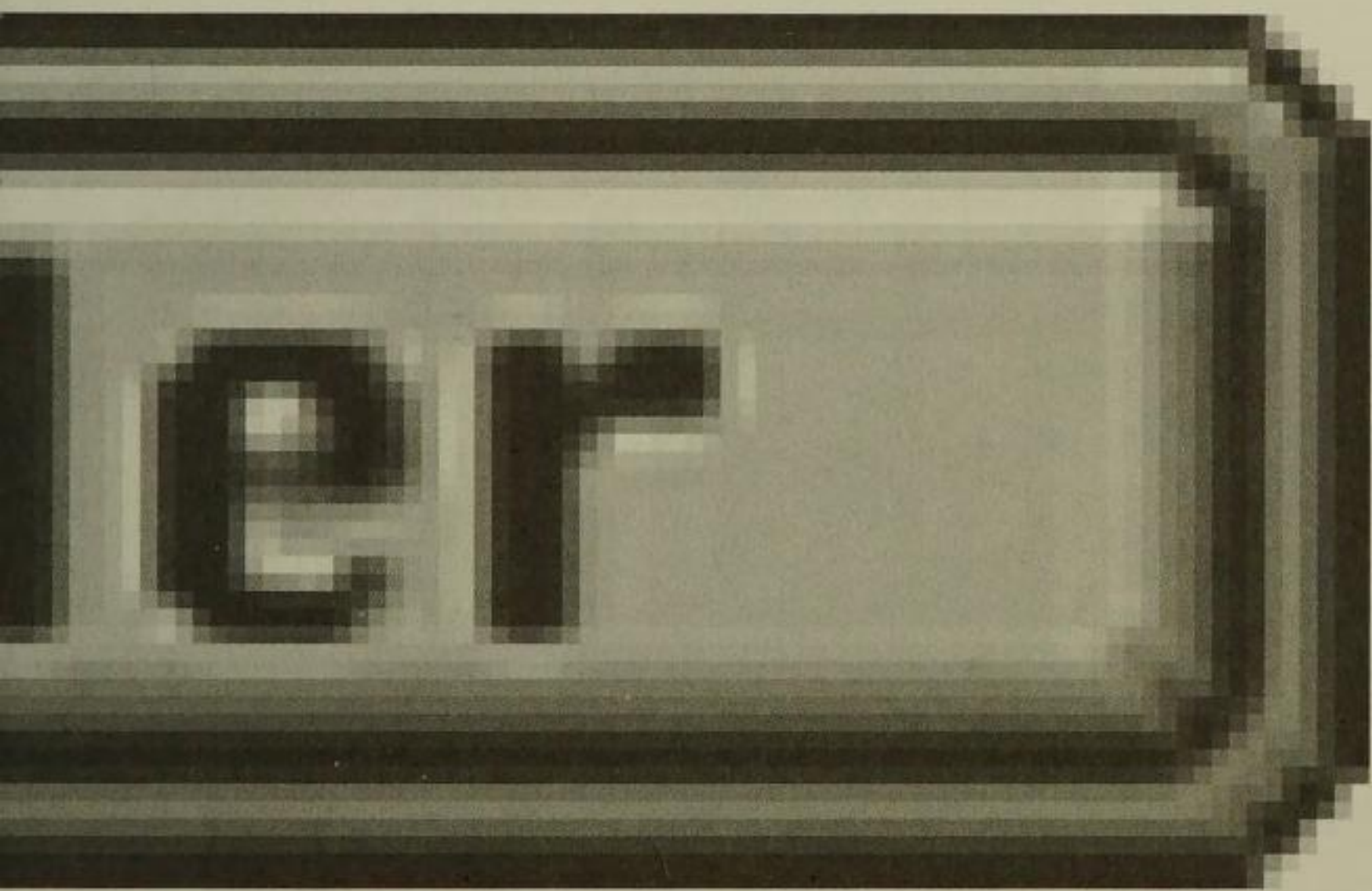
<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.
APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

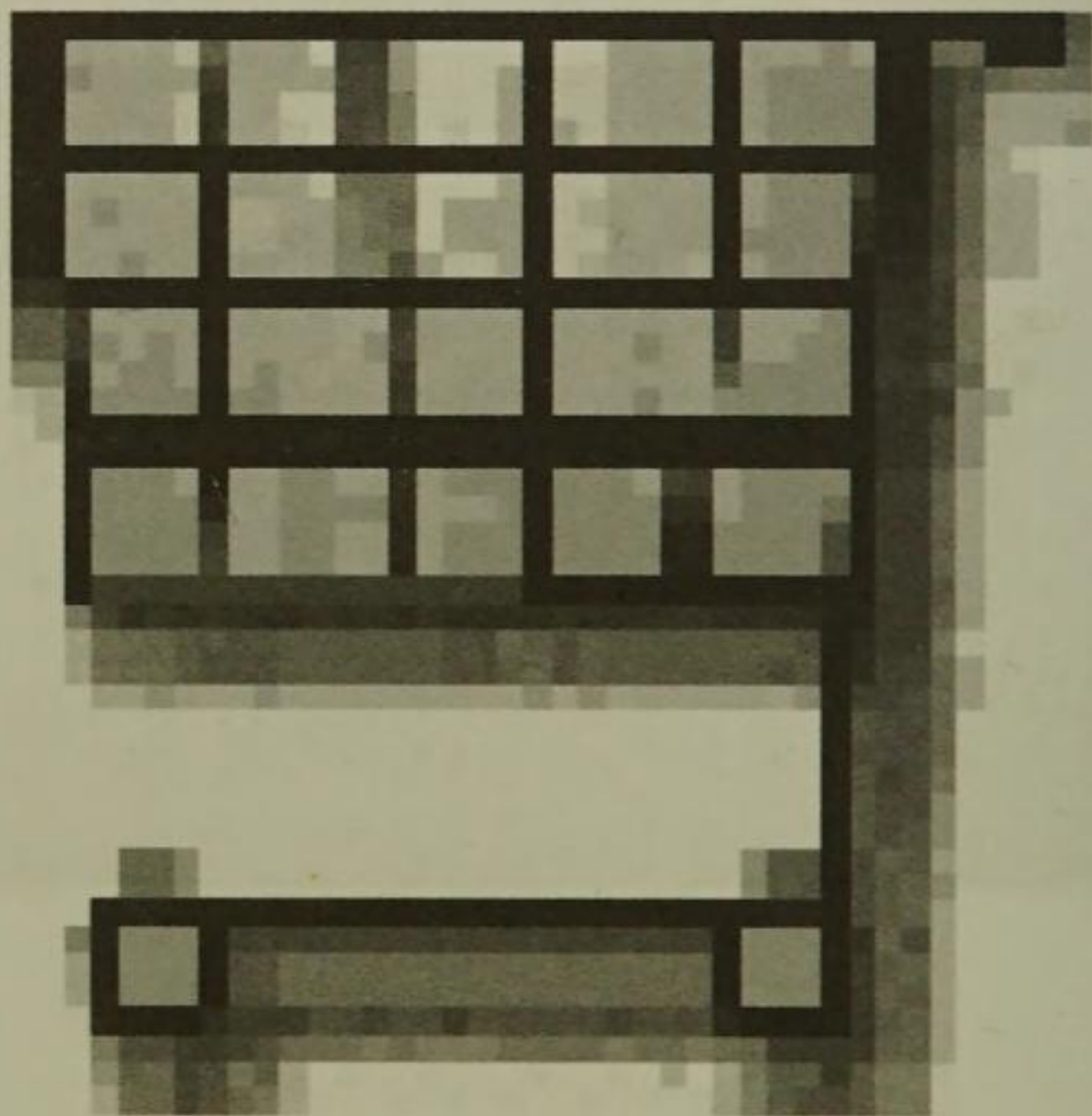
There's no bathtub here?

- Bunting > Rachel, what are you doing?
- Baker > I've got sore feet.
- Bunting > Do you have to pick them into the dinner?
- Collective > You're lovers. You eat her feet. My feet itch too, Rachel.
- Baker > Do you guys have a bathtub here?
- Collective > No, there's no bathtub. There's a sink...
- Baker > There's no bathtub here?
- Collective > There's a shower and a sink.
- Baker > Oh, that sucks. In a big apartment like this? That's crazy.
- Collective > Pretty weird with all this space you guys have.
- Collective > Okay, yeah, we're going to delete that part.

**Okay, yeah,
we're going to
delete that part.**





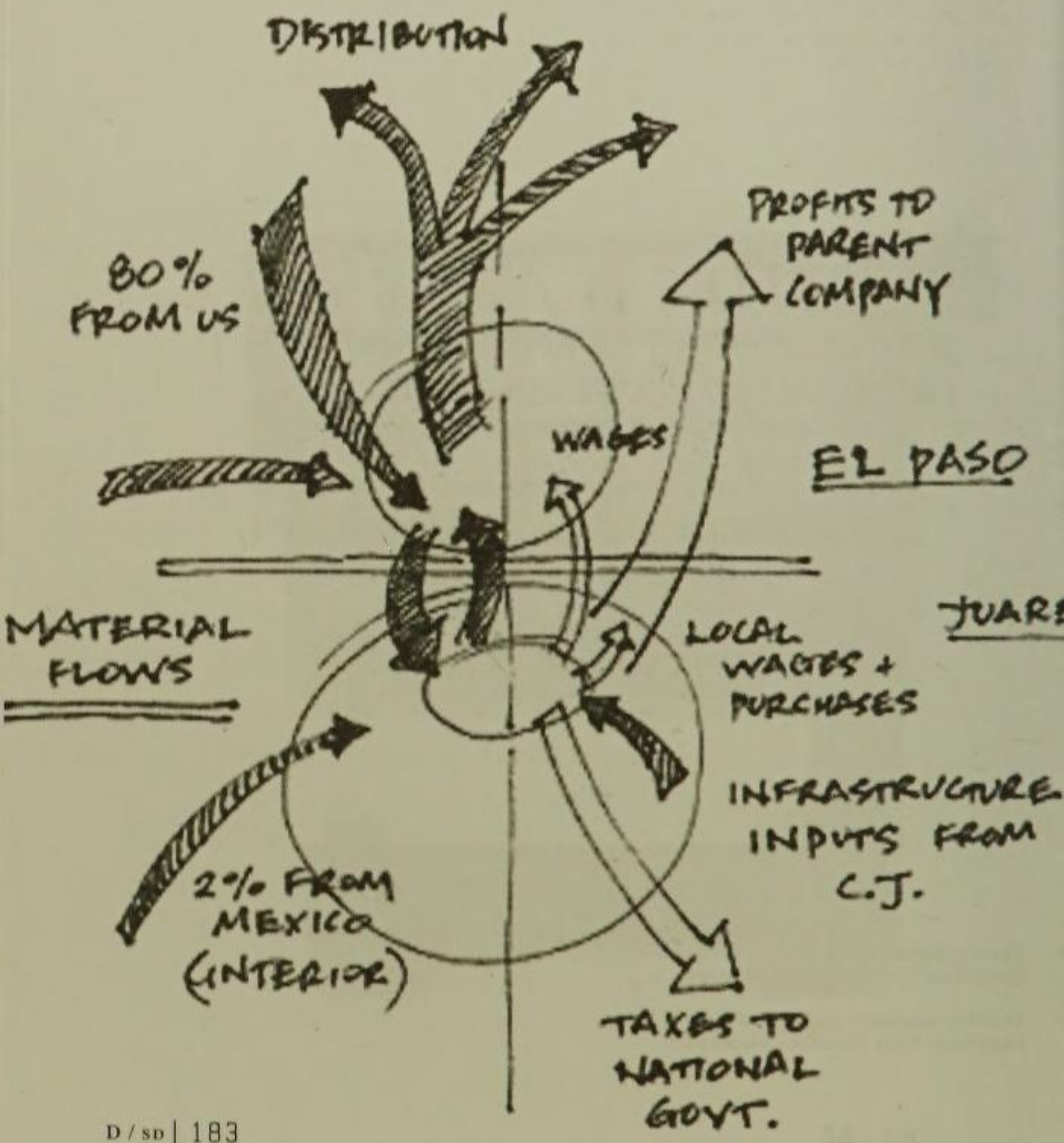


SECTION D /

SHIT DOMINION | CORPORATE MACHINE |
FILTHY LUCRE | SOFT CONTROL

Point of Interpellation
Graphical User Interface element.

Desiring Machine—Unfulfilled
Graphical User Interface element.



<< *Material Flows, Commodity Chains and the Spatial Division of Labor*
Diagram representing the flow of materials and capital through
the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez border area.

[HTTP://WWW-PERSONAL.UMICH.EDU/~KENLO/ECONDEV/PRODUC-
TION%20ECOSYSTEM.HTML](http://www-personal.umich.edu/~kenlo/econdev/production%20ecosystem.html)

SHIT DOMINION { control : organ : freedom : shit }

++ **WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS** > *DID I EVER TELL YOU
ABOUT THE MAN WHO TAUGHT HIS ASS TO TALK?*

Burroughs, William. *Naked Lunch*. NEW YORK: GROVE PRESS, 1959. [HTTP://WWW.HYPERREAL.
ORG/WSB/ASSHOLE.HTML](http://www.hyperreal.org/wsb/asshole.html)

[TEXT REPRODUCED FROM THE URL ABOVE; MAY NOT MATCH ANY PRINTED EDITION. APPARENT
TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED BUT ECCENTRICITIES REMAIN.]

“Did I ever tell you about the man who taught his ass to talk? His whole abdomen would move up and down you dig farting out the words. It was unlike anything I had ever heard.

“This ass talk had sort of a gut frequency. It hit you right down there like you gotta go. You know when the old colon gives you the elbow and it feels sorta cold inside, and you know all you have to do is turn loose? Well this talking hit you right down there, a bubbly, thick stagnant sound, a sound you could smell.

“This man worked for a carnival you dig, and to start with it was like a novelty ventriloquist act. Real funny, too, at first. He had a number he called ‘The Better ‘Ole’ that was a scream, I tell you. I forget most of it but it was clever. Like,

“‘Oh I say, are you still down there, old thing?’

“‘Nah! I had to go relieve myself.’

“After a while the ass started talking on its own. He would go in without anything prepared and his ass would ad-lib and toss the gags back at him every time.

“Then it developed sort of teeth-like little raspy in-curving hooks and started eating. He thought this was cute at first and built an act around it, but the asshole would eat its way through his pants and start talking on the street, shouting out it wanted equal rights. It would get drunk, too, and have crying jags nobody loved it and it wanted to be kissed same as any other mouth. Finally it talked all the time day and night, you could hear him for blocks screaming at it to shut up, and beating it with his fist, and sticking candles up it, but nothing did any good and the asshole said to him: ‘It’s you who will shut up in the end. Not me. Because we don’t need you around here any more. I can talk and eat AND shit.’

“After that he began waking up in the morning with a transparent jelly like a tadpole’s tail all over his mouth. This jelly was what the scientists call un-D.T.—Undifferentiated Tissue—which can grow into any kind of flesh on the human body. He would tear it off his mouth and the pieces would stick to his hands like burning gasoline jelly and grow there, grow anywhere on him a glob of it fell. So finally his mouth sealed over, and the whole head would have amputated spontaneous—except for the EYES you dig. That’s one thing the asshole COULDN’T do was see. It needed the eyes. But nerve connections were blocked and infiltrated and atrophied so the brain couldn’t give orders any more. It was trapped in the skull, sealed off. For a while you could see the silent, helpless suffering of the brain behind the eyes, then finally the brain must have died, because the eyes WENT OUT, and there was no more feeling in them than a crab’s eyes on the end of a stalk.”

SHIT DOMINION { value : fluidity : fixation }

++

GILLES DELEUZE AND FELIX GUATTARI > *CAPITAL IS THE BODY WITHOUT ORGANS OF THE CAPITALIST BEING*

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. MINNEAPOLIS: UNIVERSITY OF MINNEAPOLIS PRESS, 1983. Translation of *L'Anti-Oedipe*. P. 10.

Capital is indeed the body without organs of the capitalist, or rather of the capitalist being. But as such, it is not only the fluid and petrified substance of money, for it will give the sterility of money the form whereby money produces money. It produces surplus value, just as the body without organs reproduces itself, puts forth shoots, and branches out to the farthest corners of the universe. It makes the machine responsible for producing a relative surplus value, while embodying itself in the machine as fixed capital.

SHIT DOMINION { America : Acker : Gibson : Word : BwO: citizen : human }

++

MATT FULLER > *FUCK IT LIMP*

Snafu. "Matt Fuller on ATM." POSTED TO NETTIME ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2000. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0009/MSG00198.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0009/MSG00198.HTML). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. SOME MATERIAL HAS BEEN OMITTED, WHICH MAY DISTORT OR OBSCURE THE INTENDED MEANING OF ONE OR MORE SENTENCES.]

To: Nettime <nettime-l@bbs.thing.net>
Subject: <nettime> Matthew Fuller on ATM
From: snafu <snafu@kyuzz.org>
Date: Thu, 21 Sep 2000 02:14:53 +0200

[snafu] > What I find interesting about... [a] depiction of America as a "daydream nation," where fiction and reality are so overlapped that the collective imaginary gets a body, and you can touch it with the same concreteness of everyday actuality... Through the networked, multifarious media's glass, all of the human paranoias and instincts comes horribly to the surface without any possible sublimation...

—and what would you want to do with this body once it materializes? Fuck it limp and dissect it whilst still alive seems to be the required minimum. Kathy Acker in *Empire of the Senseless*, partially a remix of Gibson's trilogy, has a software unit or computer reimagined as a severed head, a sensorium gone stray. Part of what is being done in the forthcoming installation "A Song for Occupations"—which extremely pedantically maps Microsoft Word—is to take apart a component of this body, that part that "produces" writing, and to find out how it is composed as a sensorium, how it machines language. And in that to question whether the sense of multiplicity which you speak of is firewalled or transfigured and mobilized within this particular material-semiotic apparatus of writing. As far as I can see, the development of aesthetics of multiplicity is a crucial task, something that if done in an open and public sense can destroy for instance the vile rigidification of boundaries and categories of citizen and non-human that characterize the misery of national and governmental politics.

SHIT DOMINION { sublimation : libido : anus on high }

++ **GILLES DELEUZE AND FELIX GUATTARI >**

ONLY THE MIND IS CAPABLE OF SHITTING

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane. MINNEAPOLIS: UNIVERSITY OF MINNEAPOLIS PRESS, 1983. Translation of *L'Anti-Oedipe*. P. 143.

Analinity does not represent a lower requiring conversion to a higher. It is the anus itself that ascends on high, under the conditions (which we must analyze) of its removal from the field, conditions that do not presuppose sublimation, since on the contrary sublimation results from them. It is not the anal that presents itself for sublimation, it is sublimation in its entirety that is

anal; moreover, the simplest critique of sublimation is the fact that it does not by any means rescue us from the shit (only the mind is capable of shitting). Anality is all the greater once the anus is disinvested. The libido is indeed the essence of desire; but when the libido becomes abstract quantity, the elevated and disinvested anus produces the global persons and the specific egos that serve this same quantity as units of measure.

SHIT DOMINION { fecal : flux : interchangeability }

++ **FELIX GUATTARI** > *CAPITALISM IS SHIT*

Guattari, Felix. "Marxism and Freudianism." *Chaosophy: Soft Subversions*. Ed. Sylvère Lotringer. SEMIOTEXT(E) FOREIGN AGENTS SERIES. NEW YORK: SEMIOTEXT(E), 1996. PP. 188-189.

[W]hen I speak of shit, it is hardly a metaphor: capitalism reduces everything to a fecal state, to the state of undifferentiated and unencoded flux, out of which each person in his private, guilt-ridden way must pull out his part. Capitalism is the regime of generalized interchangeability: anything in the "right" proportions can equal anything else.

SHIT DOMINION { Situationists : triumphal capital : war machine : artists : action }

CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE > *THE FADED DAWN OF AN OBSOLETE REVOLUTION*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

Capitalism has won the day.

Collective > You stated that your grand objective is to critique and undermine authoritarian culture. What kind of real-world effects have you made in that direction?

CAE > That is a much harder question. If you get outside of lived experience, then you are in a very abstract place. You cannot look at it as

“what has this individual unit done?” You can only look at it in terms of “what has that individual unit done in terms of its relationship to others that are moving toward the same goal?” Compared with the Situationists, who were working towards anti-authoritarian aims in reasonably revolutionary times, CAE is in almost the exact opposite historical position. We are looking at this initiative at the point where radical action has almost been stamped out. In terms of the overall arrangement of various units and cells that have been working on this critique, I think we have contributed to its advancement. We have added another link to the chain.

Collective > Are you encouraging any sort of action?

CAE > If it functions to resist capital then yes!! Especially now, because it is the most desperate of times. When you look over history there are some times that are better than others. We are in a desperate time because what was such an important guiding principle for so long, the idea of revolution, is absolutely over. This is why Deleuze and Guattari became such pivotal figures, because they saw a way to stay productive in spite of this loss. Even though we cannot be revolutionaries, and we have to let that principle go, there is still this idea of molecularity, and with that idea there is still a great window of hope for radical changes to happen. This is a key principle, the reason why we can go on, even though there is no chance that we are going to somehow blow capitalism away. Capitalism has won the day. It is a war machine in the worst sense of the term, and as pernicious, horrible, and monstrous as it is, it functions, so it is not going to disappear anytime soon. So we have to keep a radical history open and dynamic, and we have to keep its languages and activities available, so that other kinds of political arrangements, other kinds of social arrangements, other kinds of

semiotic arrangements can continue, even though we can no longer really hope for the golden dawn that the revolution was supposedly going to bring to us.

**there is still this idea of
molecularity and with that
idea there is still
a great window of hope**

CORPORATE MACHINE

Source Code of JS.Seeker.B Original, [author unknown]

When executed, this Trojan horse modifies Internet Explorer for Windows so that the default search is forced to a porn or gambling website.

[HTTP://WWW.62NDS.CO.NZ/CGI-BIN/X/E4015.HTML](http://www.62nds.co.nz/cgi-bin/x/e4015.html)

[HTTP://WWW.SYMANTEC.COM/AVCENTER/VENC/DATA/JS.SEEKER.B.HTML](http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/js.seeker.b.html)

CORPORATE MACHINE { nature : will : production : contol }

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KARL MARX > GRUNDRISSE: FRAGMENT

ON MACHINES

Marx, Karl. *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy*. Translation of *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*. Trans. Martin Lichaus. PENGUIN, 1973. [HTTP://WWW.MARXISTS.ORG/ARCHIVE/MARX/WORKS/1857/GRUNDRISSE/INDEX.HTM](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/index.htm).

[UNCHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

Nature builds no machines, no locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules etc. These are products of human industry; natural material transformed into organs of the human will over nature, or of human participation in nature. They are organs of the human brain, created by the human hand; the power of knowledge, objectified. The development of fixed capital indicates to what degree general social knowledge has become a direct force of production, and to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of the general intellect and been transformed in accordance with it. To what degree the powers of social production have been produced, not only in the form of knowledge, but also as immediate organs of social practice, of the real life process.

MATT FULLER > SOFTWARE MACHINES LANGUAGE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. MAY, 2000. CALARTS.

[I]t's not simply a conspiracy.

Collective > In your installation, "A Song for Occupations," which maps the entire structure of Microsoft Word, you present the idea that software molds us and how we work on the computer, specifically how we work with Microsoft Word. Is it your thesis that Microsoft participates in a conspiracy to guide the way people work, or is your argument more of a concern with the cognitive adaptability of human beings to software?

Fuller > There are a couple of things you have picked up on—one of them is cognitive science interpretations of human behavior, the other thing is how software companies use these adopted models to produce software that "works." They also use models that determine what work is important, what people need software for, etc. Our position on this is reflected in the slogan we use on the web: "technical innovation equals class war."

We (I/O/D) believe that every form of technical innovation affects social composition. One of the more interesting positions on this is theorized by Marx in his "Grundrisse," where he discusses living versus dead labor. There is a "Fragment on Machines" where he talks about how labor in the form of machines has become an object embodying the intelligence and the work that went into making it. A loom, for instance, has a certain amount of intelligence built into it. The labor, which constitutes the workers' mental labor, has become an object. So this is productive, while also objectifying people's thought processes. Once a loom has

been built, it not only allows people to weave, but its mere existence also intensifies certain types of production and social organization. At the same time as the cotton mills were productive, they trashed an entire social stratum in England when they were introduced, generating effects in the construction of Empire and the colonial cotton trade. So contemporarily you see what's happening with something like Microsoft Word. Word has solidified, in a sense, what word processing "is." It has become our model of interacting with all kinds of text from love letters to literary texts to résumés. Say if you look at a "CV Wizard" or "Résumé Assistant"—they decide how you should display yourself to companies you want jobs from. If you look at the templates, you get options spanning from an "elegant" CV to a "contemporary" one. These CV or résumé builders lock certain types of language into place. If you look at the grammar checker, it constantly tells you that your grammar is incorrect because you have what they call "passive sentences," sentences which are not straight sequences of well-formed conjugations of grammatical objects. You get caught up in it, and this is negative because people begin to write like computer manuals in order not to be judged as "passive."

There is another sense in which Microsoft Word is practical and productive for people who do not speak English as a first language. If you watch people who only understand English at a very basic level while they write at a word processor, they'll sit there and type word by word, using the thesaurus to construct what they want to say. They choose words from all the options they have until eventually they build up a sentence. Then they move on to the next one. The software provides building blocks for English as a dominant global media that can be accessed by those not so familiar

with it. It does this by making the language conform to a standardized norm. Such standardization is a site of conflict just as much as anything else, so it's not simply a conspiracy.

CORPORATE MACHINE { Gramsci : Marxism : virtual intellectual }

**GEERT LOVINK > REEDUCATE THE EDUCATED:
THE VIRTUAL INTELLECTUAL**

<NET.NET.NET> Interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience.
09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

[I]f we try to imagine it, then maybe it will come into being.

Diamond > Let's begin by talking about the idea of a kind of philosophical or ethical base for tactical media practice and the role of the intellectual in the current era. You talk about a crisis of the Peterkin avant-garde, and argue for a pragmatic approach, one that has an underlying ethics. If anarchism is not necessarily an organizing alternative, how do you argue for a pragmatic approach that sustains a kind of drive towards both organization and intervention?

Lovink > I think Antonio Gramsci has given us a model for the role of the organic intellectual. One who is in constant battle with the people who shape the culture. One who interferes with the functions of the membrane between the people on the one hand and the party and the state on the other. This model has been very dominant up until, I would say, 1989. As of the eighties, along with the crisis of Marxism, a crisis has developed regarding the role of the intellectual, who is no longer a guiding element. Partially, this has to do with a crisis of the text, as such, sort of "text" in a Biblical sense. A long time ago, we experienced a shift from being a textual culture to a visual one, and so the text is no longer leading culture. But

there has not yet been the development of a visual intellectual. Maybe this could be some kind of figure in the making. However, for the time being, film critics, television critics, and now with the rise of the Internet, intellectuals have become very much behind the times. So if you wanted to remodel the intellectual, my proposal would be to give the education in schools a very firm technical background and to reeducate the educated. Let the people understand that text, as such, these days should also be seen as a part of the technology and not so much as some metaphysical undertaking. What this means is that intellectuals should be equipped with knowledge on visual culture and not only textual culture. Furthermore, they should shape the “technological culture.” I’m very much in favor of this term. We should shape, embody, and critique technological culture. Then the virtual intellectual, on which I have written, becomes a more specific figure—one that we can think about in terms of theory design. This is not something which exists, but maybe if we talk about it and if we try to imagine it, then maybe it will come into being.

CORPORATE MACHINE { Kafka : Esperanto : standards : ASCII : Unicode }

**MATT FULLER > UNIVERSAL AND MINOR:
CORPORATE UTOPIAN TECHNICALITY**

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. MAY, 2000. CALARTS.

I think Kafka would have blown it away. It's pretty obvious!

Collective > Do you think the idea of a universal language like Esperanto was a utopian failure or simply a bad idea?

Fuller > People still use Esperanto. There are still small pockets of people that use it to communicate. Things can even fail but still exist. Or

exist on a massive scale and be absolute failures. It's like 8-track cassettes, only in a linguistic version. There's also a difference between writing in a minority language and writing in a "minoritarian" sense. This is a term introduced by Deleuze and Guattari in writings about Kafka where they discuss writing in the language of the majority, but using it towards other ends. Writing in your mother tongue as if it were a foreign language, making it leap out of its skin. So they describe Kafka's writing in German and how he uses German words against the dominant linguistic codes of his time and the particular geographic, Imperial, and cultural traps he was writing out of. Deleuze and Guattari talk about his doubly-minor use of language as a Jew with an affinity to Yiddish, in Prague. How these sensibilities and codes along with various other impulses combine with German to provide another set of rules by which the Imperial language can be thrown into disarray.

Collective > Do you think that Kafka would have been intimidated or thwarted by a word processor?

Fuller > I think Kafka would have blown it away. It's pretty obvious! He would have written against the grain of the word processor. Microsoft Word is still the word processor I use, mainly because it has the best import filters.

Collective > Is there at least some room for a form of standardization? Because if I wanted to send something to a colleague and I had some wild wacky thing I had written, at a primitive level there has to be some standardization so that we can communicate.

Fuller > That is interpreting at the level of understanding of different dialects, of how whole new languages are produced. Then there is this other politics of how technical standards evolve. For instance, look at the different procedures by which ASCII was decided on as

a standard. Look at how American uses of English became (until recently) the standard mode for information interchange. It was the default mode of the global culture. More recently you get things like Unicode, which can handle a much wider variety of characters. This is also due to the changes in hardware as we've moved from 8-bit to 32-bit technology: you can now have Korean next to English in the same software as Arabic and so on because the characters can all be represented. This realization only occurred because of the demands that these language communities made on the software. For instance, we spoke with the guy who wrote the software I just mentioned. There were extreme problems with the standards agencies. The agencies decided what was and what was not permissible to say in the easiest format that would allow it to be said. It's hard to get a system where all characters from all languages can be written in the same software, which has only become possible recently. But at the same time, it was achieved when there were a bunch of competing standards. Before Unicode won out, there were a bunch of competing standards, and this had very much to do with the strengths of different corporations. It is not a final victory that Unicode is the standard now. It is both a result of sciences, linguistics, and different language populations making demands, and the hardware developed in order to appease these demands. Different coalitions of academic institutions and corporations are trying to get control in order to get cash, and it's not as if there will ever be a final resolution to all this. This cycle has always gone on. Rather we should try to develop the belief that people who are locked out can actively turn the cycle around and use it towards their advantage, to look at how we're already doing it and to make the most of it.

Collective > What is the difference between taking advantage of this new technology and taking advantage of corporations giving money for this new technology?

Fuller > Because it's so massively loaded. Tim Berners-Lee was employed by CERN to implement the original HTML variant of SGML that he proposed, and if you look at the way he talks about the web and HTML, it is massively utopian. He actually wants everyone to be able to talk to everyone, to make everything that is an informational commodity freely available at the cheapest available price to everyone on the web. That belief still exists as one kind of operation on the web. Others have been added. When artists map out HTML as a space, at least they map out how HTML is made up with some kind of "bohemianism," a kind of generalized form of how HTML and the web possibly ally themselves to certain implicitly "networked" ways of doing things. This does not map out the entirety of either of those spaces, but how they intermesh. The next thing that occurs is how the web is subverted in different social and political contexts within the web. We get a massive array of projects ranging from pre-web stuff to hacker stuff (particularly more social hacker projects taking place in Germany, Holland and Italy, etc.) which predate net.art and that concentrate on how computers and a sense of inventive technicity can make alliances with political and social dynamics.

Collective > Some corporations have become sophisticated with the styles of youth cultures and have developed a language of advertising that doesn't look like advertising, not operating as a top-down sales voice but hovering among other voices, whispering. Do you see any cause for optimism in the clouding of the corporate voice, or does it seem instead that corporate control is simply more dispersed?

Yes, it is how control can be dispersed, if we use control in Burroughs's sense. Instead of a link to another link to another connection, it will only be a bottom line. It's the grammar of cash. In the end, it will just be a logo.

**It's the grammar of
cash. In the end,
it will just be
a logo.**

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FILTHY LUCRE { dot.com : net.hype : clean space : dirty hands }

NATALIE BOOKCHIN > *NEW ECONOMY COLLAPSING*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 30 SEPTEMBER, 2001. LOS ANGELES.

When you're on the net, there's no clean space. And of course there's no clean space within the white cube as well...

Collective > Net.art was really allowed to flourish because of that hectic new economy craze—what things were like right before the Fall. I didn't realize historically that we were right before the Fall, that net.art and the whole <net.net.net> conference were right before the collapse of everything.

Bookchin > I don't think that the new economy, that net.art, that artists started to use the net because of the new economy. In fact, it was a hindrance, because there was so much hype around the possibilities of making millions on the net. A lot of artists who didn't work with the net, especially in Los Angeles, it seemed to me stayed away from it because they thought they would get their hands dirty. Like you stay in the clean spaces of the art gallery and museum, a place that doesn't have to do with commerce—whatever!—as opposed to the net, which has all these other “dirty areas.” When you're on

the net, there's no clean space. And of course there's no clean space within the white cube as well, but there's still that myth that simply won't—

Collective > Stop.

Bookchin > —collapse. Those that remain, those of the artists that remain still committed to working within the space, remain after the collapse of the new economy. The question that I have now that I can't answer is why a number of people that were so involved with the Internet when we had the conference in 1999-2000, why have they stopped making work?

Collective > Do you think part of the reason for the disappearance of these artists has to do with a fear of whether or not the net is still relevant as an artistic medium now that it's not such a prevalent part of mass culture?

Bookchin > I don't know. My interest in the net has endured. Right now I'm really interested in games and distributing the game form over the net. I think that the net still allows me to access different contingents that I would not be able to access without it. I'm also most interested in not having my work located only in a particular sphere—I like being able to slip in and out of different spaces, and the Internet is still one of those spaces, even though the hype has gone away. I'm glad the hype is gone, although now we have the hype of the net, net.art, too.

FILTHY LUCRE { patrons : democracy : IPO : freedom }

++ **DAVID ROSS > QUALITIES OF NET.ART: GOLDRUSH**

Ross, David. "Art and the Age of the Digital." 1999. Transcription of lecture, CADRE institute, San Jose State University, March 2, 1999. [HTTP://SWITCH.SJSU.EDU/WEB/ROSS.HTML](http://switch.sjsu.edu/web/ross.html). JUNE 2002.

[CAPITALIZATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

Net.art is based on an economy of abundance. The net, even though it's not really free and we know that the idea that we've walked into a completely democratic world where all the social and economic barriers have been erased, we all know that's bullshit. However, it's such a large step in a direction of abundance that we actually can begin to talk about that....

The economy of abundance is a new economic model which will produce enormous profits for many. It already has. Look at every Internet stock IPO. That's based on a broad assumption by investors worldwide that this is where the money is—the new goldrush. I'm not negative about this. I pray for the success of my wealthy patrons. I want them to succeed so well that when it comes to supporting the arts and artists and a culture in which they're comfortable and not threatened, they will allow for a world to exist because it's in their interest to encourage a kind of freedom and diversity and openness.

FILTHY LUCRE { identity : brand : symbolism }

++ **BEN BENJAMIN > SUPERBAD AND BRANDING**

Robinson, Sara. "Interactive Interview with Ben Benjamin." *Histories of Internet Art: Fictions and Factions*. [HTTP://ART.COLORADO.EDU:16080/AIS_INTVS_BENJAMIN.HTM](http://art.colorado.edu:16080/AIS_INTVS_BENJAMIN.HTM). TRANSCRIBED FROM QUICKTIME MOVIE, MAY, 2002.

[Question 06]

HIAFF > Has the web's shift to commercialism affected your work?

Benjamin > It's changed a lot. The web, initially you were seeing a lot of personal pages, this is me, this is my cat or whatever. So I was kind of like playing with what is that about, what kind of identity are

people projecting that way, like how can you play with that. And then later, you know, obviously it became a lot, lot more commercial, so then it's companies projecting their identity so it's like: this is us, this is our brand, this is what we're trying to say. So then I started playing with that. If companies are doing that, how can a project like this [Superbad] use the same kind of messages, the same kind of symbolism to project what identity could be.

FILTHY LUCRE { art-work : professionalization : capitalism : art history }

IRATIONAL > YOU WAGE YOURSELF UP

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.
APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

Should I be paid a really good fee for the work that I do as an artist?

Collective > Let's talk more about being a professional artist. I think you're onto something in terms of the normal distinctions of what is art, what is work and what is leisure.

Baker > Yeah, companies themselves are remodeling so that they're more involved in counter-culture. There's a new sort of ethics, not quite like rapacious capitalism anymore—it's softer. The companies are wanting to absorb and employ types like us—you see them bringing elements of previous radical projects in the name of the brand. But even with these new models, the bottom line is still profit, as it always has been. And then the other side is that companies have tools and techniques that I'm interested in using for alternative purposes.

Bunting > We had a discussion the other day about being paid. Should I be paid a really good fee for the work that I do as an artist? You know, I'm not doing work on the street anymore. In certain circles, I'm an internationally known figure. So if I don't charge a lot of money,

how can people who are like three years behind me ask for a fee?

Collective > It's an interesting question of professionalization.

Bunting > Yeah. You wage yourself up to a degree where you may be bigger or you are becoming bigger. It's a viable strategy.

Baker > It raises the stakes.

Bunting > I'm not saying we should do that all the time, but I think it's one possible way of improving yourself and your community.

Collective > A lot of net.art is about networking and the community, but net.art is also about personality and the image of it. Sometimes it even seems like the image is on par with the substance, and there is also the danger that as the stakes get raised, the bottom falls out, which I think has partly happened with net.art. It's highly promoted, but some of the work didn't have the same substance as the promotion itself did. Can't it be a risk if there's only image without enough substantial or viable action?

Bunting > The net.art scene predicted the move—and it's true, I think—that established artists, commodity artists, career personality artists would successfully colonize net.art and water it down. And that would become the work that gets celebrated, historicized, and gets the big money.

FILTHY LUCRE { Europe : Spain : utopia }

FIAMBRERA > MONEY FOR ART

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with simultaneous translation by "Frank" of @TMark.

09 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

[T]heir governments have caused utopia to disappear with money.

Collective > In Europe there is substantial money for art, and these days, what you do is not so far from many people's [Europeans'?] normal conception of art. However, other artists with similar ideas as you

but more impotent forms of working can get money.

Fiambarrera > They can get money from the art world. This is the difference between Europe and Spain; there is a big difference! The difference is that the European artistic movements—political artists, that is—have been silenced with money and with paternalism and clientalism. For better or for worse, the Spanish government is fearful. It is more timid than Europe—and not at all paternalistic—an important difference.

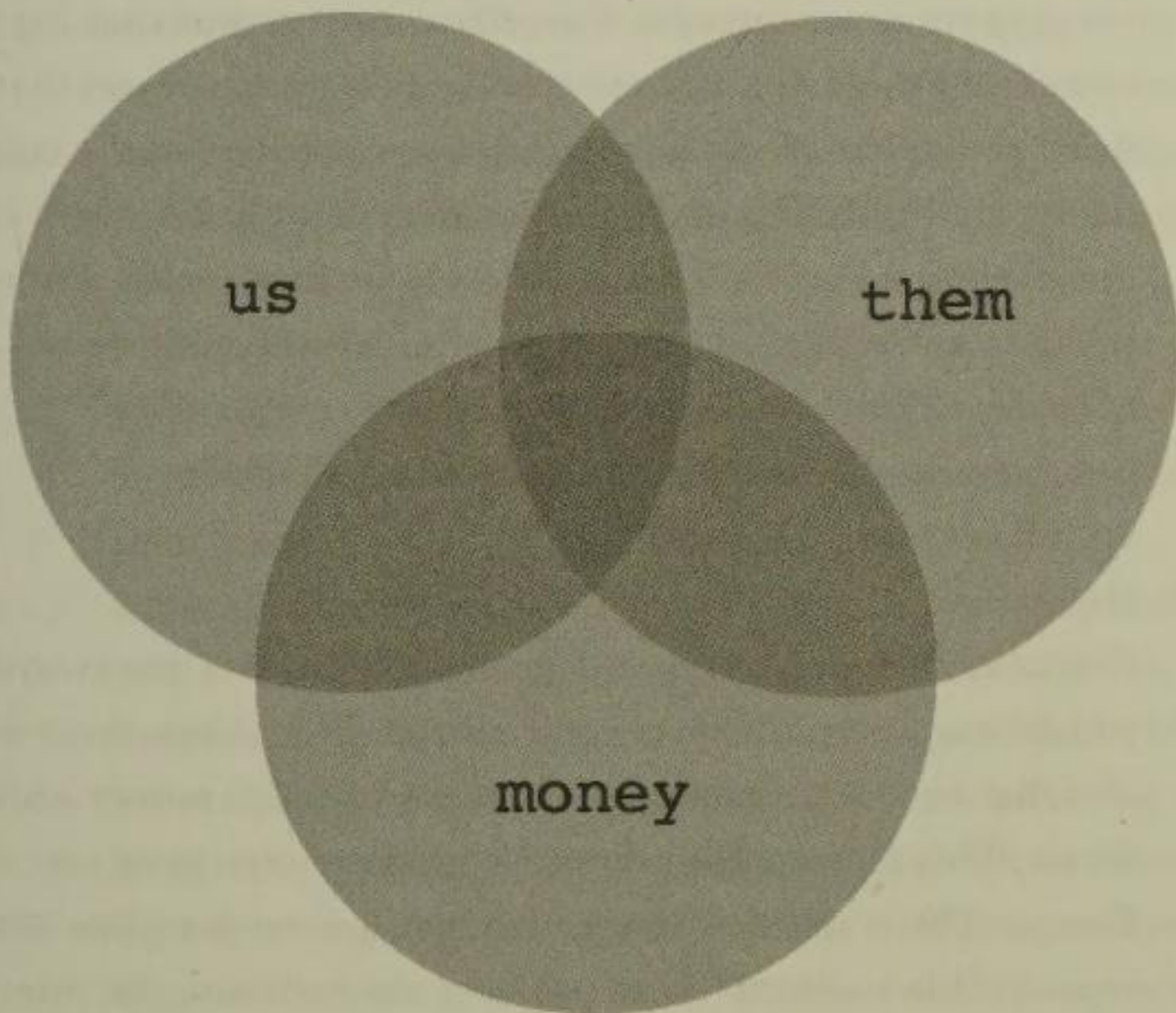
Collective > It's more like the United States in the sense that it's not very forward looking. But is there money in Spain for artists?

Fiambarrera > There is some, not much but some... from institutions and banks. But it is different from the United States because there, the government does support certain artists to give it a kind of culturally advanced face.

I believe that the problem is not the money. It is a problem, but not THE problem. Because we have friends in France and England, and they tell us that their governments have caused utopia to disappear with money. So people who were fighting for artistic ideas of autonomy and independence and didn't have money, now have money but don't fight any more for independence or for vital art. It's an illusion to think that the solution for an ideal art is money. Right now, it's a challenge for artists who need to have a place.

Collective > Another thing I was thinking of in terms of money for artists is that if what you were doing was considered art in Spain, then would you, like Natalie, get a job at the university and be able to work from within?

Fiambarrera > It could be. Then that would be the challenge; when there is money, to continue to fight from within the system.



Us Them Money
Venn diagram of a standard Cost-Benefit-Alienation ratio.

GEERT LOVINK > CULTURAL BUSINESS MODEL

<NET.NET.NET> Interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience.

09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

[T]hey want money to be made and I think it should be made by us.

Lovink > I'm interested in the new hybrid schools of incorporation or running your own business. There are many ways of running businesses and there are many ways of setting up structures that will make profit. Not all the businesses that we can see in the cultural sector are by definition corrupt or filled with traitors who abandoned the cause. This is a very old and outdated model. I'm really trying to encourage people to set up businesses and to make a lot of money. This is very important.

Audience > Geert, are your efforts funded by a business model?

Lovink > Yes, all of them.

Audience > How?

Lovink > First of all, it does have a problematic side, which is that everything you do must be run from a project basis. Everything, every single idea, has to be self-sustaining. There is no general money available for anything else, and this slows down the process, as we can see in Europe. This is also the reason why there is something like venture capital. Otherwise, all these projects, the software, the interface design, the content development, all these different aspects would have to find their own money. Even if there is no state support system or venture capital it is still doable; however, it slows down development of the whole thing.

Diamond > What kind of systems of ownership do you have? Do you have a group ownership structure?

Lovink > Yes we do, and there are many different models of this. Lately, we

have seen a few cases of sellout and people making a lot of money. However, a big part of that money is going into a foundation, which will finance political projects. The third biggest Internet service provider in Holland has sold out, but it continues to be the main backbone of our activities and also of B92. So there is this sellout and this situation where people are making millions, but there are also other models. The one I found very interesting is the not-for-profit company or the for-profit foundation. It's all very mixed.

Halleck > Another example of that would be Free Speech TV. Most of the funds for it come from a business that is run by the Instructional Telecommunications Foundation, which is a for-profit foundation founded by John Schwartz. I'd hate to think that all our struggles focus on the search for dollars to do our little art projects. We have to interface with those struggles around issues of government and state power.

Lovink > I don't really believe that this is possible. I think we should have a very strong infrastructure, a network of networks. Maybe our own independent network culture that serves to stand behind us—otherwise who are we? If we want to claim, reclaim, and redesign the public space in terms of media, then I think we should really be very strong negotiators. As far as the industries are concerned, they want money to be made and I think it should be made by us.

Audience > Who's "us?"

Lovink > Do you mean in Europe?

Audience > I'm not referring to specific geography. I want to know who's the "us" that should be making money as opposed to "them."

Lovink > I'm speaking particularly in reference to media culture. People who are into development of cultural content on multimedia platforms, the Internet, television, radio, or hybrids that exist between them.

®TMARK > *THAT'S WHY WE FUND SABOTAGE*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with "Raoul" and "Frank" of ®TMark.

09 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

We attempt to do the worst taboo with money, which is to give it away and not expect a financial return. The idea of money is part of our system because it's part of our critical thinking.

Collective > The specific cultural profit that ®TMark is interested in seems expressly anti-corporate. Is this why the anonymity is important? If ®TMark were interested in making a more traditional sort of profit, would there be no need for anonymity?

"Raoul" > The highest level of return that we could obtain as cultural profit is by furthering activism against corporate rights and making that activism known. Corporate structures are at the root of a lot of problems in America, and increasingly the world.

Collective > You keep using the word "corporations," but the problem with power seems more general. Historically, whoever is in power will make the rules because they want to sustain their power. By pointing a finger at the evil corporations and saying, "they're masters at this," aren't you localizing the problem with corporations when there are many facets of power?

"Raoul" > You're right, it is a real problem. There is a grander problem with power in human history, but currently the problem is with corporate power. Right now American corporations are the powerful entities, and that's the problem we face. I also think that there's an important theoretical distinction between corporate power and government power. A democratic government is theoretically elected by the people and determined by the people. Government power is the power of the people—that's the idea of democracies.

While corporate power is explicitly not the people, and in every way only responsible to profit.

Collective > People usually assume that money equals power. With political activists, the more money they have available, the more change they can potentially make. Has ®TMark ever considered becoming more of a profitable venture and trying to make a difference that way? Maybe funding their own political candidate and making changes within the system?

"Raoul" > Money is not equal to power. If we needed a lot of money to achieve the kind of cultural profit we're doing, we would focus on that more, but there are many things that have taken zero money in the pursuit of cultural profit.

"Frank" > We do use money, but not a lot of it. We use money. We use what money means in this culture as a symbolic entity, as a gesture. That's why we fund sabotage. We attempt to do the worst taboo with money, which is to give it away and not expect a financial return. The idea of money is part of our system because it's part of our critical thinking.

"Raoul" > We don't need money to do what we do—our job is publicity and propaganda. Five thousand dollars isn't going to change anyone's life, but the idea of it can. The fact that there's five thousand dollars going to somebody to do something politically active, or one thousand dollars, or even five hundred dollars—suddenly it makes it seem serious.

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VUK COSIC > INTERVIEW YOURSELF:

DEATH AND RETIREMENT

Cosic, Vuk. "Hot New Interview with Myself!" 2001. [HTTP://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IY/VUK.HTML](http://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IY/VUK.HTML).
JUNE 2002.

[SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.]

Cosic > ...I have seen friends go through hell just to make submission deadlines and their work consequently suffered. I have lived like that for a year or two, been to each and every festival you have heard of, but it is not a choice I would suggest to someone who is a friend. I am still working a bit, on semi-secret projects or on commissions and I am also living a nice life in spite of that.

Cosic > Now you are saying you are still working. What has happened about your retirement? You have not only previously declared the death of net.art but also your personal retirement from it. How does that work?

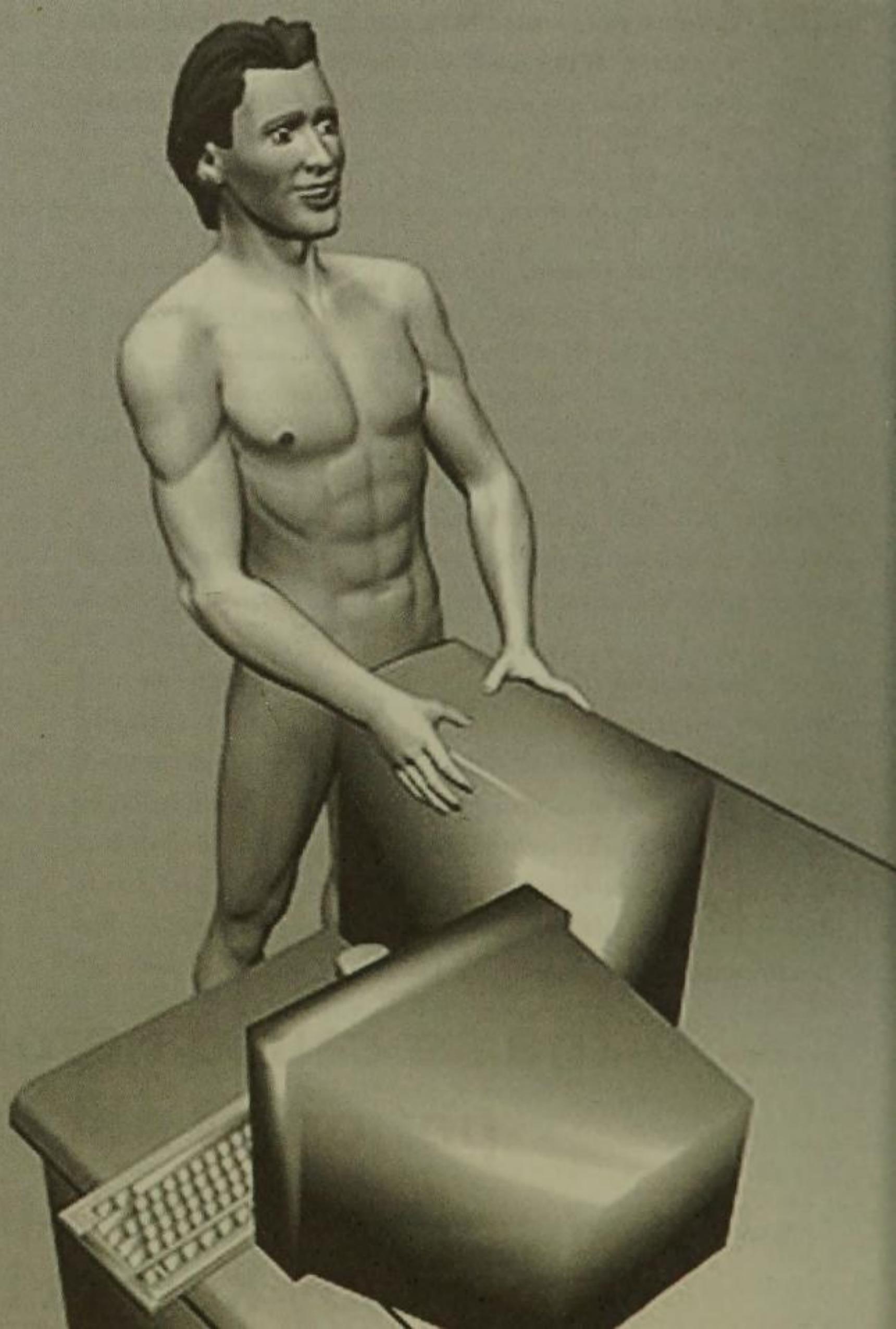
Cosic > I am sure that you are counting on some prepared answer to this. The truth is that I just don't call myself a net.artist and the retirement thing only had—and still has—the purpose to stress that the so called heroic period of net.art is over (and everybody knows it) and to help the idea of detaching myself from the art routine. Heath [Bunting] once said that his retirement is the same as a retired boxer. Every time he goes back in the ring it costs more. Since my so-called retirement I have been kindly commissioned a few times. It was actually good for business.

Cosic > Right. You just said that you work on commissions and secret projects. Why does that sound strange to me?

Cosic > Because you met me before and surely remember that I make a distinction between art and commissions. That's why. And I don't know if I am in a mood to explain that. Is that OK with you?

Cosic > If you insist.

**the so called heroic
period of net.art
is over (and
everybody knows it)**



FuckU-FuckMe GenitalDrive model F

[HTTP://WWW.ONZIN.NL/FUFME/FAQ-USE.HTML](http://www.onzin.nl/fufme/faq-use.html)

SOFT CONTROL { corporeality : theft : murder : sex : fashion }

JENNY MARKETOU > SIBLINGS, CLONES, AND

THIEVES: CHRIS.053 AND THE SCIENTIFIC FETISH

<NET.NET.NET.MX> Interview with Fran Ilich. DECEMBER, 1999. TIJUANA. Ilich, Fran. "Transfer de Smellbytes con Jenny Marketou." POSTED TO NETTIME JUNE 29, 2001.

[HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-LAT-0106/MSG00077.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-lat-0106/msg00077.html). JUNE 2002.

It could be that I decide to kill it, or perhaps someone else will....

[TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH ORIGINAL.]

Ilich > As a piece of software, is it possible for Chris.053 to have a sibling?

Marketou > Yes, because bots can be very successfully multiplied across a network. If we wanted to, we could create another Chris or an extension of Chris, creating different systems of behavior that can interact with the information in different ways with many different patterns. This is something that I've been thinking about, creating multiple personalities so they can all interact with each other. It would be interesting letting them all visualize each other's information. But right now it's still very interesting for me to work and play with the singular personality of Chris, an encounter which is at the same time cruel, fascinating and joyful.

Ilich > How you would react if somebody copied or stole Chris?

Marketou > That's part of the Internet and part of the methodology, so it

would not come as a surprise to me. However, to take control of the behavior of Chris, someone would have to adapt or hack the intelligence of Chris. But if this happens it would not surprise or disappoint me. It's something we expect when we work with the Internet. In fact, as a bot entity living on the Internet, it cannot live forever—entities such as Chris only live as long as they can find atmospheres that can maintain them. Chris will disappear one day. It could be that I decide to kill it, or perhaps someone else will, but Chris cannot live forever.

Ilich > Since your work deals with the relationships between physical and virtual space, do you see a relationship between the copying of a bot and the cloning of a human?

Marketou > At a certain point when we entered cyberspace, the Internet, we became discorporeal. Chris investigates the meaning of the discorporeal within the realm of communication and information technologies. The discorporeal is not about how we see ourselves, but about the database of information that we have become—the transubstantiation of our subjectivity. But it does not seem to me that you can compare bot copying and human cloning. Chris does not even turn a profile into another profile—what Chris does is to translate human subjectivity into information using biochemical information.

Chris takes control of what science and information technology are doing, and this subversive act gives us a critical discourse on science, information technology, discorporeality, subjectivity, the biological body and the sexual body. She is among a group of artists whose work uses resistance as an aesthetic policy.

In spite of the huge battles to dominate information, I also believe that another characteristic of information is that it cannot be

controlled. You can see this in the in-line projections in SmellBytes™—all the profiles are totally random discorporeal information.

Ilich > With this in mind, what do you think of the scent concepts of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Urban Ethology?

Marketou > I believe that all scientific institutions always want to classify somehow—science relies on classification. The Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Urban Ethology deals specifically with classification, <http://evolution.anthro.univie.ac.at/institutes/urbanethology.html> putting people into categories, which seems to me absurd. I don't really think that it's another form of racism, with which I am totally in discord. It seems to me that one would have to use the word fashion. But still, how can somebody be in agreement with this? Nevertheless, this is something that is becoming more and more popular, and I discovered that many research centers are working with this kind of approach. And during my investigations, I discovered something quite surprising: I came across a surprising study they did at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute where they assert that if you are symmetrical, then you are beautiful, and have beautiful body odors. Of course these types of methods of Darwinian classification date back to the nineteenth century, but they remain quite popular in many investigation centers around the world. So Chris.053 is appropriate in terms of what the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Urban Ethology is doing. SmellBytes™ attracts attention to all this, and somehow simultaneously makes fun of it. S/he is critical, but in a very playful way, without getting didactic.

SOFT CONTROL { a-life : parent : child : sheep : 1994 }

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KEVIN KELLY > PERHAPS WE WILL SHEPHERD

ARTIFICIAL LIVES

Kelly, Kevin. *Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems, and the Economic World.*

READING: ADDISON-WESLEY PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1994. P. 329.

[C]ontrol is a spectrum. At one end there is the total domination of “as one” control. At the other end is “out of control.” In between are varieties of control we don’t have words for.

Until recently, all our artifacts, all our own handmade creations have been under our authority. But as we cultivate synthetic life in our artifacts, we cultivate the loss of our command. “Out of control,” to be honest, is a great exaggeration of the state that our enlivened machines will take. They will remain indirectly under our influence and guidance but free of our dominion.

Though I have searched everywhere, I could not find the word that describes this type of clout. We simply have no name for the loose relationship between an influential creator and a creation with a mind of its own—a thing we shall see more of. The realm of parent and child should have such a word, but sadly doesn’t. We do better with sheep where we have the notion of “shepherding.” When we herd a flock of sheep, we know we are not in complete authority, yet neither are we without control. Perhaps we will shepherd artificial lives.

SOFT CONTROL { system : control : re-education }

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KOMFORTKLIMATE™ > ENVIRONMENTAL STASIS

SUITES, QUICK START GUIDE

Temple Ov Hombres. “Welcome to KomfortKlimat™!” [HTTP://WWW.BLEB.NET/TEMPLE/KOMFORT.HTML](http://www.bleb.net/temple/komfort.html). JUNE 2002.

WELCOME TO KOMFORTKLIMATE™!

Your KomfortKlimat™ Suite is not an “air conditioner,” no

indeed. Archaic climate manipulation technology used interfaces like dials, buttons, or even the physical presence of dangerous mercury-containing thermometers. All this unnecessary physicality can expose you and your corporate entity to costly liability issues! KomfortKlimate™ has provided you with a fully engaged multi-point climatory interface, designed to meet and exceed the ever-shifting environmental needs of your infrastructure, information technology resources, and humans.

The secret of the KomfortKlimate™ system is a deeply integrated neural network. It does the thinking for you, giving you and your technology a chance to “take a breather”™ in the always fresh and calorically ideal atmospheric output of your KomfortKlimate™ Suite. Climate upgrade options are always available, so sit back and enjoy—KomfortKlimate™!

MISCELLANEOUS COMPATIBILITY ISSUES

- In some situations, your KomfortKlimate™ Suite may become incompatible with other network devices. In the event of unjustified KomfortKlimate™ immunological response to your data, please backup and re-initialize hard drives and removable cartridges to bring them into a modern format.
- Some users report sporadic data corruption during shutdown due to incomplete flushing of the cache; some older devices do not support the SynCache option. Humans who have difficulty with this option should avoid the KomfortKlimate™ Environmental Stasis Network operational envelope when conditions may be changeable (i.e. opening and shutting of doors).
- KomfortKlimate™ could corrupt resources with the same type and ID as an existing resource. When the KomfortKlimate™ By-Your-Command™ Voice Control Module is deployed, you should give

all employees names and IDs which are distinct both textually and phonetically.

- If you are using KomfortKlimate™ PowerStasis Office Plus Suite without the ObjectSupportLib file installed, drag-and-drop is not supported. You should move physical contents within the KomfortKlimate™ operational perimeter as little as possible.
- Some third-party drivers erroneously reduce the amount of System heap space available for drivers and extensions. If you are using third-party climate drivers in your site, it is strongly recommended that you do not make use of the KomfortKlimate Crisis Tool™ unless the situation is truly dire.

PHILOSOPHICAL COMPATIBILITY ISSUES

A very important factor in the smooth operation of your KomfortKlimate™ Suite is the adherence of sentient operators within the KomfortKlimate™ perimeter to the dictates of a Corporate Evolutionary Model (CEM). Ideally, this adherence will arise from a deep acceptance of the necessarily subservient status of the human organism to the dictates of highly evolved corporate-collective organisms, but even a simple behaviorist training programme will help maintain the efficiency of your KomfortKlimate™ investment. No matter which Suite option you have chosen to buy or lease, KomfortKlimate™ currently offers a support package with a variety of training options for your human assets, ranging from intensive video workshops to full-day Corporate Evolution seminars. Contact the KomfortKlimate™ Ideological Training Division before the difficult issues arise and threaten your profit outcomes.

Please refer to System Update Overview and Installation documentation for additional information.



This user has performed an illegal operation and will be shut down.

Close

If the problem persists, contact the user vendor.

Debug

Details>>

Illegal Operation, KomfortKlimate
Environmental Stasis Kernal experiencing a user exception
HTTP://WWW.BLEB.NET/TEMPLE/KOMFORT.HTML

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**WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS WITH
ALLEN GINSBURG AND GREGORY CORSO >**
THE DANGERS OF MACHINE CONTROL

Burroughs, William, Gregory Corso, and Allen Ginsburg. "Interview." 1961. [HTTP://WWW.HYPER-REAL.ORG/WSB/INTERVIEW1961.HTML](http://www.hyper-real.org/wsb/interview1961.html). JUNE 2002.

[THIS INTERVIEW ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN *Journal for the Protection of All People* IN 1961, AND WAS TRANSCRIBED BY *Flesh* IN 1992. THE EDITORS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO LOCATE A PHYSICAL COPY OF THIS PUBLICATION. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK. PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL TEXT.]

Ginsburg > What about control?

Burroughs > Now all politicians assume a necessity of control, the more efficient the control the better. All political organizations tend to function like a machine, to eliminate the unpredictable factor of AFFECT—emotion. Any machine tends to absorb, eliminate, Affect. Yet the only person who can make a machine move is someone who has a motive, who has Affect. If all individuals were conditioned to machine efficiency in the performance of their duties they [sic] would have to be at least one person outside the machine to give the necessary orders; if the machine absorbed or eliminated all those outside the machine the machine will slow down and stop forever. Any unchecked impulse does, within the human body and psyche, lead to the destruction of the organism.

Ginsburg > What kind of organization could technological society have without control?

Burroughs > The whole point is I feel the machine should be eliminated. Now that it has served its purpose of alerting us to the dangers of machine control. Elimination of all natural sciences—If anybody ought to go to the extermination chambers definitely scientists. Yes I'm definitely anti-scientist, because I feel that science represents a conspiracy to impose, as the real and only universe, the

Universe of scientists themselves—they're reality-addicts, they've got to have things so real so they can get their hands on it. We have a great elaborate machine which I feel has to be completely dismantled—in order to do that we need people who understand how the machine works—the mass media—paralleled opportunity.

SOFT CONTROL { prank : non-lethal : wireless : Wackenhut }

BIZHAQ FIELD DATA > SUBJECTS 000.0412-A AND B

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Temple ov Hombres. BizHaq. [HTTP://BLEB.NET/TEMPLE/BIZHAQ/FD000.0412.HTML](http://bleb.net/temple/bizhaq/fd000.0412.html)

SITE:

STARBUCKS #5308

Subject 000.412-a

PHYSICAL:

NAVY SLACKS, BROWN BELT, PALE CREAM POLO,

TASSELED BROWN SHOES

TECH:

CELL PHONE (NOKIA), GARAGE REMOTE ON KEY CHAIN

MANNERISMS:

SPINNING CELL PHONE ON ROTATING TRICK BELT HOLSTER

Subject 000.412-b

PHYSICAL:

OLIVE SLACKS, WHITE SHIRT, BLUE TIE WITH GREEN DIAMONDS

TECH:

CELL PHONE (NOKIA), LASER POINTER, SUNGLASSES ON LANYARD

MANNERISMS:

SPINNING SUNGLASSES ON LANYARD

METHODOLOGY:

PARABOLIC MIC. FROM APPROX. 200 FT.

A > **AT THE TRADE SHOW THEY WERE GIVING OUT THESE RUBBER BALLS, YOU KNOW? AND WHEN YOU BOUNCE THEM OR THROW THEM, THIS LITTLE SPRING SWITCH INSIDE THE BALL GETS TRIGGERED AND A RED LIGHT FLASHES AND IT JAMS ALL RADIO FREQUENCIES FOR TWENTY SECONDS IN LIKE A TEN-FOOT RADIUS. PRETTY COOL TOY. SEE?**

B > **HEY, BETTER THAN A T-SHIRT.**

A > **THAT'S FOR SURE. SO THE CELL PHONE RECEPTION ON THE FLOOR WAS FOR SHIT WITH ALL THE MONITORS AND BANDWIDTH AND WHATNOT, AND— HA HA!—AND SO EVERYBODY WAS OUT ON THIS ONE BALCONY MAKING THEIR CALLS, RIGHT? AND EVERY COUPLE MINUTES SOME JOKER WOULD TOSS ONE OF THESE BALLS ONTO THE BALCONY AND IT WAS JUST CHAOS! PEOPLE SCREAMING AT THE SKY, CELL PHONES GETTING TOSSED OFF THE BALCONY— CHECK IT OUT, I GRABBED THIS ONE.**

B > **OOH, SWEET.**

A > **YEAH, ALL CHARGED UP ALREADY TOO. AND SO THIS GOES ON FOR A WHILE,**

RIGHT? BOING-DOWN COMES ONE OF THOSE BALLS, AND EVERYBODY FREAKS. AND ABOUT THE FOURTH OR FIFTH TIME THIS HAPPENS, THINGS STARTED GETTING NASTY. STUN GUNS WERE COMING OUT, PEOPLE SPRAYING THEMSELVES WITH MACE, ONE GUY TRYING TO BREAK A WINDOW BY BEATING ON IT WITH HIS SHOE. IT WAS WILD, MAN, JUST WILD! THANK GOD FOR CROWD CONTROL. THAT SLEEP FOG IS JUST KILLER STUFF, REALLY.

B > IS THAT SLEEP FOG A WACKENHUT THING?

A > NAH, I THINK IT'S A CONTRACTOR OUT OF PERU OR ECUADOR OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

B > ALL RIGHT, GOOD DEAL. SEE YOU SUNDAY.

++ **WACKENHUT > REMOVE ALL BURDENS**

Wackenhut. "Physical Security : Property Resource Officer."

[HTTP://WWW.WACKENHUT.COM/SERVICES/NAMERICA/PHYSICAL-PROP.HTM](http://www.wackenhut.com/services/namerica/physical-prop.htm). JUNE 2002.

[UNCHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

PHYSICAL SECURITY: PROPERTY RESOURCE OFFICER

Times have changed and so has the need for professional security services to support commercial office buildings. Trained security personnel, tenant customer service, effective access control, alarm monitoring and response, and proper on-site supervision are vital to a successful security program.

THE PROPERTY RESOURCE OFFICER

Our goal is to provide a security program that will enhance the present security, elevate the security awareness of your tenants, visitors, and vendors; and, ultimately remove all burdens associated with security from your management efforts so that you may focus on your core responsibilities.

SOFT CONTROL { corporate trough : Esperanto : Jodi : Tinky Winky }

++ **WIRED > WEBBYS 1999: THIS IS FOR TINKY WINKY!**

Slaton, Joyce. "Digital Darlings Bask at Webbys." *Wired News* MARCH 19, 1999.

[HTTP://WWW.WIRED.COM/NEWS/PRINT/0,1294,18591,00.HTML](http://www.wired.com/news/print/0,1294,18591,00.html).

Inside the VIP party, nominees mingled with press and sponsors, bumping elbows in the long bar lines, schmoozing around the hors d'oeuvre trays. Guests wore tiaras, fur, feathers, glitter, Astroturf, and PVC rather than business suits. But aside from the freak fashions the party looked much like any other corporate cocktail trough.

[...]

But the raucous partying and drinking on the Webbys tab was cut

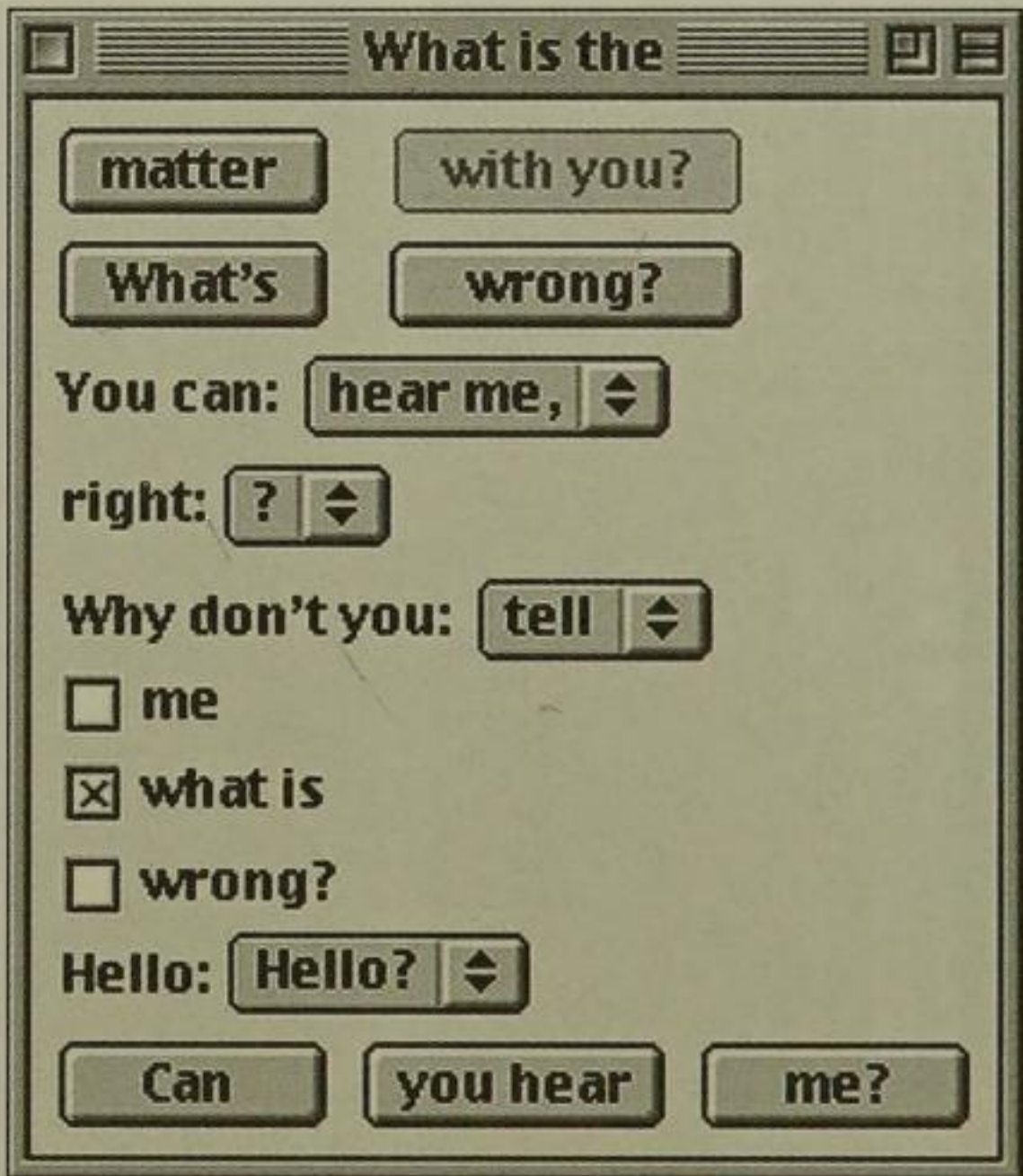
short just after 8pm, when attendees were ushered into the presentation. Tiffany Shlain kicked off the show with a few words about the growth of the Web.

“In the '60s they thought we'd be speaking Esperanto by now, but instead HTML is the international language,” Shlain said, handing over hosting duties to emcee Marc Maron, who warmed up the crowd with stern warnings to winners wishing to exceed the Webby's strict five-words-only policy for acceptance speeches.

“Say something like ‘Where do I start?’ and you've ended,” Maron said. “Anyone who disobeys will be severely punished by Marina [Berlin, mistress of awards].”

Winners were careful with their five-word allotment. The biggest laugh of the night followed the speech of Jodi.org, winners in the Arts category, who snarled “Ugly corporate sons-of-bitches!” at the crowd. “Jodi.org is now being escorted from the building,” Maron intoned. Less gasp-inspiring but equally funny were the speeches from PBS Online's Cindy Johanson, who wowed the crowd with a heartfelt “This is for Tinky Winky!”

**Ugly
corporate
sons-of-bitches!**



SECTION E /

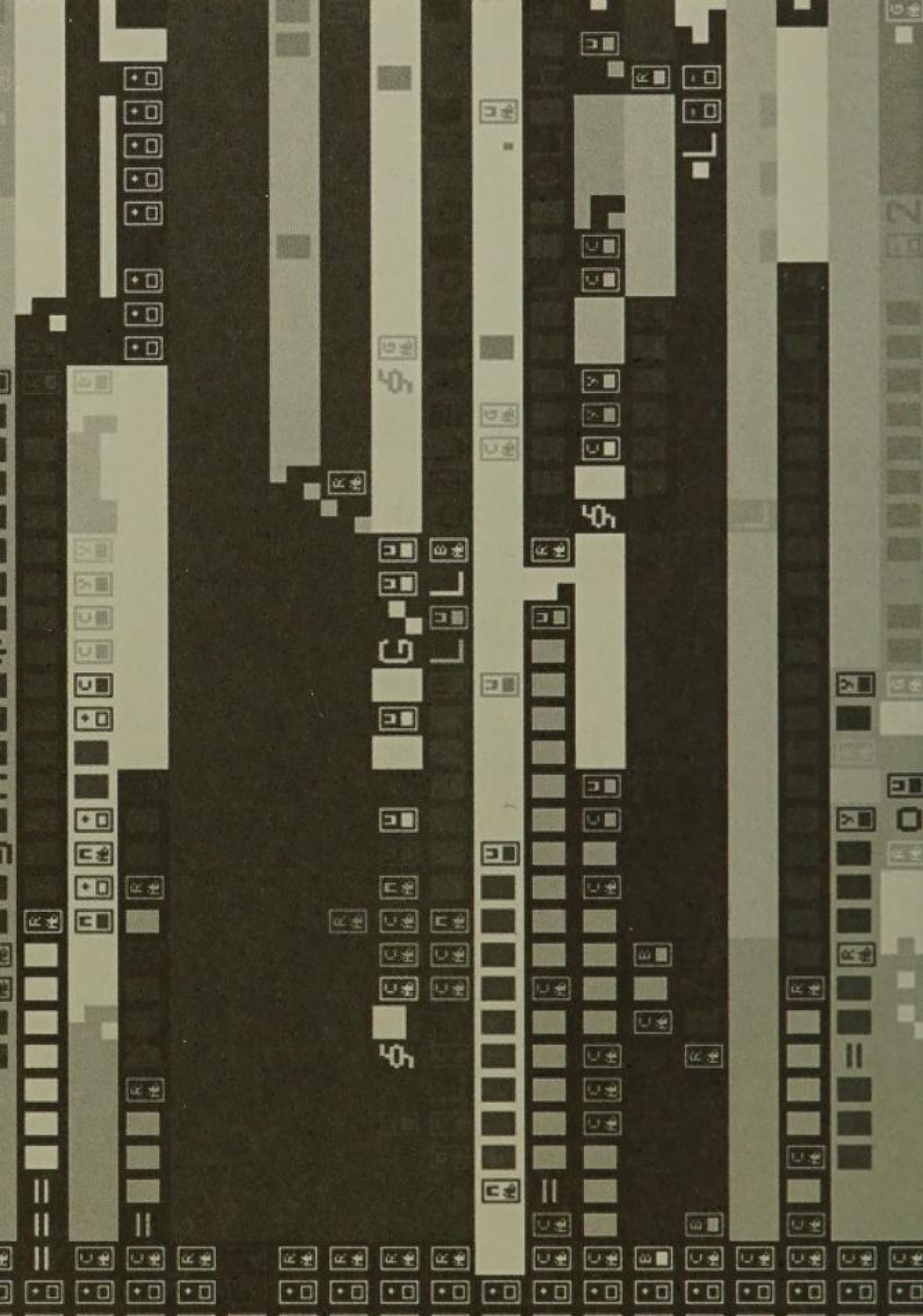
NET.ART | MACHINE.LANGUAGE |

ART.SYSTEM | AFTER.NET

TXT419, Jodi.org

Dialogue, Superbad.com

[HTTP://WWW.SUPERBAD.COM/1/META4/DESKTOP.HTML](http://www.superbad.com/1/META4/DESKTOP.HTML)



TXT432, Jodi.org

NET.ART { propaganda : mythology : success }

++ **NATALIE BOOKCHIN + ALEXEI SHULGIN** >

*INTRODUCTION TO NET.ART SECTION 4: CRITICAL
TIPS AND TRICKS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL MODERN
NET.ARTIST*

Bookchin, Natalie, and Alexei Shulgin. "Introduction to Net.Art." 1999.

[HTTP://WWW.EASYLIFE.ORG/NETART/](http://www.easylife.org/netart/). JUNE 2002.

[UNCHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

4A PROMOTIONAL TECHNIQUES

4A-1 Attend and participate in major media art festivals,
conferences and exhibitions.

4A-1.A Physical

4A-1.B Virtual

4A-2 Do not under any circumstances admit to paying entry
fees, travel expenses or hotel accommodations.

4A-3 Avoid traditional forms of publicity. e.g. business cards.

4A-4 Do not readily admit to any institutional affiliation.

4A-5 Create and control your own mythology.

4A-6 Contradict yourself periodically in email, articles, inter-
views and in informal off-the-record conversation.

4A-7 Be sincere.

- 4A-8 Shock.
- 4A-9 Subvert (self and others).
- 4A-10 Maintain consistency in image and work.
- 4B SUCCESS INDICATORS: UPGRADE 2
- 4B-1 Bandwidth
- 4B-2 Girl or boy friends
- 4B-3 Hits on search engines
- 4B-4 Hits on your sites
- 4B-5 Links to your site
- 4B-6 Invitations
- 4B-7 E-mail
- 4B-8 Airplane tickets
- 4B-9 Money

NET.ART { ASCII : HTML : critique : Mongrel : I/O/D : The Group }

MATT FULLER > BUTTON ART: NEW LANGUAGES

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. MAY, 2000. CALARTS.

It is not sufficient to say that it was self-referential because there was nothing to refer it to.

Collective > From the perspective of the time that the early net.art was being made, maybe it seemed like it was critiquing something, but it was implicit in its very critique.

Fuller > What was the object, the intention, of the critique?

Collective > The object was to comment on the new net.

Fuller > A lot of it was also taking advantage of this new technology to make something that hadn't existed before.

Collective > With many of the earlier net.artists, we brought up criticism regarding ASCII art and that they were making self-referential

button art, browser and form art. How do you use technology for making art that is on the net and that is not so self-referential? How do you generate meaning which provokes movement or a dialogue that moves beyond just talking about what you are looking at? It seems that you and Mongrel synthesize this in-between space where you still rely on self-referentiality but you start to critique critiquing in the process.

Fuller >

I would, out of politeness, situate myself outside of what is generally called net.art. The name "net.art" has a very tight internalistic reference. I was aware of that work as it was being done, but I wasn't a part of it, and neither were Mongrel or I/O/D. But these were actions that were beginning to invent a language. As HTML was being written it had a lot of formal possibilities. A lot of our work was trying the technology out and seeing what it would do. It is not sufficient to say that it was self-referential because there was nothing to refer it to. In retrospect, a lot of it does seem that way because we've become used to the things that this early work attempted to explore, the symbolic conventions it investigates. I think that only now have the people who have continued to stay within that terrain begun to look self-referential.

NET.ART { Shulgin : Baker : Bosma : network : video art : installation : Dada : chess }

ROBERT ADRIAN > RECOMBINANT FORMS

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Adrian, Robert. "Net.Art on Nettime." POSTED TO NETTIME MAY 11, 1997. [HTTP://WWW.LJUDMILA.ORG/NETTIME/ZKP4/37.HTM](http://www.ljudmila.org/nettime/zkp4/37.htm). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION HAVE BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

Date: Sun, 11 May 1997
From: Robert Adrian <rax@pop.thing.at>

In looking for reference points to somehow locate "Net.Art" (as a phenomenon of the www) within the recent history of art, various

contributors to the discussion have proposed most of the movements and media of the 20th century. David Garcia started the list with video art, while Carey Young found “strong links” to sculpture, telematic art, land art and especially to installation. John Hopkins mentions mail art, Walter van der Crujisen added experimental film, performance, conceptual art, electronic art and media art. Pauline Bosma suggests radio and hints at Fluxus while Alexei Shulgin and Rachel Baker’s references to online readymades and “found elements” point to a Dada connection. I can add minimal art, computer graphics and Zerography to the list without even stopping to think.

The interesting thing about this list is that, as viable separate art forms, most of these “movements” and/or media are as defunct as real video art but we find them still alive in the way artists are recovering and recombining them as part of the strategy for working in the networks—which suggests that either 1) the separateness (the “ism”-ness) was an art-historical illusion or 2) the new networks, created by the conjunction of recording and communication technologies, form a kind of funnel through which the disparate forms of industrial culture are being squeezed and merged. It is a kind of collaging, not a collaging of images and sounds only but of cultural material, of memories, histories and media.

Jeremy Welsh wrote: “The kinds of things that are being done with resampled/recombined data on the web are only a further extension of a process that begins (provisionally) with the cubists and gets to be the dominant aesthetic as a result of Scratch Video [...] and its subsequent incorporation in MTV, advertising and mainstream cinema. Now that everything we look at is more or less collage it would be ludicrous to contend that collage is in or of

itself a radical strategy. It's a tool that anyone can use, and precisely this ubiquity makes it viable and interesting."

Or a game that anyone can play—as Alexei Shulgin says in an "interview" with Rachel Baker: "Internet in itself is a hobby, is a game, everybody can play Internet. It's like chess. [...] The competitive side of it has no importance, but the thing itself is very, very strategic, and that is probably what attracted me to the Internet game."

NET.ART { retro : Benjamin : aura : network : value : blur : 1980s-1990s-2000s }

MARK AMERIKA > *RETRO IN THE ZEROES: WORKS OF NET ART MAINTAIN THEIR AURA*

Amerika, Mark. "On Being Retro in the Zeros." [HTTP://PLAZA.BUNKA.GO.JP/BUNKA/MUSEUM/KIKAKU/EXHIBITION10/ENGLISH/IE/ZERO/INDEX.HTML](http://plaza.bunka.go.jp/bunka/museum/kikaku/exhibition10/english/ie/zero/index.html). JUNE 2002.

[APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

In our accelerated blur culture, the Eighties were retro in the Nineties. So the mid-Nineties can be retro in early Zeroes, no? It's a fine feeling to be retro in the Zeroes, to be a real, commodified "thing-in-itself" even as "the work itself" still, somehow, seems unreal. You still cannot touch it. You still cannot sequester it. You still cannot stop it from generating the audience it will inevitably generate.

You can associate yourself with it. You can network with it. You can link to it. You can even purchase it and say that it's part of your collection as long as it remains accessible to the distributed net community that gives it its ultimate value.

For that matter, you can co-market your own historical persona with its aura.

Which reminds me: what would have happened if Benjamin had seen the emergence of the Net? Would it have reaffirmed his posi-

tion on art objects losing their aura in lieu of an increased network-value for the avant-pop celebrity that composed the work? The fact is, works of net art maintain their aura in ways beyond mere objecthood. Their so-called “immateriality” confers upon them a radically different kind of marketplace value, one that grows with every new person that visits the site (over a million served). The value of net art plays with the notion of scarcity in a serious way, essentially saying to the mainstream art institution and/or adventurous collector, “the more I attention I get, the higher my market value, and the more time I put into the work’s creation, the more you will have to pay to have the privilege of calling me yours, of collecting me the way you would collect the rarest of dead sea scrolls.”

NET.ART { Paik : labels : video art : media art }

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CORNELIA SOLLFRANK WITH FLORIAN CRAMER >

THE TERM “NET.ART” AS MARKETING TOOL

Cramer, Florian. “Hacking the Art OS—Interview with Cornelia Sollfrank.” POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 15, 2002. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00076.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-0203/msg00076.html) | [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00077.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-0203/msg00077.html). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.]

Cramer > Is it then necessary to use labels like “net art” at all when the medium is not so relevant?

Sollfrank > I think it makes sense to use such labels in the beginning, when a new medium is being introduced, and actual changes come along with it; in the phase where the actual medium is explored like Jodi did for example with the web/net, or Nam June Paik with video. You could compare it with video art—which is in this sense a predecessor of net art. I don’t think that it is useful any longer to talk of

“video art.” The ways how video is being used today are established and it becomes more meaningful to refer to certain contents. That is, by the way, the problem of the whole thing called “media art”—too much media, too little art...

Cramer > Looking at your art, isn't it the case that projects like the net.art generator develop their concept, their systems of “social hacks” from the media?

Sollfrank > That's true in this case. But it is not necessarily the way I work. The term “net.art” functioned also as a perfect marketing tool. And it worked until the moment it gained the success it had headed for. Then everything collapsed. [laughter]

NET.ART { labels : art history : The Group }

IRATIONAL > THE “NET.ART” LABEL AND THE GROUP

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.
APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

But there was never any Group.

Collective > How do you feel about the term “net.art”?

Bunting > It performs a function. It's strategic, tactical, operates in different contexts. It's shorthand for us to use internally and then it was a promotional tool to build a movement.

Baker > It was a process of manipulating a genre, of developing a genre in a subconscious way. That's why you get all these references to previous art histories; it was playing around with those histories.

Collective > So would you call yourselves net.artists or are you uncomfortable with that?

Baker > Sometimes we're comfortable with the term, but in some contexts

it works and in others it doesn't.

Bunting > It's an act of communication that detracts from understanding.

Collective > If you're labeled?

Bunting > Yeah, if you label yourself or you are labeled. I would say, "yeah I'm a net.artist" to someone who works on the net, and they understand that straightaway. But then you say that to someone else who is politically interested or they somehow want to colonize that you're a net.artist, and you don't want to give them that.

Collective > It's an interesting progression from how net.art started to how things have turned out. It seemed to begin with a lot of referencing the actual machine, more about browsers and the technology of it. Then it progressed to more conceptual and political work like Jenny and Geert.

Collective > But there is a Group, you can't deny that. An initial group, Irrational, Jodi, Vuk, Alexei...

Bunting > I didn't feel particularly involved in that Group—Jodi, Vuk, Alexei, not even Olia. And none of their work exists without the foundations, hundreds of other people. It's just that these people were notable for some reason and I think because of that they're more powerful. They all perform different roles. Alexei, he's into networking. Which is different than Vuk, whose work is about history. My work is different. Rachel's is different. It doesn't mean that other people couldn't step into those roles. These aren't necessarily the only people or even the best people, but it all comes from a grassroots thing, so you have a group of people that represent—

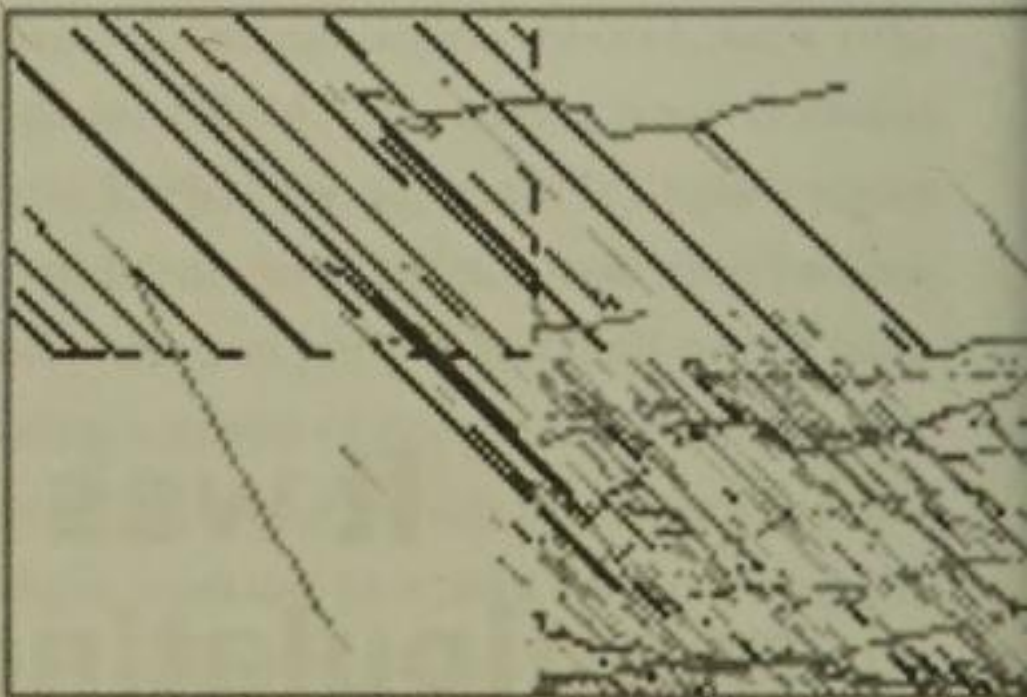
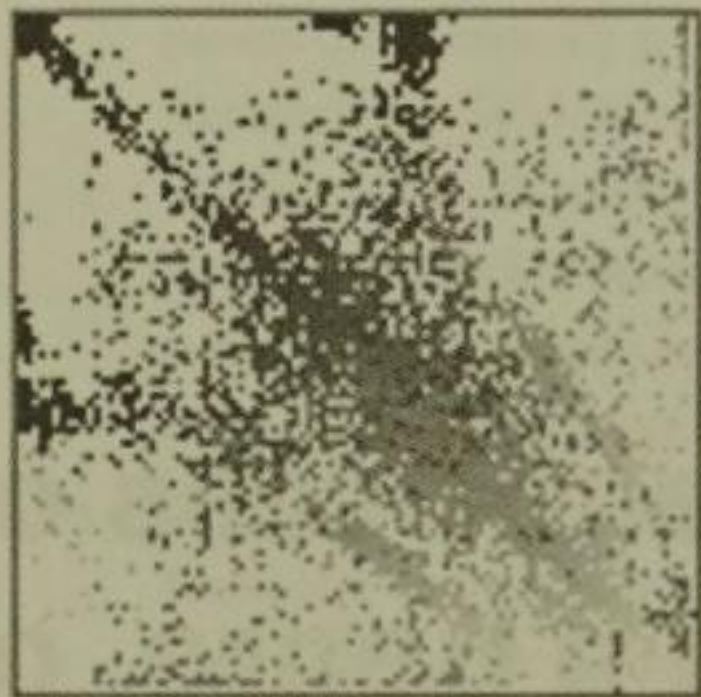
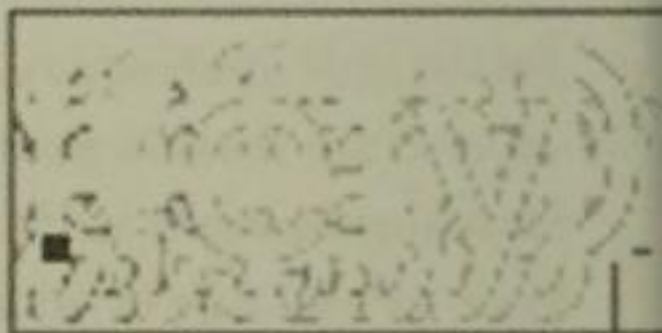
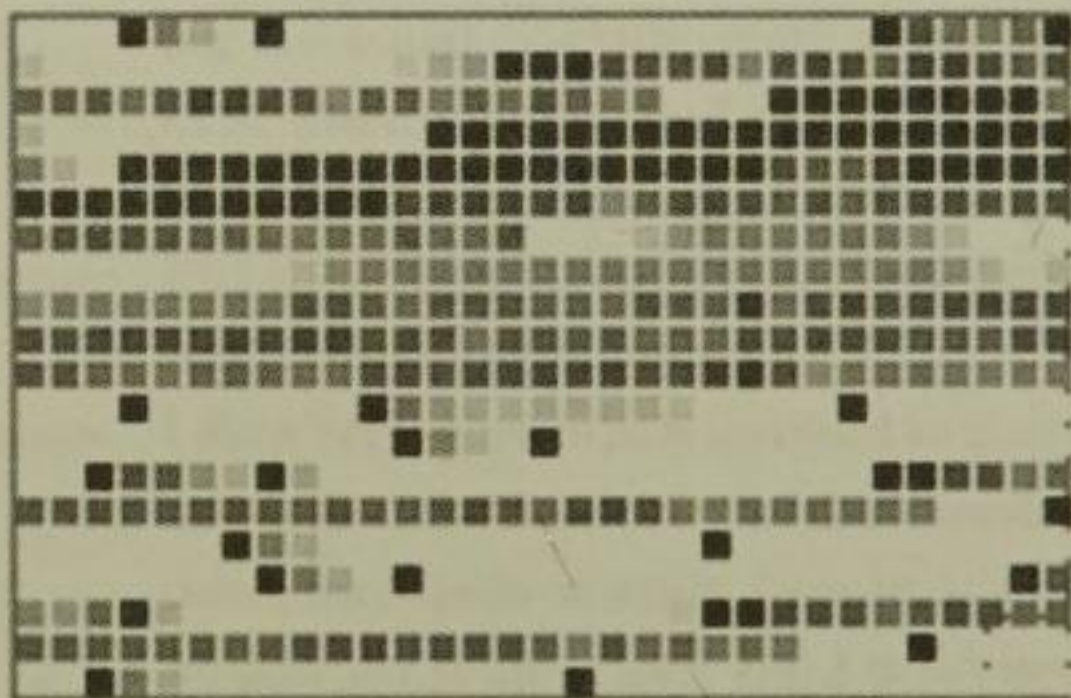
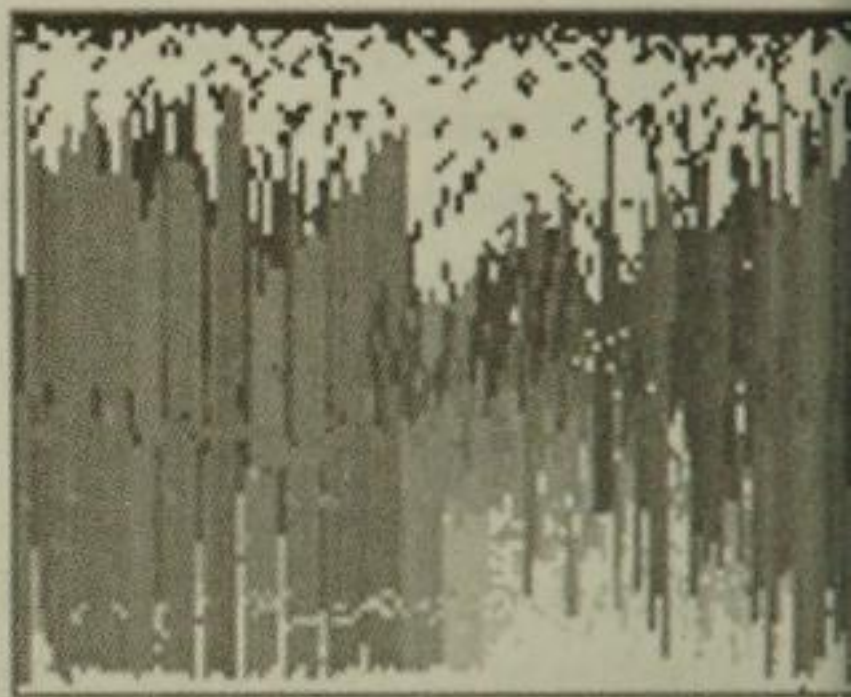
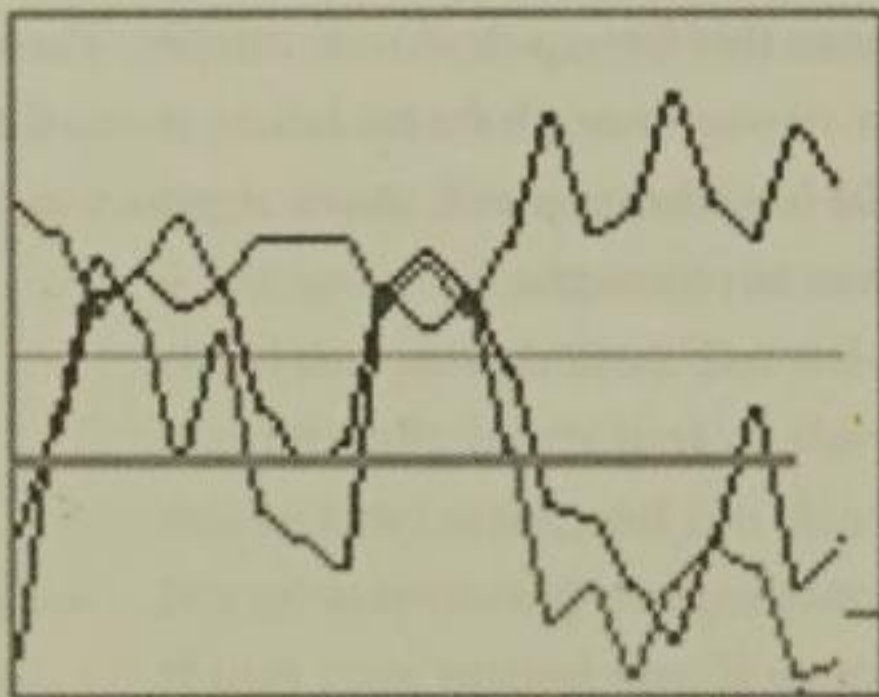
Collective > And that's the Group I saw. Could the Group have been formed from the outside, by people looking at it and researching the origins of art on the net? Because when people are linking to the same three sites, it's easy to start thinking that there's a Group or

whatever word you want to give it.

Baker >

I was speaking to Olia about this Group, and in retrospect she was quite sad there was not a strong enough formulation around the Group, that there should have been much more support in the Group. But there was never any Group.

**It was a process of
manipulating a genre, of
developing a genre
in a subconscious way.**



Output from FEED

HTTP://WWW.POTATOLAND.ORG/PL.HTM

MACHINE.LANG { Duchamp: Flusser : photography : apparatus : angel }

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MATT FULLER > *FRACTAL RECURSION*

RECOMBINANT APPARATUS

Fuller, Matt. "Commonality, Pixel Property, Seduction: As If." 2001.

HTTP://WWW.AXIA.DEMON.CO/UK/PIXEL.HTML. JUNE 2002.

[FOOTNOTES ARE AS THEY APPEAR IN ORIGINAL. PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED. SOME SPELLINGS AMERICANIZED.]

Marcel Duchamp suggested that fifty percent of a work of art was in any case done by its audience². This is obviously an appallingly

²In Pierre Cabanne, 'Interviews with Marcel Duchamp', Da Capo, 1987.

low estimate. The aim of all artists should be to up this percentage.

These statements of connection, of mutual interdependence are a declaration of the poverty of privatization, but they are also the acknowledgement of the condition of working in a technologized, media culture. Vilém Flusser suggests that an archetypal post-industrial object is the personal camera³. This is an "apparatus"

³Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, Reaktion Books, 2000.

programmed to take all possible pictures. The users of the apparatus provide the libidinal and inquisitive drives to carry this program out. Will every picture that it is possible to take with say, an average 35mm camera ever be taken? No, for the simple reason that the problem involves a fractal recursion. To take every possible photo would require that those pictures also would require to

be snapped, in infinite combination.

At the same time, there are millions of cameras at large. They roam the planet as the probe-heads of a recording angel. Whilst certain forms of image: babies, footballers, bored naked women, “moving” tramps, politicians, beaches, run almost to the edge of exhaustion, there is no end to the archive, simply because there is no end to what offers itself up to the lens.

We cannot stop at the level of the camera. As the results of each media system are expelled, they attempt to find some way to worm inside another. The exit pipe of photography is into other media systems: magazines, family albums, shoeboxes, websites, police records, newspapers, gravestones or shrines. Each of these has its own protocols of filtering, editing and amplification—economic, political, aesthetic, technical, religious.... Digitization potentially refuses the possibility of any end to this process.

MACHINE.LANG { Paik : bug : Jodi : loss }

VUK COSIC > TACTICS BASED ON SLOW MODEMS

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

I doubt anyone recorded it on video. So that piece is pretty much lost.

Cosic > What you have here are frame borders. It's not really interactiv-
[Looking at the screen] ity—you try to move them but you can't. In the HTML code, you write <border = 100> instead of <border = 0>. This kind of work is all about understanding the HTML code or why browsers crash, and about doing the opposite expected.

Collective > Do you think that's what net.art is about?

Cosic > No. But a lot of this happened with net.art pieces in the early stages, especially in the case of Jodi.org. Their tactics were based

on slow modems and they got very frustrated when modems and connections became faster. In '95, you would see one HTML document that would have ten or fifteen copies of the same image aligned approximately in the same position. That was a very complicated thing for a browser to render. Also while it was downloading very strange things happened, and that effect doesn't happen anymore. I doubt anyone recorded it on video. So that piece is pretty much lost. Nowadays we can only talk about it.

Collective > It's ironic that a lot of criticism you hear about net.art is from people who are used to criticizing other types of art. They say, "Well, net.art is just people saying, 'hey look what I can do with a browser, look what I can do with the net.'"

Cosic > That's unfortunate.

Collective > Especially given what you just said about subverting the intended uses of the technology instead of glorifying.

Cosic > We are all aware of the history and prehistory of media art and art in general. Occasionally there are works about other historical/traditional art. I mention this because the guy in Jodi (they're a couple) got into an art school because Nam June Paik saw and liked his media collages. He was subverting the intended uses of the technology instead of playing within them. I like that little story—it's just a detail, it's not that meaningful, but I like it. Tiny footnotes to the usual comments about how the work is not informed by the art, it's more about these chance happenings. One thing I find interesting is that net.art is slowly drifting away from public attention. Net.art is not taking off. Net.art is not becoming a mainstream art form, as was the case with video art. You don't have many serious collectors, you don't have so many new media or video gallerists.

JODI > NO FEAR: WE ARE ANGRY

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Baumgärtel, Tilman. "Interview with Jodi." *Telepolis* OCTOBER 6, 1997. [HTTP://WWW.HEISE.DE/TP/ENGLISH/SPECIAL/KU/6178/1.HTML](http://www.heise.de/TP/ENGLISH/SPECIAL/KU/6178/1.HTML).

[SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Baumgärtel > Aren't you afraid that your work will disappear at one point because of technological paradigm changes? For example, that it can't be viewed anymore because browsers change overnight?

Jodi > Fear is not a good condition for work. We have no fear. Like it says on these t-shirts: "No fear!" We make these things because we are angry. People perceive this anger when they are on the other end, at the receiving computer....

Baumgärtel > Why are you angry?

Jodi > Because of the seriousness of technology, for example. It is obvious that our work fights against high tech. We also battle with the computer on a graphical level. The computer presents itself as a desktop, with a trash can on the right and pull-down menus and all the system icons. We explore the computer from inside, and mirror this on the net.

When a viewer looks at our work, we are inside his computer. There is this hacker slogan: "We love your computer." We also get inside people's computers. And we are honored to be in somebody's computer. You are very close to a person when you are on his desktop. I think the computer is a device to get into someone's mind. We replace this mythological notion of a virtual society on the net or whatever with our own work. We put our own personality there.

WALTER BENJAMIN > *THE WORK OF ART
IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION:
DADAISM AS TECHNICAL PRECURSOR TO FILM*

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." 1935. Based on Julian Scaff's version. [HTTP://WWW.STUDENT.MATH.UWATERLOO.CA/~CS492/BENJAMIN.HTML](http://www.student.math.uwaterloo.ca/~cs492/BENJAMIN.HTML). JUNE 2002. ORIGINAL AT [HTTP://PIXELS.FILMTV.UCLA.EDU/COMMUNITY/JULIAN_SCAFF/](http://pixels.filmtv.ucla.edu/community/julian_scaff/).

[APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

XIV

One of the foremost tasks of art has always been the creation of a demand which could be fully satisfied only later. The history of every art form shows critical epochs in which a certain art form aspires to effects which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form....

Every fundamentally new, pioneering creation of demands will carry beyond its goal. Dadaism did so to the extent that it sacrificed the market values which are so characteristic of film in favor of higher ambitions—though of course it was not conscious of such intentions as here described. The Dadaists attached much less importance to the sales value of their work than to its uselessness for contemplative immersion. The studied degradation of their material was not the least of their means to achieve this uselessness. Their poems are "word salad" containing obscenities and every imaginable waste product of language. The same is true of their paintings, on which they mounted buttons and tickets. What they intended and achieved was a relentless destruction of the aura of their creations, which they branded as reproductions with the very means of production.

++
MATT FULLER > *THE ART OF PROGRAMMERS:
UPLOAD A NEW VERSION THEN GO BACK
TO THEIR SLEEPS*

Fuller, Matt. "Commonality, Pixel Property, Seduction: As If." 2001.
[HTTP://WWW.AXIA.DEMON.CO/UK/PIXEL.HTML](http://www.axia.demon.co.uk/pixel.html). JUNE 2002.

A > So if fifty percent of a work is done by its audience, a smart artist will try and double that?

B > Certainly, if we can judge by the lifestyles of the best programmers. All they have to do is download a couple of Perl scripts every week or so, make a minor adjustment, upload a new version then go back to their sleeps.

A > They've arranged it so it's like that.

B > So it's done together?

A > One kind of together, different kinds at different times. I mean you might get someone who thinks they're mainly doing it alone. But then they might just be thinking that at a time when they need to trick themselves into forgetting about it.

B > So that's the art or the programmers?

A > It's the pre-existing elements they're working with, the objects, classes, codes.

B > I mean you've got to occasionally, you've got to do some programming here and there.

A > But it's more a question of having a good grasp of what you're trying to do, what people have done before, do a little research, define the problem, keep in contact with what's being uploaded to the class libraries and stuff. I mean keeping yourself nicely rested does come into it too...

VUK COSIC > ARTIST'S INTUITION

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

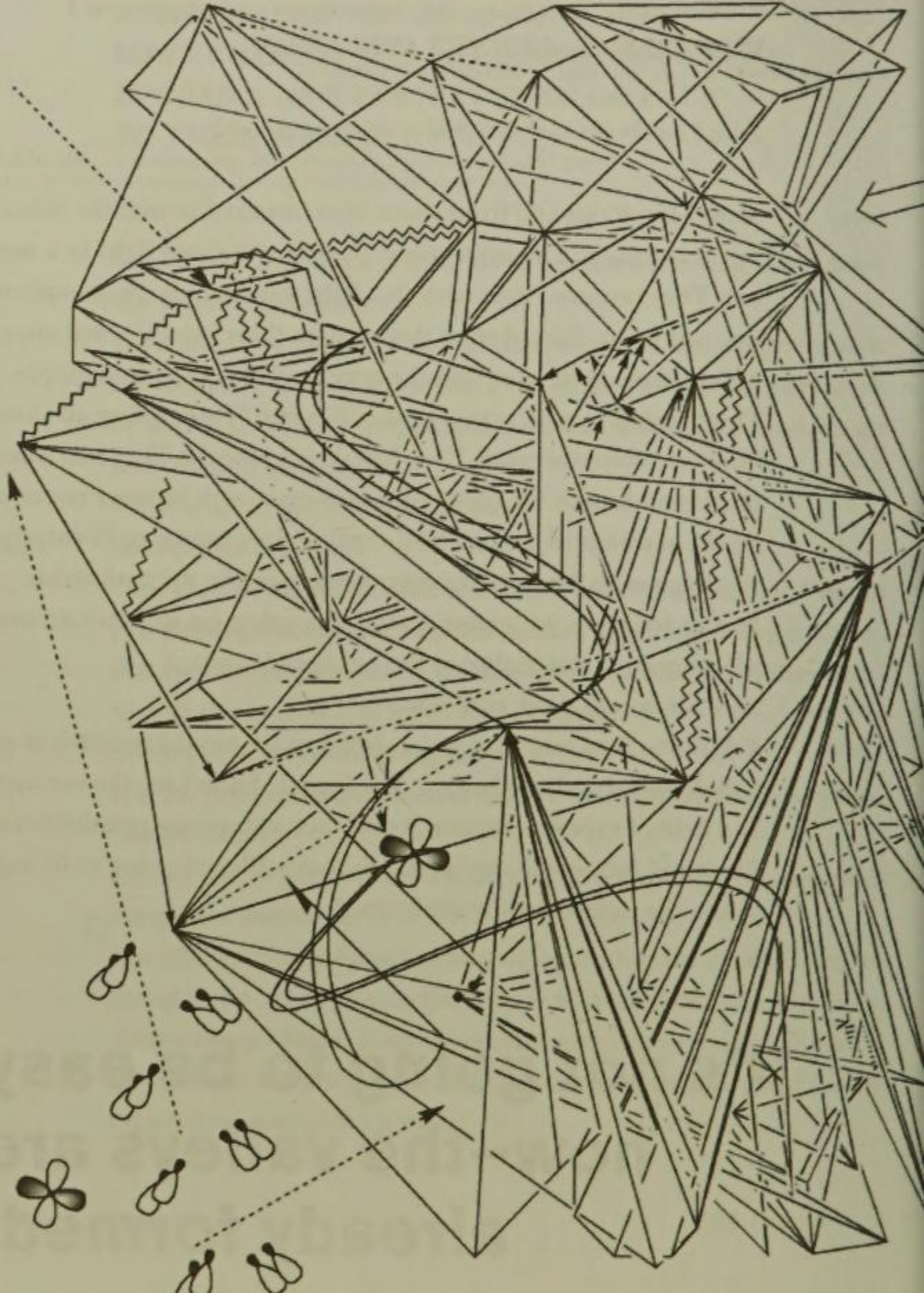
I don't see the net itself as a field of experimentation.

Cosic > Artist's intuitions and frustrations often materialize with the following generation. The Impressionists thought about light in a new way. They captured light such that light was the only thing happening, not paint. Part of what their vision, their intuition was about only became clear later with the advent of film and photography. Then you have mail artists in the '60s and '70s sending all these funny envelopes around. They had their networks. They had a new understanding of the globe. But now every web browser contains all those things as default features that only twenty or twenty-five years ago were thought of as very progressive by the mail artists. So I'm trying to understand what was going on with net.art and what needs to materialize in the next generation.

Collective > So what do you think comes next?

Cosic > I'd like to find out what we're going to do next! Especially if we collide with another planet.... But for me, I don't see the net itself as a field of experimentation. I don't see any serious possibilities of inventing influential new methods there. It's not going to be easy now—the valleys are already formed.

**It's not going to be easy
now—the valleys are
already formed.**



Signifiers in Progress #2

ART.SYS { Sollfrank : @TMark : Lialina : Hart : art history : shero : microlevel }

IRATIONAL > ART HEROES

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.
APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

And he's still heroic... in his back garden.

Collective > Maybe the problem is the systematic way that a certain kind of work got promoted, and an art system which tries to create single-name stars who invented certain important things? A system that's far less interested in some kind of politicized radical alternative networking group that isn't so much about self promotion and heroicizing?

Baker > I don't have so much of a problem with heroicization, I think it serves a function. I've also had this conversation with Connie, who uses the term "shero."

Collective > What is the function of the art hero?

Baker > It's one of the basic theoretical concepts you come across throughout art history, and you're always taught at art school to really critique that and change that. I certainly was, and I did, but I'm apart from that now. I don't have to believe in the art hero. In gay culture there's an understanding about the campiness of heroes, the performer. It's fiction, it's theater. The anti-establishment

thing itself is a heroic pursuit. ®TMark are heroes. You don't have to buy into the idea of a hero wholesale.

Collective > But who gets the invitations except the heroes? Who gets the write-ups besides the heroes? It matters a lot to the people who aren't heroes.

Baker > Yeah, maybe. We've had this discussion with Graham Hart about presence in the media, that you shouldn't be so interested in having a big media impact. His rhetoric is about having impact on the microlevel, the personal.

Bunting > But he's saying that with the same amount of impact. He's still telling it to the newspaper. He's still playing the same games. And he's still heroic... in his back garden.

Baker > Olia to me is a hero. She's my hero.

Collective > But isn't Olia an interruption that people don't know how to deal with in terms of net artists?

Bunting > She performs or fits into a very dominant role which seems to be about women in history who walked Africa by themselves or who flew the first plane across the Atlantic. Olia knows that role and she plays it.

+ + ART.SYS { relics : data : writing }

MARK AMERIKA > *AVANT POP 4: TEXTUAL-BLOOD*

Amerika, Mark. "The Avant-Pop Manifesto: Thread Baring Itself in Ten Quick Posts." 1993.
[HTTP://ALTX.COM/MANIFESTOS2/AVANT.POP.MANIFESTO.HTML](http://altx.com/manifestos2/avant.pop.manifesto.html).

[APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Avant-Pop artists and the alternative networks they are part of will eat away at the conventional relics of a bygone era where the individual artist-author creates their beautifully-crafted, original works of art to be consumed primarily by the elitist art-world and their business-cronies who pass judgment on what is appropriate and

what is not.

Literary establishment? Art establishment? Forget it. Avant-Pop artists wear each other's experiential data like waves of chaotic energy colliding and mixing in the textual-blood while the ever-changing flow of creative projects that ripple from their collective work floods the electronic cult-terrain with a subtle anti-establishment energy that will forever change the way we disseminate and interact with writing.

ART.SYS { Stern : studio : doghouse : ®TMark : prom }

VUK COSIC > THE POPULAR GUY IN SCHOOL

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

Really? You mean there is such a thing as a prom king? Really???

Collective > What artists inspire you? Can you recommend any work? Do you find any of the artists who are using the Internet now to be exciting?

Cosic > I see good art everywhere I go. I like the camera installation in... what's the expression? Doghouse?

Collective > Those are our studios!

Cosic > Studio, excuse me. I mean, that's what people call them?

Collective > Yeah, their studio.

Cosic > I saw Eddo Stern's work, that was good. I liked the game film Sheik Attack, that was very interesting. And the closed circuit TV inside the game on the web! But I don't have a favorite artist or a favorite color. Two weeks ago at a show in Liverpool, I saw a great piece of net.art. It looks exactly like work we used to do, with blinking big squares and browsers crashing all the time. There's work—such as ®TMark—which is very clever, but which is for me the next generation. It's well done, but it's not the type of work that I would be

interested in doing.

Collective > If you don't follow other artists or trends, how did you choose what work to do?

Cosic > Let's say you're in your twenties. You are this bright guy. You write some poetry, and you find other progressive people who all publish some magazine. You and your friends become the talk of the town. This is how I felt when I was doing online stuff—that it was the thing to do. It's like being... what's the opposite of prom queen? Who's the popular guy in school?

Collective > Prom king.

Cosic > Really? You mean there is such a thing as a prom king? Really??? It sounds like a drag queen to me.

ART.SYS { Cosic : Bunting : Next Five Minutes : nettime : The Group : chess }

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ALEXEI SHULGIN WITH RACHEL BAKER >
SHIT TO GOLD: A MECHANISM BY WHICH
YOU WIN OR LOSE

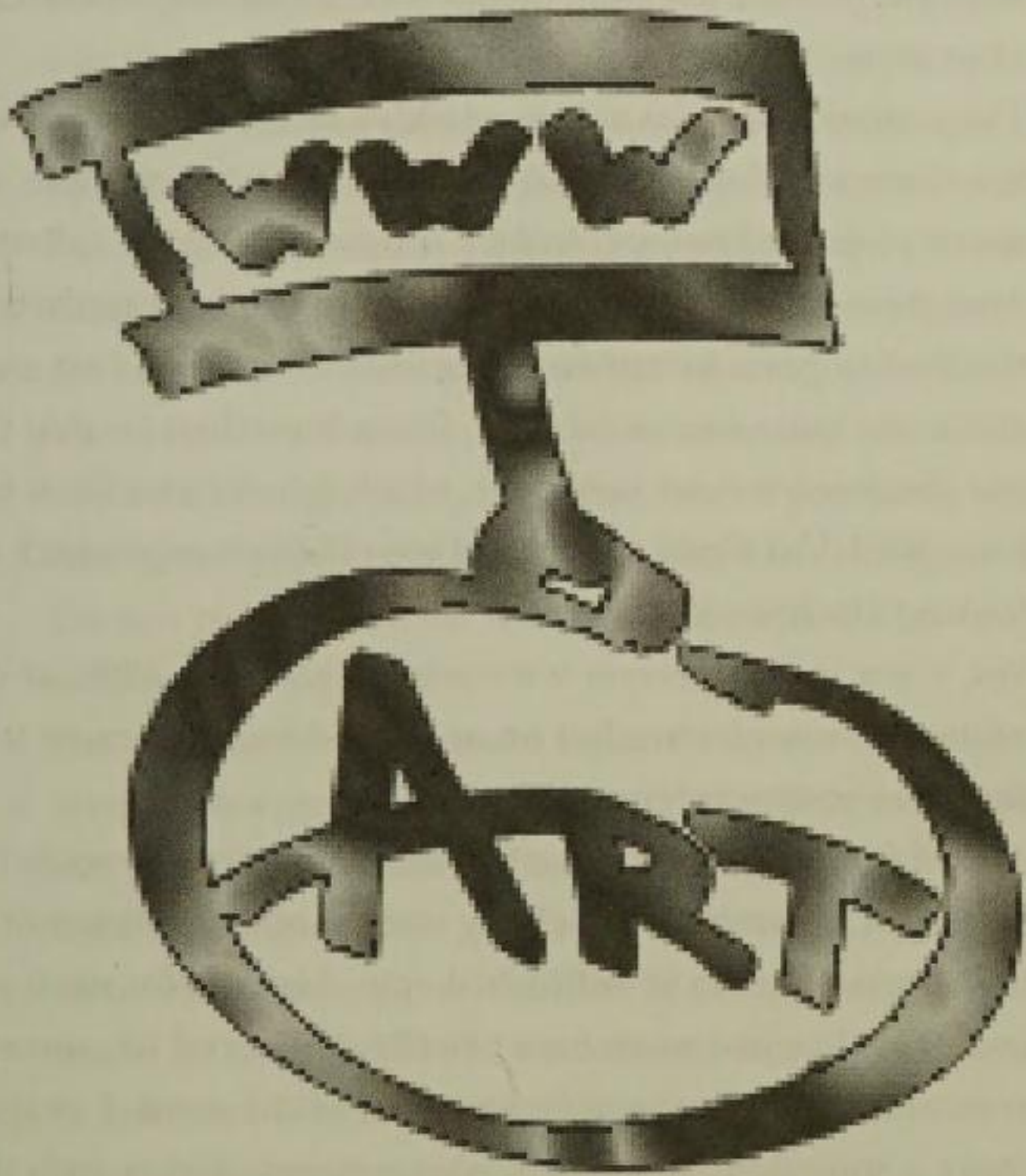
Baker, Rachel. "Re: nettime: Art on Net." POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 16, 1997. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-9703/MSG00087.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-9703/MSG00087.HTML). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION HAVE BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

That is why I took up Internet. Internet in itself is a hobby, is a game, everybody can play Internet. It's like chess.

Baker > Then does this divorce from conventional art institutions in net.art have a relationship to the interest you had in found art sites?

Shulgin > It was naturally, in trying to draw a conclusion or consequence from the de-institutionalisation of the work of art, that I came to the idea of Gold Medal Award sites which in effect are already completely made. Let me show you: this is a website with innocent non-art intentions—it is a ready-made. Now it is a ready-made in



Gold Medal Award, Moscow WWArt Centre
[HTTP://WWW.EASYLIFE.ORG/AWARD/](http://www.easylife.org/award/)

which shit is changed to gold, metaphorically speaking. It is a sort of a mythological effect produced by art awards and art criticism.

Baker > You didn't know me before you came to Holland.

Shulgin > No. I came to Amsterdam in January. I met you at the Next Five Minutes conference. It was the beginning of a long e-mail friendship. We devised the Gold Medal Award and discussed infiltration of nettime.

Baker > The nettime group was associated with several other groups, wasn't it?

Shulgin > Yes, there was Vuk Cosic and Heath Bunting for example, who was also a patron of net.art, and he started a museum called CERN. And there was V2 whose purpose was to promote net.artists from the East to get a sort of communication between East and West, and it was quite successful then. It was from then on that the West was absolutely net.art conscious, which it had never been before.

Baker > I see. Well, Vuk Cosic also owned your Refresh page which we were looking at a little while ago.

Shulgin > Yes, it was in the Moscow wwwarts collection in 1996, at the time of its near-completion. But no one could own it because it was too fragile to transport, given its size.

Baker > Alexei, from what you say the Refresh page was never really finished.

Shulgin > No. No. The last time somebody worked on it was this morning.

Baker > So it remains a sort of unfinished epic. And also for me it seems to indicate that you were never really dedicated to conventional communication in the ordinary sense of the word. I imagine that there is something broader in your concept of what art is than just communication.

Shulgin > Yes. I considered art as a means of expressing the present, not an end in itself. One means of expression among others, and not a complete end for life at all; in the same way I consider that color is

only a means of expression in painting and not an end. In other words, communication should not be exclusively retinal or visual; it should have to do with the concept, with our urge for understanding. This is generally what I love. I didn't want to pin myself down and I tried at least to be as universal as I could. That is why I took up Internet. Internet in itself is a hobby, is a game, everybody can play Internet. It's like chess. Actually when you play a game of chess it is like designing something or constructing a mechanism of some kind by which you win or lose. The competitive side of it has no importance, but the thing itself is very, very strategic, and that is probably what attracted me to the Internet game.

Baker > Do you mean by that another form of communication?

Shulgin > Yes, at least it was another facet of the same kind of mental expression, intellectual expression, one small facet if you want, but it differed enough to make it distinct, and it added something to my life.

Baker > Do you regard Moscow wwwarts page as a distinct expression of your personality?

Shulgin > Yes. Absolutely. It was a new form of expression for me. Instead of merely photographing something for gallery exhibition the idea was to reproduce the work that I loved so much in miniature. I didn't know how to do it. I thought of a book, but I didn't like that idea. Then I thought of the idea of the box in which all my works would be mounted like in a small museum, a portable museum, so to speak, and here it is in this Internet valise.

Baker > It is a sort of ready-made catalogue, isn't it.

Shulgin > There was a whole art system, which I thought up to win at roulette at Monte Carlo. Of course I never broke the bank with it. But I thought I found a system.

Baker > Did you win anything?

Shulgin >

No, I never won anything. But at any rate as you know, I am interested in the intellectual side, although I don't like the word "intellect." For me "intellect" is too dry a word, too inexpressive. I like the word "belief." I think in general that when people say "I know," they don't know, they believe. I believe that art is the only form of activity in which man as man shows himself to be a true individual. Only in art is he capable of going beyond the animal state, because art is an outlet toward regions which are not ruled by time and space. To live is to believe; that's my belief, at any rate.

ART.SYS { journalism : hackers : art slaves : Warhol : Koons : CCC : fashion }

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CORNELIA SOLLFRANK WITH FLORIAN CRAMER > *AESTHETIC TOOLS AND ART SLAVES*

Cramer, Florian. "Hacking the Art OS—Interview with Cornelia Sollfrank." POSTED TO NETTIME MARCH 15, 2002. [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00076.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00076.HTML). [HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00077.HTML](http://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-0203/MSG00077.HTML). JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Cramer >

When I look at your work, I notice that on the one hand you are a very important net artist, and—what seems closely related—you work as a critical journalist for Telepolis among others. You <http://www.heise.de/tp/> frequently write about hacker culture: for example, you've written about an Italian hacker congress and interviewed the Chaos Computer Club spokesperson Andy Müller-Maguhn about the Cybercrime Convention. Am I right in supposing that when you write about hacking, you always maintain an aesthetic interest in net art—and that, vice-versa, when you are writing about net art, you investigate to what extent it tends towards computer hacking?

Sollfrank >

I see myself foremost as an artist, and that is my point of departure for everything else; it gives me the motivation too to slip into other

roles. Being a journalist is more a means to an end, because as a journalist I obtain information that as an artist I would not obtain. That means I instrumentalize this function, as I did at the Ars Electronica 2001. The theme there was “Takeover” and I was invited to participate on the panel “Female Takeover.” An interview that I did for Telepolis with the head of the Ars Electronica, Gerfried Stocker, helped me understand what he thought about the theme—and how this somewhat vague concept came about. That’s why journalism and scrutiny are basic tools of my art. My product though—I don’t know if I should refer to it like that—is ultimately artistic, or if you want to call it that, aesthetic.

Cramer > In the conclusion to your review on Ars Electronica you write: “perhaps art no longer needs Ars Electronica either.” I have to add that I warmed to that remark. [LAUGHTER]

Sollfrank > But perhaps it does! “Perhaps” is what is written and meant.
[LAUGHTER]

Cramer > You see yourself as a concept artist, and on your homepage there is a slogan that could be seen as an analogy: “A smart artist makes the machine do the work.” Is that supposed to mean that concept art actually wasn’t concept art before machines started to process the concepts?

Sollfrank > No, I wouldn’t formulate it so radically, so one-dimensionally—ultimately one could use slaves instead of machines to produce art.
[LAUGHTER]

Cramer > À la Andy Warhol’s Factory ...

Sollfrank > Yes, somewhat similar. Or simply craftsmen and women, or keen art students who implement the master’s idea.

Cramer > Jeff Koons.

Sollfrank > Yeah, Jeff Koons is a good example. I don’t think that one needs a

machine to realize that idea of art. If the aesthetic program is developed which the artist works with, then it doesn't matter who produces the actual pieces. The artist becomes a purely representational figure. He or she simply has to fit the image of an "Artist"—something which is already set as [a] parameter in the system.

ART.SYS { label : network : hype : business : dead }

++ **JODI > *THEY CALL IT MAIL ART OR VIDEO ART
AND IT'S DOOMED TO DIE***

Baumgärtel, Tilman. "Interview with Jodi." *Telepolis* OCTOBER 6, 1997.
[HTTP://WWW.HEISE.DE/TP/ENGLISH/SPECIAL/KU/6178/1.HTML](http://www.heise.de/tp/english/special/ku/6178/1.html).

[SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.
APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Baumgärtel > Was doing art on the Internet a way to get around the art system, the galleries, museums, curators, etc.?

Jodi > I don't think you really avoid the art world by doing things on the Internet. It was more that we were already working with computers. And I found that the best way to view works that were made with a computer was to keep it in a computer. And the Internet is a very good system to spread this kind of work....

The computer is not only a tool to create art, but also the medium to show it within the network. And since the network doesn't have any labels, maybe what little Stevie is doing is art. It's the same with our work: There is also no "art" label on it. In the medium in which it is perceived, people don't care about this label. But if we show our work in a gallery space, the label "art" is on what we do. And we have to find "art ways" to show our work.

Baumgärtel > You have no art to sell at this point, only dematerialized objects on some server computer. What is your "business model" as artists?

Jodi >

There are the festivals, which always pay a fee. We haven't been thinking about this too much, but there is always the so-called "service fee" that you can ask for as an artist, if you do a workshop or give a talk.

Baumgärtel >

What do you get for the participation in the Documenta?

Jodi >

We get a fee for the expenses we have when we put our files on their server. In total we got 1200 marks. It is a clear example of exploitation. Which artist would move his ass for this amount of money? But net art is a victim of its b-status. It is treated as a group phenomenon, as a technically-defined new art form. That is something that we have to leave behind as soon as possible, because that is the standard way to do these things: a group creates a hype. They call it mail art or video art, and it's doomed to die after five years. I think we are looking for another way, because we are not typical artists and we also won't play the role of the net artists forever.

**since the network doesn't
have any labels, maybe
what little Stevie
is doing is art.**



Dear Art.com customers:

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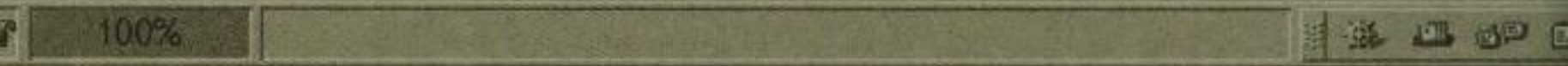
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- Questions from vendors should be directed to purchasing@art.com.



Art.com Fairwell Page

Circa May-June 2001.

[HTTP://COSMO.PASADENA.CA.US/STAN/DOT-COM/](http://cosmo.pasadena.ca.us/stan/dot-com/)

AFTER.NET { labeling : hype : promotion : mutation : pr0n }

++ **NATALIE BOOKCHIN AND ALEXEI SHULGIN** >

INTRODUCTION TO NET.ART, SECTION 5:

UTOPIAN APPENDIX (AFTER NET.ART)

Bookchin, Natalie, and Alexei Shulgin. "Introduction to Net.Art." 1999.

[HTTP://WWW.EASYLIFE.ORG/NETART/](http://www.easylife.org/netart/). JUNE 2002.

[UNCHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

5A WHEREBY INDIVIDUAL CREATIVE ACTIVITIES, RATHER THAN AFFILIATION TO ANY HYPED ART MOVEMENT BECOMES MOST VALUED.

5A-1 Largely resulting from the horizontal rather than vertical distribution of information on the internet.

5A-2 Thus disallowing one dominant voice to rise above multiple, simultaneous and diverse expressions.

5B THE RISE OF AN ARTISAN

5B-1 The formation of organizations avoiding the promotion of proper names

5B-2 The bypassing of art institutions and the direct targeting of corporate products, mainstream media, creative sensibilities and hegemonic ideologies

5B-2.A Unannounced

5B-2.B Uninvited

5B-2.C

Unexpected

5B-3 No longer needing the terms "art" or "politics" to legitimize, justify or excuse one's activities

5C THE INTERNET AFTER NET.ART

5C-1 A mall, a porn shop and a museum

5C-2 A useful resource, tool, site and gathering point for an artisan

5C-2.A Who mutates and transforms as quickly and cleverly as that which seeks to consume her

5C-2.B Who does not fear or accept labeling or unlabeled

5C-2.C Who works freely in completely new forms together with older more traditional forms

5C-2.D Who understands the continued urgency of free two-way and many-to-many communication over representation

AFTER.NET { medium : Whitney Biennial 2000 : Documenta 1997 }

CORNELIA SOLLFRANK > "NET.ART" WAS THE PIONEER PHASE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. SPRING, 2000. LOS ANGELES.

Galleries should simply allow people to check their e-mail!

Collective > Isn't it interesting that you have to have the same kind of presentation in a museum that you can have in your own house? Why don't they simply give you a list of websites associated with the show and send you home? Why even charge admission to the museum? Yeah, bingo.

Sollfrank > I don't think it's relevant to talk about net.art any longer as net.art,

because then you're just looking at the medium. I think this makes sense when a medium is new, when you have to experiment with the medium, when you have to discover what is specific about it. At this stage you can talk about it as "net.art." But I think this kind of phase is over now. Net.art was the pioneer phase, the experimental phase. That is my position, that net.art is over. Now there is a new phase where projects are integrated into shows because they relate to what the show is about. The emphasis is less medium, more content, even if the art happens to be on the Internet or on video or whatever, it is no longer the question of why this is in a museum. Now more often Internet work is physically in a larger contextualized show space.

Did you see the 2000 Whitney Biennial show in New York? It was so funny. There was one space, a dark room with several benches. And we were in rows next to each other, staring. There was one computer in the back which somebody operated, so there were active members who operated the computers and passive members who watched.

Collective > Work which is "technical" often seems to get immediately marginalized—people won't think about the content because they can't get past the technical.

Sollfrank > The first time net.art was included in a gallery show was in Documenta in 1997! What they did was really ridiculous—they had one room which contained all the terminals and these computers were not online because the curator was afraid that people would check their e-mail. That comes with the package of the Internet when it is opened up into a public space. Galleries should simply allow people to check their e-mail!

VUK COSIC > COLLECTING NET.ART

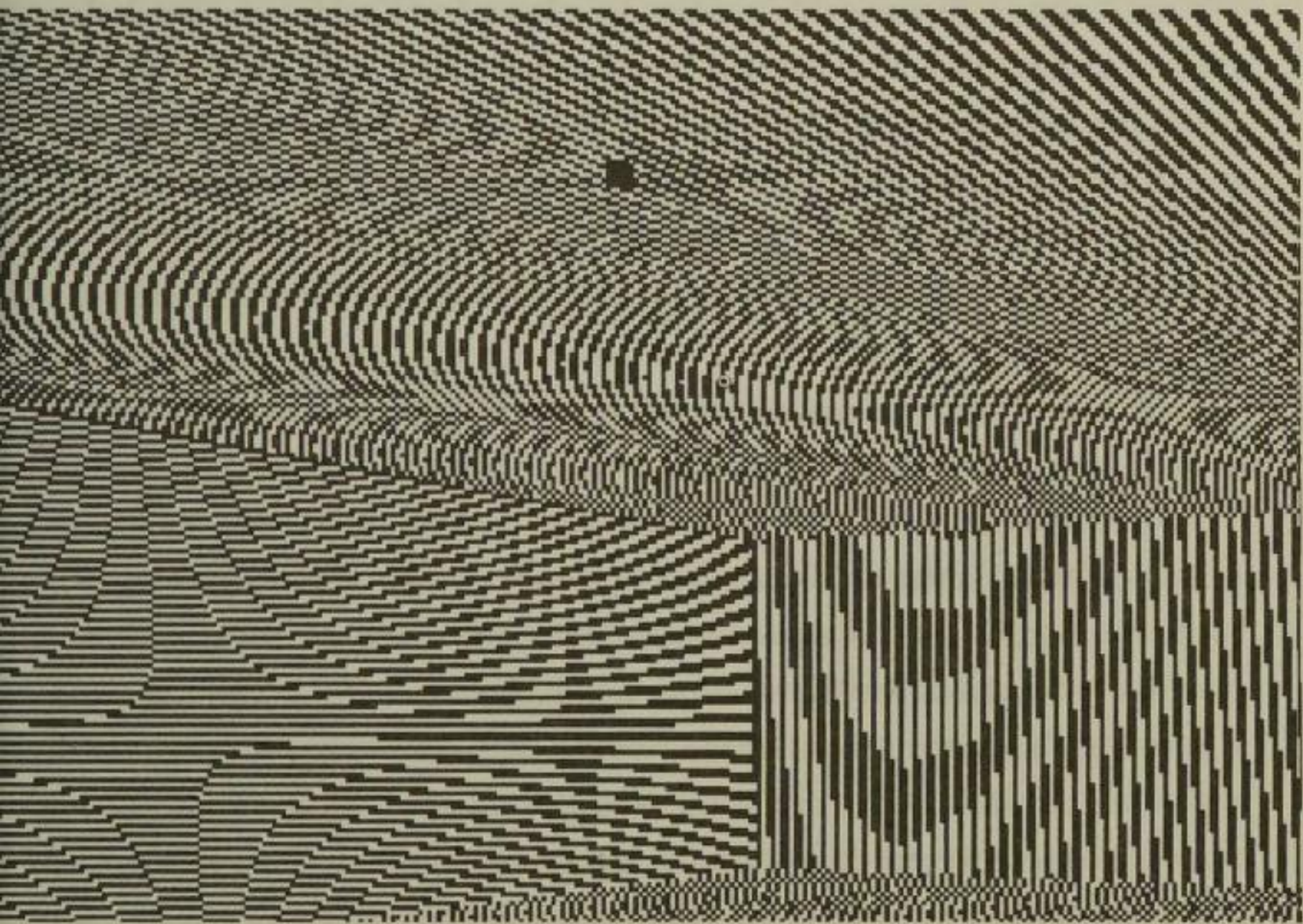
<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

You wanna find a new way of making art, baby? Will you do better?

Cosic > I read in Wired magazine about some collectors here in California who buy video art and video installations and install them in their home. This is so rare and exceptional that people write articles about it.

Collective > At the time when video art was at the same stage that net.art is now, it was being collected. David Ross had a big collection of video art. VHS wasn't very accessible then so it was a much more commodified item. Of course, even with video art, there is an object, and one of the problems I've had with my net.art is that there is no identifiable object. I put my net.art on the Internet, where everyone can see it. Then I was approached by museums and galleries wanting to show it. And they would tell me, "Well, we need to do something special with this for our museum, that doesn't exist elsewhere." I resent that approach because it's not how I made the piece. But then again, you could have a net.art installation, which is something I'm looking into now. Something that makes use of the net but also has a physical presence. A lot of net.artists resist working that way because that's what they're working against. They have a problem with the idea of a net.art collection.

Cosic > Yeah, it's weird. The question of artists conforming to the expectation of the art world... what do you want? Do you want to come up with some new expression? You wanna find a new way of making art, baby? Will you do better? Do you have what it takes to make it in a given environment/system? This compromise is problematic. I



CTRL-SPACE Screenshot, Jodi.org
[HTTP://WWW.C3.HU/EVENTS/98/JODI/](http://www.c3.hu/events/98/jodi/)

saw a net.art installation project by Shu Lea Cheang called Brandon, which was commissioned by the Guggenheim in New York for \$250,000. The artist, quite a gifted individual, fit the bill in several ways—she is Asian, lesbian, female...

Collective > So what? Are you bitter about that? You think she didn't deserve it?

Cosic > No, but it is quite a coincidence. She is a good artist, which is the first thing I said. She did Bowling Alley, an old net.art work, very good. Anyway, this net.art piece Brandon could have cost, let's say, \$50,000 to produce in very fictitious studio circumstances, but it actually cost \$5,000. The rest of the cash was used for publicity and for installations. Altogether the net.art component was the least important part of the installation.

Brandon was totally uninteresting. It was a solid idea, but because of the acceptance of the commission, she was forced to introduce more and more components, such as interactivity and multimediality, that were not necessarily her agenda. They were part of the equipment-makers' agenda. So the work progressively become a spectacle that contained images. It became, unfortunately, uninteresting. And she's still a good artist, but she decided not to go that route. On the other hand, there's Jodi, definitely gifted young people, who never go out of the context of net.art. They did one CD-ROM which is a separate work. You should see that. It's amazing work, but it is CD-ROM specific. They also made a game called *CTRL-SPACE*. It looks good, but it is not as successful as their web work. They totally have changed the rules of net.art and have done other things. And then amazingly enough, with that CD-ROM, they won first prize for best video at the video art awards at ZKM, Germany. It was a CD-ROM! The people there wanted to give Jodi an award, but they didn't know how. It's great—they're absolutely amazing.

ALEXEI SHULGIN > *ART OF THE TELEPHONE*

NET.NET.NET.MX> Interview with Fran Ilich. DECEMBER, 1999. DRIVING ON INTERSTATE 5.

Ilich > Net.art was born mainly due to public participation with these new methods. Do you think that at one time there was the possibility for the development of the art of the telephone?

Shulgin > Yes. Completely. Maybe not for television, because television is in the hands of big companies and is very expensive, aside from the fact that it is a unilateral channel of communication. Artists really cannot enter there. I once had an idea to organize a festival about the art of the telephone. From what I know, there are some artists that are or were working with this method and have come up with a lot of interesting projects. Unfortunately this media is too old and outdated.

Ilich > Alexei, what is the future of net.art?

Shulgin > The truth is I'm not very good with predictions. But when I think about the Internet, I think that the initial era when artists experimented with a new method is over. The Internet has become a normal tool, like the telephone or the television. People use it for a lot of things, thanks to this initial era when artists were working on new methods of production. We shouldn't think of net.art as a specific method—in the beginning the term "net.art" was only a joke, it was a critique against the custom to label everything new, a reaction against institutionalization. Now we see that net.art, or the art of the Internet, has converted a good measure of the institutionalized art, and this brought about good results. This approach just limits the art of the Internet and forces it to feed certain requirements of the system.

++

0100101110110101.ORG (FLORIAN CRAMER) >

INTERVIEW YOURSELF: "ANTI-POST-NET ART"

Cramer, Florian. "Anti-Post-Net Art: A self-interview of www.0100101110110101.org."

[HTTP://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IY/](http://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IY/). JUNE 2002.

[THE READER SHOULD NOTE THE FOLLOWING E-MAILED WARNING FROM AMY ALEXANDER OF PLAGIARIST.ORG, REPRODUCED VERBATIM:

btw note that the 01 IY interview is actually a practical joke by florian cramer. since neither florian nor the "real" 01 were ntnnt people not sure if that matters to you anyway, but in case you mention other interviews, i figured i'd clarify that...

PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION HAVE BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

0 > How would you compare the mutations of your web site—second-last was the file directory of "life_sharing"—to the self-referential continuity of Net Art in the progression from Heath Bunting and Jodi to Lisa Jevbratt? Are you concerned with that "code attitude" and the other members of the ASCII school of Net Art?

1 > There may be superficial parallels, but actually we think we fall closer to the anti-aestheticist side of this kind of activity. For instance our early practice of breaking off and stealing little pieces from sculptures and installations in museums is an example of trying to create similar ruptures as Alexander Brener's spray can attack on the Malevich painting or Oleg Kulik's crawling around on all fours with a neck brace on. This kind of intervention may seem old-fashioned to some people who value the pseudo-ruptures induced into digital data by Jodi, Heath Bunting and Vuk Cosic. But we have to reject their surface hype appeal on the basis of our dislike of the media art hype and the factual Net Art star cult surrounding them. Actually, some data on the new incarnation of our web site suggests that Bunting's and Cosic's [resignation] from Net Art was intentional and contrived precisely to trivialize their work. You may of course notice that we have not quit. We are

willing to reject the “easy out” of trivialization through has-been-Net Art star cult status.

0 > And clearly this is the connection between your work and that of body art actionists like Kulik, the false timelessness?

1 > Actually it is hard to say. Net Artists have had to take a step back in order to reflect the digital codes they appropriated, and then another step back to analyze the first step. This is why we use the term “Anti-Post-Net Art” instead of simply “Post-Net Art.” This term precisely dictates a second level of removal from the commodity value of digital art—it is not some mind game, but a clear political statement: we are not willing.

0 > Would you mind if people see this as a traditional avant-garde attitude?

1 > Well, you may have noticed that our approach, which is perhaps Situationist if anything, is to take the code of a Net Artist like Jodi and copy them, but altering some of it, like the color of a page, or some words contained in them... whatever seems marginal. And then this appropriation becomes the underlying marginality of our own work. Remember Duchamp’s emphasis on the studio-editor. We essentially use it but ignore it simultaneously, as if to say that these historical links are not what it’s about.

AFTER.NET { non-commodifiable : ASCII : old guys : paper }

VUK COSIC > END OF THE SPICY NET.ARTIST

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

We hold hands and ask each other, “Well, what do you think a mailing list could mean in contemporary society?” We don’t really need those questions now.

Collective > You’ve talked about non-commodifiable art. Do you actually believe that it exists?

Cosic > No, not really. The word "art," the social label that is put on creative or productive individuals, is already buying into the system. Not necessarily with cash, but in general, society wants a little "spice," and that is what artists are supposed to be.

Collective > I'm wondering how you feel now that you have received some form of artistic success, appearing all over the U.S., speaking at MOCA, etc. Are you concerned that your ASCII work is being commodified?

Cosic > I don't have to work so much. The art system needs to maintain its prestige by displaying contemporary practice, and it somehow turns out that net.art, even though it's not functioning anymore, is now being perceived as something new and hot.

Collective > It's already over? You're just using them?

Cosic > You can choose how much you want to interface with reality, with other layers of society. You can choose not to accept money as a means of communication and try to live without. You can choose not to accept soap. Or you can choose not to accept the art system. You could live very well without an art system as a human being, but it's your choice. My choice was to see how this art system functions, something I could comment on, or hopefully to have a some kind of dialogue with other people. That's it. I'm not trying to be too much of a destructive guy. I get to visit all these funny places and I don't see why it's so bad. I just think it's nice to travel.

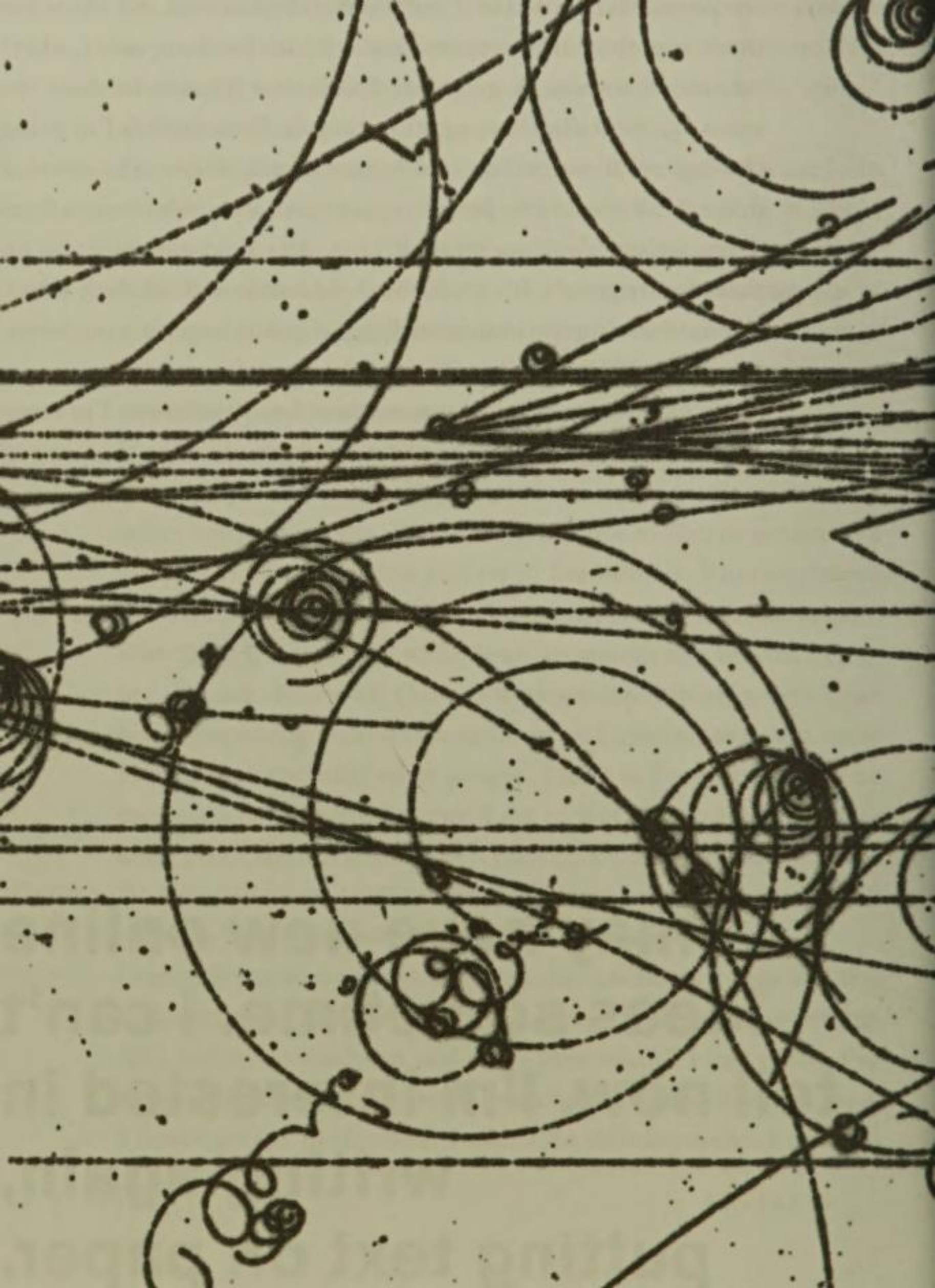
Collective > Do you ever see yourself coming back to art on the Internet? It still seems to have tremendous advantages as an art medium...

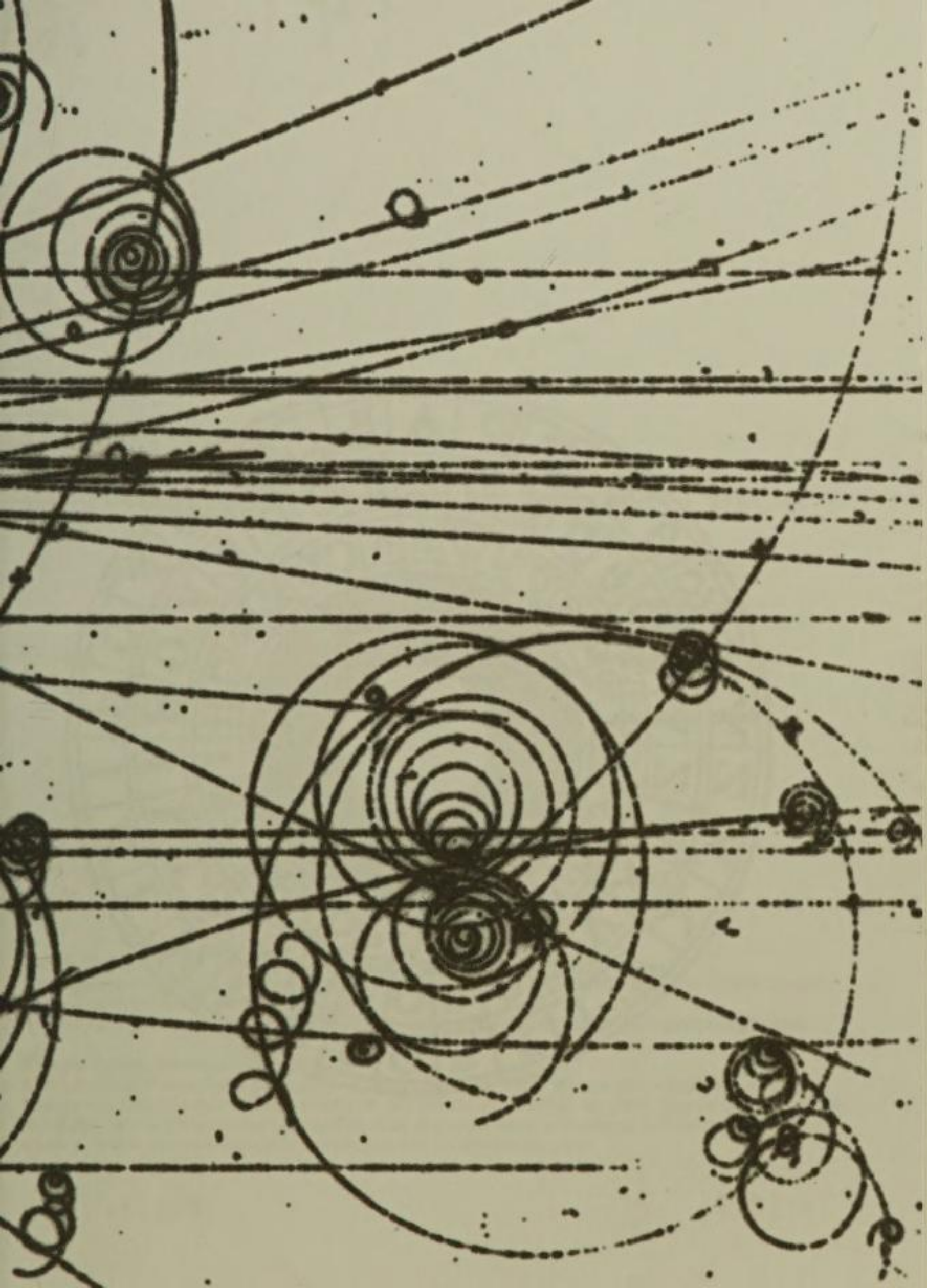
Cosic > I recently put some stuff up; I keep documenting things and this keeps my HTML skills in shape. But I feel I have done everything. All I had to say has been said and I have said all I had to say. I've never done the same site twice. I don't work on anything too long, I never go for perfection, I don't do development: I only do

research. All of this ASCII work is finished as well. My ideas are there somehow in the rawest form. It can be done nicer, okay? Anyone who wants to, go ahead. But for me it has to be done the same day, be it dinner or another project. Even though I'm going through all these ceremonial net.art events all over the world, I don't think it would be honest to just re-stage my submissions from five years ago. And you know, it's fun. All us old guys meet up on these funny panels. It's great. We hold hands and ask each other, "Well, what do you think a mailing list could mean in contemporary society?" We don't really need those questions now.

I may have new online ideas sometime. I can't tell now. I'm interested in writing again, putting text on paper.

**I may have new online
ideas sometime. I can't
tell now. I'm interested in
writing again,
putting text on paper.**





SECTION F /

WRITING | THEFT | MAPPING | READING | DECAY

Bubble Chamber Event, image courtesy of CERN.

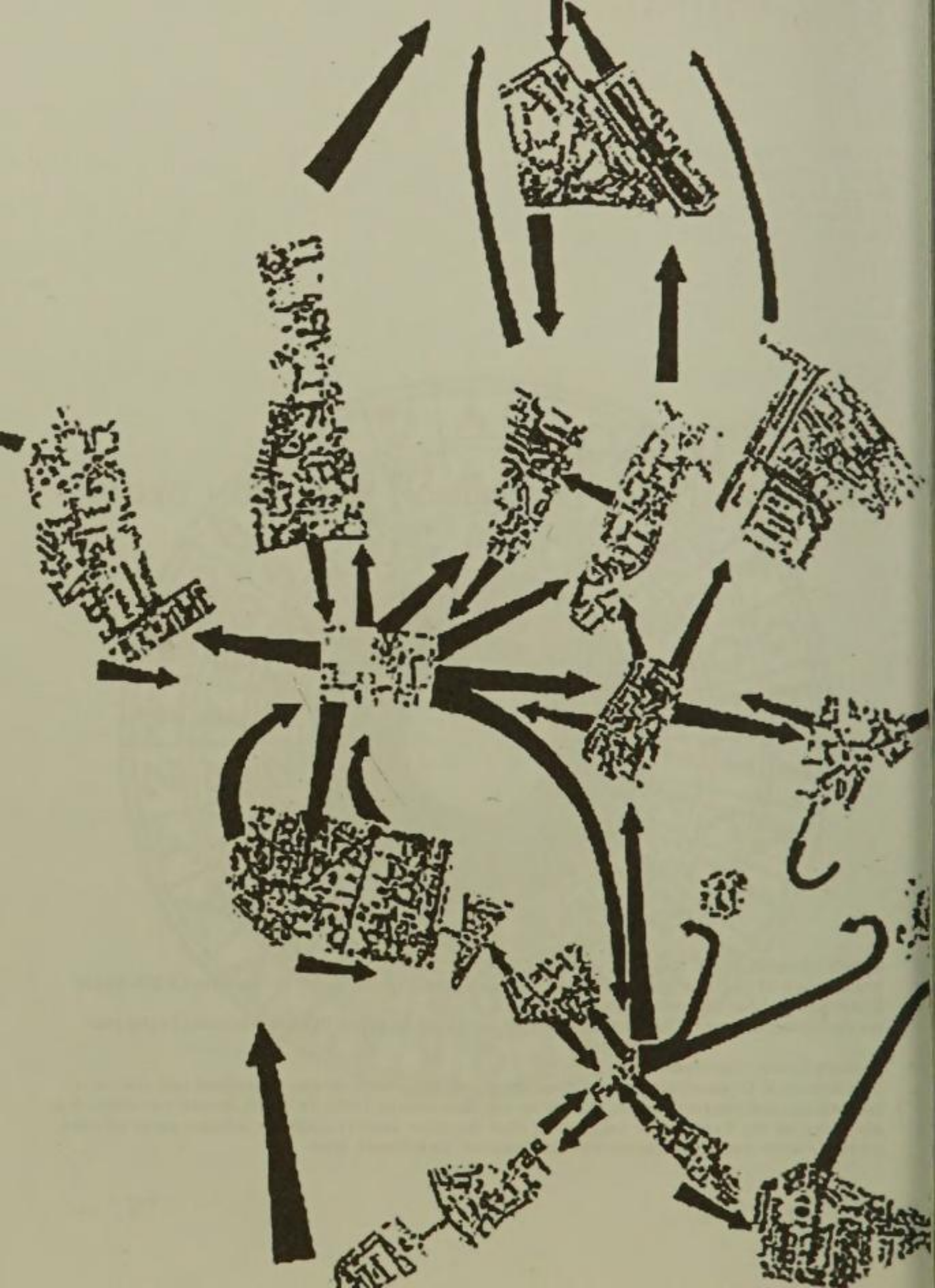
Production of particle jets by 16 GeV negative pions (p- mesons) in the first CERN liquid hydrogen bubble chamber. Circa 1970.

[HTTP://DOC.CERN.CH//ARCHIVE/ELECTRONIC/CERN/OTHERS/PHO/PHOTO-EX/11465.JPEG](http://DOC.CERN.CH//ARCHIVE/ELECTRONIC/CERN/OTHERS/PHO/PHOTO-EX/11465.JPEG)

Memory System, Giordano Bruno

The heretical Dominican philosopher/magician Giordano Bruno described this system of concentric combinatory letter wheels in *Ars Memoriae* in 1582. In 1600, Bruno was burned at the stake by the Vatican for suggesting that the stars were actually an infinite array of suns.

[HTTP://WWW.ESOTERICARCHIVES.COM/BRUNO/ARSMEMOR.HTM](http://WWW.ESOTERICARCHIVES.COM/BRUNO/ARSMEMOR.HTM)



WRITING

The Naked City, Guy Debord.

A map of Paris made from map fragments, circa 1959. The title on the image is: *Illustration de L'hypothese des plaques tournantes en psychogeography.*

Compression artifacts by NotBored.

[HTTP://WWW.NOTBORED.ORG/NAKED-CITY.GIF](http://www.notbored.org/naked-city.gif)

WRITING { incise : mark : eraseure }

++ **OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY** > *WRITE*

"write, v." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Ed. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner. 2ND ED. OXFORD: CLARENDON PRESS, 1989. OED ONLINE. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS.

[HTTP://DICTIONARY.OED.COM/CGI/ENTRY/00287966](http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00287966). JUNE 2002.

write

[OE. *writan*, = OFris. *writa* to score, write (Fris. *write* to wear by rubbing, etc.), OS. *writan* to cut, write (MLG. *writen*), OHG. *rīzan* to tear, draw (MHG. *rīzen*, G. *reißen*), ON. *rita* to score, write (Norw. *rita*, *vrita*, SW. *rita* to draw)...]

1. To score, outline, or draw the figure of (something); to incise. *Obs.*
1. B. To form (letters, symbols, words, etc.) by carving, engraving, or incision; to trace in or on a hard or plastic surface, esp. with a sharp instrument; to record in this way.
1. C. *fig.* to write in the dust, in or on sand, water, the wind, etc., with reference to absence of abiding record.
1. D. *transf.* To impress or stamp marks indicating (some condition or quality) *on, in, or over* a person, etc.

WRITING { construction ; children ; barbarian ; incision ; scribbling }

FRANZ KAFKA > THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Kafka, Franz. "The Building of the Temple." *Parables*. NEW YORK: SCHOCKEN BOOKS, 1947.

[HTTP://ZORK.NET/~PATTY/KBUILDTEMPLE.HTML](http://zork.net/~patty/kbuildtemple.html).

[THE TEXT AT THE URL GIVEN ABOVE DIFFERS SLIGHTLY FROM THE 1947 PRINTED VERSION. THE PRINTED VERSION HAS BEEN FOLLOWED HERE.]

Everything came to his aid during the construction work. Foreign workers brought the marble blocks, trimmed and fitted to one another. The stones rose and placed themselves according to the gauging motions of his fingers. No building ever came into being as easily as did this temple—or rather, this temple came into being the way a temple should. Except that, to wreak a spite or to desecrate or destroy it completely, instruments obviously of a magnificent sharpness had been used to scratch on every stone—from what quarry had they come?—for an eternity outlasting the temple, the clumsy scribblings of senseless children's hands, or rather the entries of barbaric mountain dwellers.

WRITING { English : Russian : film : narrative }

OLIA LIALINA WITH JOSEPHINE BOSMA >

DEFENDING THE NET WITH LANGUAGE

Bosma, Josephine. "Olia Lialina Interview Ljubljana." POSTED TO NETTIME AUGUST 5, 1997.

[HTTP://AMSTERDAM.NETTIME.ORG/LISTS-ARCHIVES/NETTIME-L-9708/MSG00009.HTML](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/lists-archives/nettime-l-9708/msg00009.html).

JUNE 2002.

[PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION HAVE BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED. DRASTIC CHANGES ARE INDICATED WITH SQUARE BRACKETS.]

Bosma > I understand you are exploring what net.language is. Is it a language that is developing?

Lialina > It seems to me that I am a person who develops this language. What I am thinking about, I am trying to defend the Internet. That

is my attitude. Not by special ideologies, not by proclaiming something, but by developing its own language. If artists develop and give a life to the language for this environment, it is more difficult for commercial structures, for people who just want to represent their works in the net. It is more difficult for them to feel comfortable in this world after it has its own language. They must feel like strangers, those people who make their home pages representing their products.

Bosma > How do you work on developing this language?

Lialina > Difficult question. What is the structure of my work, the process? I just think what I want to do in general. If I have something in mind, the only thing I try to do is doing it in the net. I don't have restrictions. I don't look for a special topic which fits the net. It's absolutely intuitive. My English is quite poor. I stay far from discussions and articles from theorists written about net. ideology and economy. Especially when I started, I knew absolutely nothing. When I made "My Boyfriend Came Back From The War," it was a pure experiment with frames and HTML language. I didn't expect it would "sound" in this context, that there was already this context. After I heard all these theories about "My Boyfriend Came Back From The War," only after I started to think about myself. I worked out my attitude. The main thing I can say is that the net is a place for self-expression and nothing can restrict it. Of course it is not just that, but it could be a place for self-expression.

Bosma > When you talked about developing language I thought you were talking about filmic language in an image kind of way, but you are talking about words, about prose or poetry?

Lialina > You know, this [term] netfilm, for example, appeared when I thought about films. I can say that I don't make netfilms, but more

netstories. Some kind of narrative. Narrative in my works is everywhere. It can be with words, with pictures, but it's always dialogue or monologue. I think because the Russian tradition is quite literal in art and mostly in Moscow, I can't stand outside of it. It is somewhere in me, this desire to work with words, with sentences, with paragraphs and so on. But at the same time, which might be interesting for you: I can't do anything in Russian. "My Boyfriend" or "Anna Karenina" or other projects, I didn't think about in Russian first. Every time I start to do something in the net, my mind switches to the English language. It's a very poor language, more poor than net.english, my English. But for me it is enough to express in the net. I thought about why this is so. I speak very good Russian, I make excellent jokes [laughs] in Russian, I always experiment with words. I have a very rich Russian language. I think that if I would start to make my projects in Russian, it would be another game. It would immediately be a game with the Russian language, not with net.language. I think these are two very different and serious things for me, they can't be together. They start to fight with each other inside me.

WRITING { dialogue : artificiality : rewrite }

GEERT LOVINK > INTERVIEW AS TACTICAL MEDIA

<NET.NET.NET> Interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience.
09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

You can manipulate the interview and completely rewrite it.

Diamond > I have a question that relates to tonight's structure. You conduct a lot of your interventions through interviews, and you have a real history of interviewing people. Why have you chosen this structure as a way of constructing dialogue?

Lovink >

I strongly believe that dialogue speeds up thought. At this moment, we need that speed because it's really important to develop concepts that can rapidly move over the net and will be adopted by people overnight. We use the term "tactical media" because there is a certain urgency. What I find most interesting in thinking about the format of the interview is that you can do it, not live, but you can rework it. Then it has this very artificial aspect which I really like. You can manipulate the interview and completely rewrite it. This includes not only giving the person who I interview the possibility to rewrite the answer but to also rewrite my questions. In this process, we have possibilities that we didn't have before.

WRITING { collectives : representatives : trust }

CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE (STEVE KURTZ) —
THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 02 NOVEMBER, 1999. LOS ANGELES.

It is the old Hollywood scam— "We'll clean it up in post!"

Collective > What is the process that we're going to have to go through with Critical Art Ensemble in order to see this published? What is the process that you're going to take our interview material through?

CAE > You'll interview me, then you will transcribe it, and edit it to the point where it's fine with you. Then you send it to CAE and everyone in the group will read it, our editor will go over it, and then we'll send it back.

Collective > So everybody in your group reads it? Do they add or take away what they think is misstated?

CAE > Yes, if someone sees a problem then they'll address it.

Collective > As a result of that process, they must be fairly particular about the fact that you represent them when you [Steve Kurtz] travel around like this. Are you the spokesperson for CAE?

CAE > Yes, in most cases.

Collective > So when you're talking, the group is happy with anything you say?

CAE > Mostly. This trust stems from collective structure and the meaning of the collective structure for CAE. We all have specialized skills. When we formed the group we tried not to replicate skill and knowledge bases. Whoever has the best skills for the project, that's generally who directs it. And in the case of interviewing, it is much easier for just one person to do the talking. Post-production is where everyone can join in.

Collective > So you are the chosen representative?

CAE > Yes. Because I have twenty years of teaching experience. I am the one who is used to standing in front of audiences and delivering academic-styled speech. While it is possible to interview everybody else in the collective, it might take a longer time. It is easier to say, "Okay Steve, you are going to do it!" and then we will figure out the details later. It is the old Hollywood scam—"We'll clean it up in post!"

WRITING { mutation : consciousness : silence : color : politics }

++ **WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS > WORDS ARE BUILT IN
TO THE SOFT TYPEWRITER**

Burroughs, William, Gregory Corso, and Allen Ginsburg. "Interview." 1961.
[HTTP://WWW.HYPERREAL.ORG/WSB/INTERVIEW1961.HTML](http://www.hyperreal.org/wsb/interview1961.html). JUNE 2002.

[THIS INTERVIEW ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN *Journal for the Protection of All People* IN 1961, AND WAS TRANSCRIBED BY *Flesh* IN 1992. THE EDITORS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO LOCATE A PHYSICAL COPY OF THIS PUBLICATION. PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.]

Corso > Do you feel there has been a definite change in man's makeup? A new consciousness?

Burroughs > Yes, I can give you a precise answer to that. I feel that the change the mutation in consciousness will occur spontaneously once certain pressures now in operation are removed. I feel that the principal instrument of monopoly and control that prevents expansion of consciousness is the word lines controlling thought feeling and apparent sensory impressions of the human host.

Ginsburg > And if removed, what step?

Burroughs > The forward step must be made in silence. [W]e detach ourselves from word forms—this can be accomplished by substituting for words, letters, concepts, verbal concepts, other modes of expression; for example, color. We can translate word and letter into color (Rimbaud stated that in his color vowels, words quote “words” can be read in silent color). In other words man must get away from verbal forms to attain the consciousness, that which is there to be perceived at hand.

Corso > How does one take that “forward step,” can you say?

Burroughs > Well, this is my subject and is what I am concerned with. Forward steps are made by giving up old armor because words are built into you—in the soft typewriter of the womb you do not realize the word-armor you carry; for example, when you read this page your eyes move irresistibly from left to right following the words that you have been accustomed to. Now try breaking up part of the page like this:

*Are there or just we can translate
many solutions for example color word color
in the soft typewriter into
political conflicts to attain consciousness
monopoly and control*

Corso > Reading that it seems you end up where you began, with politics

and its nomenclature: conflict, attain, solution, monopoly, control—so what kind of help is that?

Burroughs > Precisely what I was saying—if you talk you always end up with politics, it gets nowhere, I mean man it's strictly from the soft typewriter.

WRITING { Napster : Word : Linker : Director }

MATT FULLER > TOWARDS A MINOR SOFTWARE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. MAY, 2000. CALARTS.

Think about the crazy ways people write!

Collective > Why don't you use free software to create more room for a "minor software"?

Fuller > Right now the free software movement is in a situation where it has to move from software written by engineers to a more widely diffused and socialized form of software production. At the moment, it has almost reached the peak of free software being made specifically for programmers. Now they are starting to produce graphic user interfaces, suites that have word processors and spreadsheets, etc. But if you look at the major free software word processors, they entirely adopt the model of Microsoft Word. They just mimic it. It's not even an ironic mimesis, it's straight slave mentality. The thing that you should do is produce things that don't work like Napster, produce things that are really insane. Think about the crazy ways people write! Think about how people write essays. We all write ludicrous things and maybe we want a program to amplify that. You have to crack the machine of language and open those roots up, so not only do you have to make the software free but you have to offer clusters of experimentation. We need to find ways that people on a mass level as

well as on a small level can determine what they actually desire in software. For example, Mongrel produced the art piece/software “Linker” because they had a specific social need and no software to meet that need. But because it was produced in Director, it is still a closed piece of work. It has to be done in a different way to maximize its potential. But it’s a short step at the moment.

Collective > How far would you like the open-endedness of software to go? Would you like the elimination of all rigid standards?

Fuller > I think that it needs to be developed to a point where no one can say what should be done. The situation has to be created where things can develop at their own pace, and not according to what anybody, or any software, dictates.

**You have to crack
the machine of language
and open those
roots up**


```
#define m(i) (x[i]^s[i+84])<<
```

```
unsigned char x[5] , y, s[2048]; main
n) {for( read(0,x,5 ) ; read(0,s ,n=20
) ; write(1 ,s,n) ) if
[y=s [13]%8+20] /16%4 ==1 ) {
i=m( 1)17 ^256 +m(0) 8,k =m
0,j= m(4) 17^ m(3) 9^k* 2-k
^8,a =0,c =26;for (s[y] -=16
--c;j *=2)a= a*2^i& 1,i=i /2^j&1
<<24;for(j= 127; ++j<n;c=c>
y)
c
+=y=i^i/8^i>>4^i>>12,
i=i>>8^y<<17,a^=a>>14,y=a^a*8^a<<6,a=a
>>8^y<<9,k=s[j],k ="7Wo~'G_ \216" [k
&7]+2^"cr3sfw6v;*k+>/n." [k>>4]*2^k*257/
8,s[j]=k^(k&k*2&34)*6^c+~y
;}}}
```


THEFT

DeCSS DVD Descrambling Code

efdtt.c authored by Charles M. Hannum with assistance from Phil Carmody.

ASCII DVD-logo shaped by Alex Bowley.

Possession of this code may be a violation of the Digital Millenium Copyright Act.

[HTTP://WWW-2.CS.CMU.EDU/~DST/DeCSS/GALLERY/BOWLEY-EFDTT-DVDLOGO.HTML](http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~dst/DeCSS/GALLERY/BOWLEY-EFDTT-DVDLOGO.HTML)

THEFT { ownership : criticism : detournment }

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DEFINITION OF FAIR USE

“Definition of Fair Use.” Copyright Society of the U.S.A. [HTTP://WWW.LAW.DUKE.EDU/COPYRIGHT/COPYKIDS/QUIZ/DEF.HTML#FAIRUSE](http://www.law.duke.edu/copyright/copykids/quiz/def.html#fairuse).

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THEFT { Barthes : collage : appropriation : anti-essentialist }

CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE >

PLAGIARISM RESTORES DRIFT

Critical Art Ensemble. *The Electronic Disturbance*. NEW YORK: AUTONOMEDIA, 1994. PDF AT [HTTP://WWW.CRITICAL-ART.NET](http://www.critical-art.net). PP. 85-86

[UNCHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

Plagiarism often carries a weight of negative connotations (particularly in the bureaucratic class); while the need for its use has increased over the century, plagiarism itself has been camouflaged

in a new lexicon by those desiring to explore the practice as method and as a legitimized form of cultural discourse. Readymades, collage, found art or found text, intertexts, combines, detournment, and appropriation—all these terms represent explorations in plagiarism. Indeed, these terms are not perfectly synonymous, but they all intersect a set of meanings primary to the philosophy and activity of plagiarism. Philosophically, they all stand in opposition to essentialist doctrines of the text: They all assume that no structure within a given text provides a universal and necessary meaning. No work of art or philosophy exhausts itself in itself alone, in its being-in-itself. Such works have always stood in relation to the actual life-process of society from which they have distinguished themselves. Enlightenment essentialism failed to provide a unit of analysis that could act as a basis of meaning. Just as the connection between a signifier and its referent is arbitrary, the unit of meaning used for any given textual analysis is also arbitrary. Roland Barthes' notion of the *lexia* primarily indicates surrender in the search for a basic unit of meaning. Since language was the only tool available for the development of metalanguage, such a project was doomed from its inception. It was much like trying to eat soup with soup. The text itself is fluid—although the language game of ideology can provide the illusion of stability, creating blockage by manipulating the unacknowledged assumptions of everyday life. Consequently, one of the main goals of the plagiarist is to restore the dynamic and unstable drift of meaning, by appropriating and recombining fragments of culture. In this way, meanings can be produced that were not previously associated with an object or a given set of objects.

THEFT { memory : collage : authorship }

++ **WILLIAM GIBSON** > *EVIDENCE SORTED BY A POET*

Gibson, William. *Count Zero*. NEW YORK: ACE, 1984. P. 227.

"I understand," she said, sometime later, knowing that she spoke now for the comfort of hearing her own voice. She spoke quietly, unwilling to wake that bounce and ripple of sound. "You are someone else's collage. Your maker is the true artist. Was it the mad daughter? It doesn't matter. Someone brought the machine here, welded it to the dome, and wired it to the traces of memory. And spilled, somehow, all the worn sad evidence of a family's humanity, and left it all to be stirred, to be sorted by a poet. To be sealed away in boxes. I know of no more extraordinary work than this. No more complex gesture..."

THEFT { sampling : cut-up : quotation }

®TMARK > *DECONSTRUCTING BECK*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with "Raoul" and "Frank" of RTMark. 09 MARCH 2000. CALARTS.

But copyright infringement has been going on for centuries very profitably.

Collective > I was wondering about the "Deconstructing Beck" project you did. Why Beck?

"Raoul" > As with all our projects, we didn't choose it.

Collective > You didn't choose it?

"Raoul" > No, it chose us. The group decided to attack Beck, but they weren't really attacking; it was more of a fandom kind of thing. They actually love Beck and so do we.

Collective > Beck didn't get it?

"Frank" > Beck likes to use the strategy of "cutting up," but he can do it legally since he has the backing to clear the samples. We feel that

since we're bombarded with all of this information in our daily lives we should also be able to take something that we like and quote it, cut it up and repackage it. And since the people who did the project were making academic recordings that like ten people listen to, they figured they should be able to engage in the tactic of "cutting up" and quotation without having to clear all those samples and pay a lot of money.

"Raoul" > It shouldn't rely on the amount of money that you have.

"Frank" > Everybody should be able to do collage if they want to. I guess that's the argument.

Collective > Would you have done what you did with Beck to someone you didn't like? Would that have made the same point?

"Raoul" > Well, we didn't do it. We wanted to highlight how new sampling technologies enable firmer control, and how corporate power tends to figure out ways to exploit that control. They are able to hone in and draw out the maximum profit from every square inch of possibility. But copyright infringement has been going on for centuries very profitably. In fact a lot of art and literature depends on it. Even though it may have missed the point in some ways, we thought that the project furthered our bottom line.

THEFT { sampling : fair use : lawyers }

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®TMark > *EXCERPTS FROM NASTY LETTERS*

®TMark, "Beck Authorities Correspondence." [HTTP://WWW.RTMK.COM/LAWLETTERS.HTML](http://www.rtmk.com/lawletters.html).

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Date: Wed, 18 Feb 98 09:49:00 -0800

From: "McPherson, Brian" <bmcphers@rmslaw.com>

To: "RTMARK@PARANOIA.COM" <RTMARK@PARANOIA.COM>

Hi. My name is Brian McPherson and I am Beck's attorney.

Needless to say, I found your email a little bit surprising—bragging

about copyright infringement is incredibly stupid. You will be hearing from me, Universal Music Group, BMG Music Publishing and Geffen Records very shortly....

Date: Fri, 3 Apr 1998 11:25:51 -0800
From: Mark/Negativland <mark@negativland.com>
To: "McPherson, Brian" <bmcphers@rmslaw.com>

We would strongly suggest that you re-read the fair use portion of our nation's copyright laws.... And for a little irony, don't skip the beginning of those copyright laws where our founding fathers stated that the whole purpose of LIMITED copyright was to encourage the creation of new work! The application of copyright's Fair Use provisions to transformative works such as this Beck deconstruction is all about doing just that....

All artists have nothing to lose and everything to gain from allowing work such as this to exist, free of anti-art litigation based purely on economic turf presumptions. The legal profession's continuing perverse and careless refusal to distinguish between whole and unmitigated theft for profit and the fragmentary re-use of our common cultural artifacts in the creation of new work is the best reason we know of to keep lawyers out of art....

Date: Fri, 3 Apr 98 12:11:00 -0800
From: "McPherson, Brian" <bmcphers@rmslaw.com>
To: "Mark/Negativland" <mark@negativland.com>

Hi Negativland. I don't know you, but I do know a bit about your case. What Beck, Geffen, etc. plan to do is certainly none of your business, as far as I can tell. Furthermore, I kind of resent your unsolicited criticism of my knowledge of copyright law. But hey, it's a free country, and I guess you have a lot of free time on your hands. Good day.

Date: Thu, 9 Apr 1998 12:18:00 -0700

From: Mark/Negativland <mark@negativland.com>

To: "McPherson, Brian (Geffen lawyer)" <bmcphers@rmslaw.com>,
"Brodsky, Peter (BMG lawyer)" <Peter.Brodsky@bmge.com>

[Y]es, we do tend to make plenty of free time to defend and protect free appropriation which is at the procedural and aesthetic heart of our entire body of work....

In defending this kind of work, we hope to implant the novel idea that when art and commercial law come into conflict, the contest should be resolved on a level playing field—one that takes the imperatives, perogatives, and creative impetus of the art practice involved fully into account....

[I]t is incumbent on all of you who employ these now inadequate and blind-sided laws to make the crucial distinctions between whole-work piracy and bootlegging and the culturally valuable practice of collage which uses elements and fragments of the existing culture surrounding us all....

++ THEFT { sampling : cut-up : quotation : originality : ownership }

**AMY ALEXANDER > INTERVIEW YOURSELF:
PLAGIARISM AND OWNERSHIP**

Alexander, Amy. "Meta IY and Other Stuff." [HTTP://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IY/](http://PLAGIARIST.ORG/IY/). JUNE 2002.

[SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.
PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL. APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.]

Alexander > That would seem to lead us to believe you're a plagiarist. Oops—I mean... well, now that the cards are on the table, aren't you? Why should we be interested in someone who never does anything original? Isn't the whole "appropriation" thing plagiarized from the 1960s? And "Interview Yourself"—what's this about anyway? You stole this whole critique of the net art "star system" from a discus-

sion on nettime between Oia Lialina and Josephine Bosma!

These are interesting questions, and I could go on at length about them, but I think it would make this interview realllly long [:-)], and it's not where I want to focus. So sort of simplistically: there are a couple parts to the "plagiarist" philosophy. On the one hand, it parodies the ever-intensifying ideas of ownership and property, which are held onto more desperately in these digital days the more obvious it becomes that they don't hold up anymore—and probably never did. Ownership of words (domain names), intellectual property mania, "illegal" computer code, etc. It's all about control of course—no matter how ridiculous it becomes. But also, the idea of primacy doesn't hold up anymore—everyone can be immediately aware of everyone else's ideas—and sometimes discover we're all thinking the same thing—so illusions of being "first" fall apart. So the first idea behind plagiarist is to point out that the idea of "originality" needs to be rethought. It doesn't mean it doesn't exist, but we need to rework traditional thinking about the relationship between "originality" and "prior art." (Pun intended.)

The second idea behind plagiarist is simply that it tends to use the net to analyze and discuss its own culture. Projects like theBot, netsong (with Peter Traub), and the Recycler don't really exist on some level, because the raw materials are all net data. And the result of this analysis is inevitably that the net is ultimately about the net, an ouroboros endlessly swallowing its own tail.

GIORGIO AGAMBEN > *BENJAMIN AND*

*QUOTATIONS: ALIENATING BY FORCE A FRAGMENT
OF THE PAST FROM ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT*

Agamben, Giorgio. "The Melancholy Angel." Trans. Georgia Albert. *The Man without Content*. Translation of *L'uomo senza contenuto*. STANFORD: STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1999. P. 104.

The quotations in my works are like robbers lying in ambush on the highway to attack the passerby with weapons drawn and rob him of his convictions." Walter Benjamin, the author of this statement, was perhaps the first European intellectual to recognize the fundamental change that had taken place in the transmissibility of culture and in the new relation to the past that constituted the inevitable consequence of this change. The particular power of quotations arises, according to Benjamin, not from their ability to transmit that past and allow the reader to relive it but, on the contrary, from their capacity to "make a clean sweep, to expel from the context, to destroy." Alienating by force a fragment of the past from its historical context, the quotation at once makes it lose its character of authentic testimony and invests it with an alienating power that constitutes its unmistakable aggressive force. Benjamin, who for his entire life pursued the idea of writing a work made up exclusively of quotations, had understood that the authority invoked by the quotation is founded precisely on the destruction of the authority that is attributed to a certain text by its situation in the history of culture.

++ **JORGE LUIS BORGES** > *TLÖN AND AUTHORSHIP:
PLAGIARISM DOES NOT EXIST*

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." Trans. James E. Irby. *Labyrinths, Selected Stories & Other Writings*. Edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby. NEW YORK: NEW DIRECTIONS, 1964. P. 13.

We already know that in Tlön the subject of knowledge is one and eternal.

In literary practices the idea of a single is also all-powerful. It is uncommon for books to be signed. The concept of plagiarism does not exist: it has been established that all works are the creation of one author, who is atemporal and anonymous. The critics often invent authors: they select two dissimilar works—the Tao Te Ching and the 1001 Nights, say—attribute them to the same writer and then determine most scrupulously the psychology of this interesting *homme de lettres*.

Their books are also different. Works of fiction contain a single plot, with all its imaginable permutations. Those of a philosophical nature invariably include both the thesis and the antithesis, the rigorous pro and con of a doctrine. A book which does not contain its counterbook is considered incomplete.

**A book which does not
contain its counterbook
is considered
incomplete.**

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1:1 (2) - Migration, Lisa Jevbratt

MAPPING { Borges : map-territory : indexes-data }

LEV MANOVICH > *PORNO WEB SITES EXPOSED*
THE LOGIC OF THE WEB

Manovich, Lev. "Database as Symbolic Form."

[HTTP://JUPITER.UCSD.EDU/~MANOVICH/FLN/DOCS/DATABASE.RTF](http://JUPITER.UCSD.EDU/~MANOVICH/FLN/DOCS/DATABASE.RTF). JUNE 2002. P. 5

Jorge Luis Borges's story about a map which was equal in size to the territory it represented became re-written as the story about indexes and the data they index. But now the map has become larger than the territory. Sometimes, much larger. Porno Web sites exposed the logic of the Web to its extreme by constantly re-using the same photographs from other porno Web sites. Only rare sites featured the original content. On any given date, the same few dozen images would appear on thousands of sites. Thus, the same data would give rise to more indexes than the number of data elements themselves.

MAPPING { dreaming : description : immediacy }

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WILLIAM GIBSON AND ROBERT LONGO >

IT'S NOT A MODEL FOR SOMETHING ELSE

Bakel, Rogier Van. "Remembering Johnny." *Wired* 1995. ARCHIVED WEB VERSION.
HTTP://WWW.WIRED.COM/WIRED/ARCHIVE/3.06/GIBSON_PR.HTML. JUNE 2002.

[SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.]

Longo > I was thinking about books and images. I associate the way that words create images with dreaming. When you dream, there's no frame, it's more atmosphere. Books are somehow much more like atmosphere than like a real story.

Gibson > Well, for me, that whole business of narrative—I'm always uncomfortable with that. I wish I didn't have to do that. I'd like to be able to write books that don't need verbs. Just large collections of nouns and modifiers would work for me. [Laughs.] The ongoing descriptions of things is where the pleasure is in writing. But there's always the editor in the back of my head saying, Now wait a minute, these people have to be doing something and going somewhere.

Longo > Sometimes, what I really want to be is a writer. Writing somehow reminds me of boxing. It's, like, right there.

Gibson > It's direct, yeah. It's not a model for something else, at least.

MAPPING { nettime : database : interface : architecture : community : discourse }

GEERT LOVINK > *ORAL DATABASE CULTURE*

<NET.NET.NET> Interview with Sarah Diamond, Dee Dee Halleck and a live audience.
09 FEBRUARY, 2000. AT MOCA, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

[T]he computer and the Internet itself are textual environments. The programs on which the Internet is running are textual.

Diamond > Isn't there a kind of structural problem with the Internet in that it's a discursive space but also a database, and that kind of environment is inherently flattened? Not necessarily democratic in terms

of vertical structure, but flattened. So what does it mean for intellectuals to construct understanding amongst the different sorts of objects within that space? Do they provide a structure of discourse?

Lovink > The essence of my position is that the intellectual should try to understand his or her role in the technological culture as a part of the technology. This means that there's something paradoxical which intellectuals should face, namely that the computer and the Internet itself are textual environments. The programs on which the Internet is running are textual. This is a big debate—is the Internet essentially a new media that is driven by the visual? But if we were to go down to its essence, deep under the machine, we find a program running which is perfectly textual. Even the images we see these days often consist purely of numbers. These are the things I would like to address.

Halleck > It seems like nettime is an interesting combination of a database and a readable kind of text. It certainly doesn't have images that link to pages, and the architecture is rather clear and beautiful. The interface itself is very useful.

Lovink > I think that it is a new form of discourse production. In the past, intellectuals were very much a part of that production in the sense that discourse-making was very much oral and in this way created a common discourse. These days, this oral culture has a technical base in machines and in the networks that connect them. We try to conceptualize what we are all individually writing from the tremendous amount of noise and information we are generating as a kind of collective text-filtering. Some would call this a community. Nettime is a text-based discourse-driven community.

SIMON POPE > *WEB STALKER: IT FEELS ITS WAY*

<NET.NET.NET> E-mail interview response on 03 OCTOBER, 2001. 00:17:50 +0100.

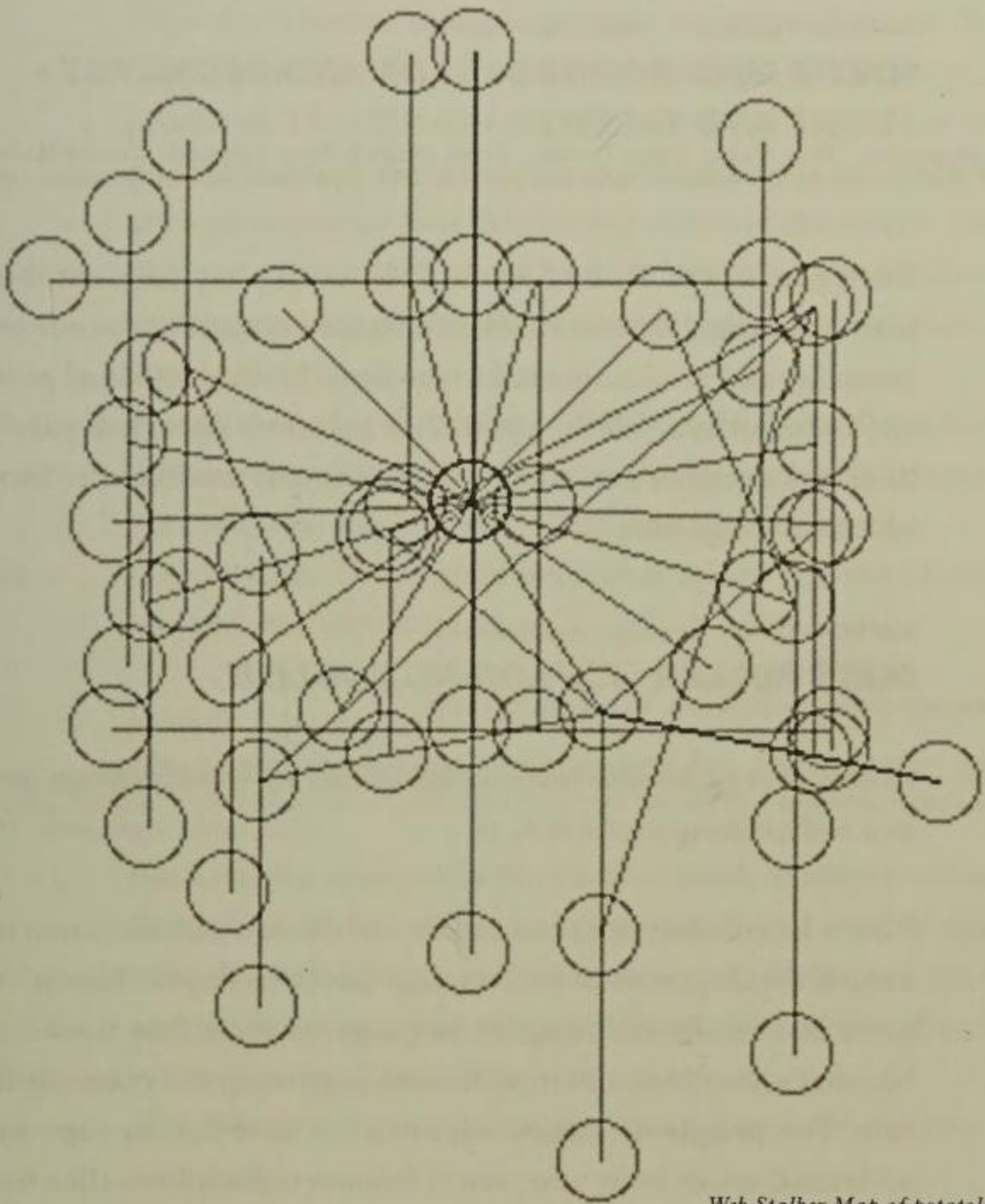
If the flâneur is dead, then so, we thought, must be the browser.

Collective > The term “emotional code” was used somewhere to describe the Web Stalker, however, the interface is extremely clean and simple, not immediately hinting at these emotional attributes. Perhaps it is just a response to a program that takes on a “life” of its own, but maybe it has to do with the lack of comforting graphical navigation that users typically identify with browsing the Internet. How did you address the emotional attributes of the Web Stalker when constructing it?

Pope > In naming our software “The Web Stalker,” we made a direct reference to the London writer Ian Sinclair when he states that the 19th century “flâneur” no longer provides an adequate role-model for inhabitants of the city; the Stalker, with an incisive, task-oriented approach, is far better.

So we saw parallels between wandering the city and browsing the web. Browsing seemed ill-suited to our requirements. We needed to make some urgent inquiries and so developed the software to do this. The Web Stalker performs specific operations: stash, extract, map, crawl, stalk.

If the flâneur is dead, then so, we thought, must be the browser. The Web Stalker is more concerned with computer-computer interaction than human-computer interaction. As a user, you get a view into its limited but very exact operations on HTML documents. You get the sense that the software inhabits a massively dense space of links and richly marked-up texts; it exists in a haptic environment



Web Stalker Map of potatoLand.org
Web Stalker download: [HTTP://WWW.BACKSPACE.ORG/IOD/IOD4.HTML](http://www.backspace.org/iod/iod4.html)

where sight means nothing: it feels its way from document to document and deals and proceeds through touch. This is the closest to an emotional computing that the Web Stalker gets, I guess.

MAPPING { geometry : tactile : movement }

++
JORGE LUIS BORGES > *TLÖN AND GEOMETRY : VISUAL AND TACTILE*

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." Trans. James E. Irby. *Labyrinths, Selected Stories & Other Writings*. Edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby. NEW YORK: NEW DIRECTIONS, 1964. P. 12.

The geometry of Tlön comprises two somewhat different disciplines: the visual and the tactile. The latter corresponds to our own geometry and is subordinated to the first. The basis of visual geometry is the surface, not the point. This geometry disregards parallel lines and declares that man in his movement modifies the forms which surround him.

MAPPING { OED : language : codification }

MATT FULLER > *EXPLODING ENGLISH*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. MAY, 2000. CALARTS.

[T]they have gone online to try to keep up with the speed of change, print as a medium being unable to do so.

Collective > I have heard that because of the codification of dictionaries, natural development of the language has been slowed. Haven't we had a historically static English language for some time now?

Fuller > No, that's absolutely not true! English is growing at a massively fast rate. The people who make dictionaries have had to cope with additional words every year, words from new disciplines (like from tight scientific disciplines that are throwing around specialized

jargon) to the multiplication of the edges of English and the way English mutates in different language populations. The Oxford English Dictionary has actually given up on trying to codify the English language. All they do now is try to record how it is used. They don't bother trying to provide a standard because they just can't do it due to the excessive amount of language being produced. The OED tries to find examples of English use in every point of history that they can get their hands on. They do not attempt to project how English will evolve in the future. Usefully, because of the explosion of English, they have gone online to try to keep up with the speed of change, print as a medium being unable to do so.

Collective > Do you think that the way the OED "simply observes" has become a dominant model now? Not to standardize or codify "correctness" but instead to just find what is happening?

Fuller > Yes, for sure. This is good because it means that the impetus for innovation is elsewhere.

MAPPING { textuality : fold : random : accretion }

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WILLIAM GIBSON > *CYBERSPACE: NEOLOGIC SPASM*
Gibson, William. "Academy Leader." *Cyberspace: First Steps*. Ed. Michael Benedikt. CAMBRIDGE: MIT PRESS, 1991. 27-29. P. 27

Just a chance operator in the gasoline crack of history, officer...
Assembled word cyberspace from small and readily available components of language. Neologic spasm: the primal act of pop poetics. Preceded any concept whatsoever. Slick and hollow—awaiting received meaning.

All I did: folded words as taught. Now other words accrete in the interstices.

"Gentlemen, that is not now nor will it ever be my concern..."

Not what I do.

I work the angle of transit. Vectors of neon plaza, licensed consumers, acts primal and undreamed of...

MAPPING { ASCII : textuality : random text }

VUK COSIC > WRITING AND IMAGE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

I feel like an old hippie.

Collective > Would you ever make ASCII that has some type of meaningful text?

Cosuk > Yes. There's software that automatically takes an essay and prints it out in some shape.

Collective > No, I mean a little more intentional marrying of text and ASCII image. All your ASCII text is arbitrary and random—though it's actually about text, there's no textual meaning.

Cosuk > When I was a writer, I was interested in conveying meaning in a different way, but still within the framework of text. I was copying books, deleting stuff, letting random or not-so-random parts of the text turn into a story. The last thing I would want would be to make an image that could be really read. This is why I also did the text-to-speech with the ASCII image.

Collective > But do you think that there's a way to do it without being literally over-the-top? Is there a way you can bring in content?

Cosuk > I'm very interested in writing due to my experiences with net.art. I would like to see if you took the hand out, how this sentence would look. I don't have a clue what might happen—I see a little bit what would happen with e-mail, computer-based. I think it's so cool. I feel like an old hippie.

**The last thing I would
want would be to make
an image that could
be really read.**

ON JUNE, 23 2000 AOL

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AOL 83 Minutes hoax, Author Unknown
http://vil.mcafee.com/dispVirus.asp?virus_k=98509

WILL START TO

[UNCHANGED FROM ORIGINAL.]

MONITOR YOUR ACCOUNT

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READING { review : TV : phonograph : pop philosophy }

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GILLES DELEUZE > *TREATING A BOOK AS YOU
WOULD TREAT A RECORD YOU LISTEN TO*

Deleuze, Gilles. *Dialogues*. NEW YORK: COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1987. PP. 3-4.

Today we have at our disposal new ways of reading, and perhaps of writing. There are ones which are bad and rotten. For example, we get the feeling that some books are written for the review that a journalist will have to produce, so that there is no longer even any need for a review, but only for empty words ("You must read that! It's great! Go on! You'll see!") to avoid reading the book and putting the article together. But good ways of reading today succeed in treating a book as you would treat a record you listen to, a film or a TV programme you watch; any treatment of the book which claims for it a special respect—an attention of another kind—comes from another era and definitively condemns the book. There's no question of difficulty or understanding: concepts are exactly like sounds, colours or images, they are intensities which suit you or not, which are acceptable or aren't acceptable. Pop philosophy.

IRATIONAL > *IT'S EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD DESIGN*

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview with Rachel Baker and Heath Bunting of Irational.

APRIL, 2000. CALARTS.

Should it be a capital "A"? Should it be a lowercase "a"?

[REPEATED "COLLECTIVE" SIGNIFIES RESPONSES FROM MULTIPLE MEMBERS OF THE COLLECTIVE.]

Bunting > Can I ask you a question? Why do you have a Swiss tool pouch but you don't have a Swiss tool?

Collective > Because I'm a traitor. So why do so many of these net.art networkers have such bland-looking web pages? Is it that there doesn't have to be cool graphics all the time because they don't care about that level?

Bunting > What do you mean by "cool"?

Collective > The Irational website is simple. It's text links. It's not like this crazy graphic-designed Flash website, where you come in and you're like whoa! whoosh! with sound and shit and like, interface.

Collective > It's not about the aesthetic, it's about the information. That is the aesthetic—an anti-aesthetic.

Bunting > It took me months to design that look.

Collective > Because you program by hand?

Bunting > No. Should it be a capital "A"? Should it be a lowercase "a"? Should there be a space?

Collective > It's not arbitrary...

Bunting > Should there be a double space line there or should it be a single space? Now a hard rule, now remove all the hard rules, let's do it again... it's not anti-aesthetic.

Collective > It's not?

Collective > Anti-aesthetic is an aesthetic. I think it's highly aesthetic.

Bunting > I would say it's exceptionally good design.

- Collective > Of course. You've done these simple graphics and simple designs. You have a particular aesthetic.
- Bunting > I would say, yeah. It's not an anti-aesthetic though.
- Collective > It's a simple aesthetic. Graphic.
- Bunting > It's a sparse, pure aesthetic. Very specific.
- Collective > It's straight up.
- Collective > Minimalist.
- Collective > It's just like, boom, here you go. Here's the information. It's clean.
- Collective > That's right.
- Collective > It's just hanging in my head... I don't know, I get so concerned with design after a while.
- Bunting > It's different. It's a different style or aesthetic. It's incorrect to say that Irrational doesn't have style or aesthetic.
- Collective > I didn't say that.
- Bunting > Or that it's not a concern for me, or that I'm against aesthetics. Because I do agonize over the design. It takes hours to get something to looking a certain way.
- Collective > No, there's a definite aesthetic. Like in those love letters...
- Bunting > What love letters?
- Collective > That project of writing notes to each other.
- Bunting > Oh, me and Rachel.
- Collective > The drawings on the napkins.
- Bunting > Yeah, that's Rachel.
- Collective > "Oh, Baker, I'm on the toilet!" That is an aesthetic.
- Bunting > That's all Rachel's new stuff.
- Collective > Well for some reason that made the aesthetic concrete. But it's just this web page with text. There's this napkin with pen, you know?

SIMON POPE > THE PROPER GUI

<NET.NET.NET> E-mail interview response on 03 OCTOBER 2001 00:17:50 +0100.

“Don’t you know you’re using the sound control panel slider incorrectly?”

Collective > I/O/D started in 1994, on the very cusp of the era of true home computing. The Internet and Microsoft were not even household words at that point, yet you were already pushing ideas of interface and application design as points of control and manipulation. What made you follow that path at such a relatively early time?

Pope > At the time we were putting I/O/D together, I had been applying information technology to hierarchical classification systems in biology—the “Systematic Classification” of species with everything in its place in a “tree” structure. I’d been making simple hypertext systems running on Apple Macintosh machines, to re-use these systems to represent species according to the similarities in behavior, habitat or the like. This was a historical development of technology, aimed at representing the world in a massively different way, linking across hierarchical structures of thought, domains of knowledge, or even organizational and social structures. At the time, Apple was positioned in that now familiar lineage which runs from Vannevar Bush through Doug Englebart, Ted Nelson and Alan Kay to Xerox PARC.

But even if Apple had developed the “computer for the rest of us,” they still weren’t giving us the computing we wanted! Theirs was a computing which seemed to claim an “end of history” in terms of user-interaction. Their user-interface guidelines had become tablets of stone, and any criticism of them was considered heresy (which was recognized in 1996 by Dona Gentner and Jakob

Nielsen in “The Anti-Mac Interface”). We needed to break the tyranny of the desktop and that bureaucratic way of ordering and controlling the world. So we started to scratch through their neat, generalizing, liberal GUIs.

We concluded that the “desktop metaphor” reinforced social relations where it claimed to produce new ones. We thought that maybe it was time our culture and our understanding brought its influence to bear and see what the outcomes might be.

At the launch of the first I/O/D, I remember meeting someone with a gray beard and blue jeans (who I immediately presumed had something to do with Apple) who told me to stop misusing Apple’s user-interface guidelines: “Don’t you know you’re using the sound control panel slider incorrectly?” Of course that was the point, but these old geezers thought that their way was the only way and that we obviously needed educating. The last thing we wanted to constrain ourselves by was behaviorist HCI [Human-Computer Interface] principles, so we brought our knowledge of DIY, ‘zines, jungle [dj’s], art practices, and critical theory into the middle-manager’s office and shat in his filing cabinet.

After the first edition of I/O/D, we quickly recognized that we weren’t in the game of redesigning and replacing existing GUIs—we’d always be working within the constraints set by others. But in this environment still controlled by “proper” computing and information systems, we did what we could with the means available to us to assert our “everyday practices” (to borrow from Michel de Certeau). We also recognized something important to us in this heritage that Apple was laying claim to: they had been “counter-cultural” in their time, and they owed a huge debt to Ted Nelson’s “computer lib” and Murray Bookchin’s ideas of “liberating tech-

nology.” It seemed culturally and socially important—and technically possible—to pursue this line of development, and to explore the ground which lay beyond business computing, with its concern for management, efficiency, and security.

READING { Slovenia : PopTV : book wall : ASCII : commodity : retro-computing }

VUK COSIC > LOW UGLY DIRTY EYE-CANDY

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. 23 MARCH, 2000. CALARTS.

So dumb. You could do this in a second. Very stupid, I think.

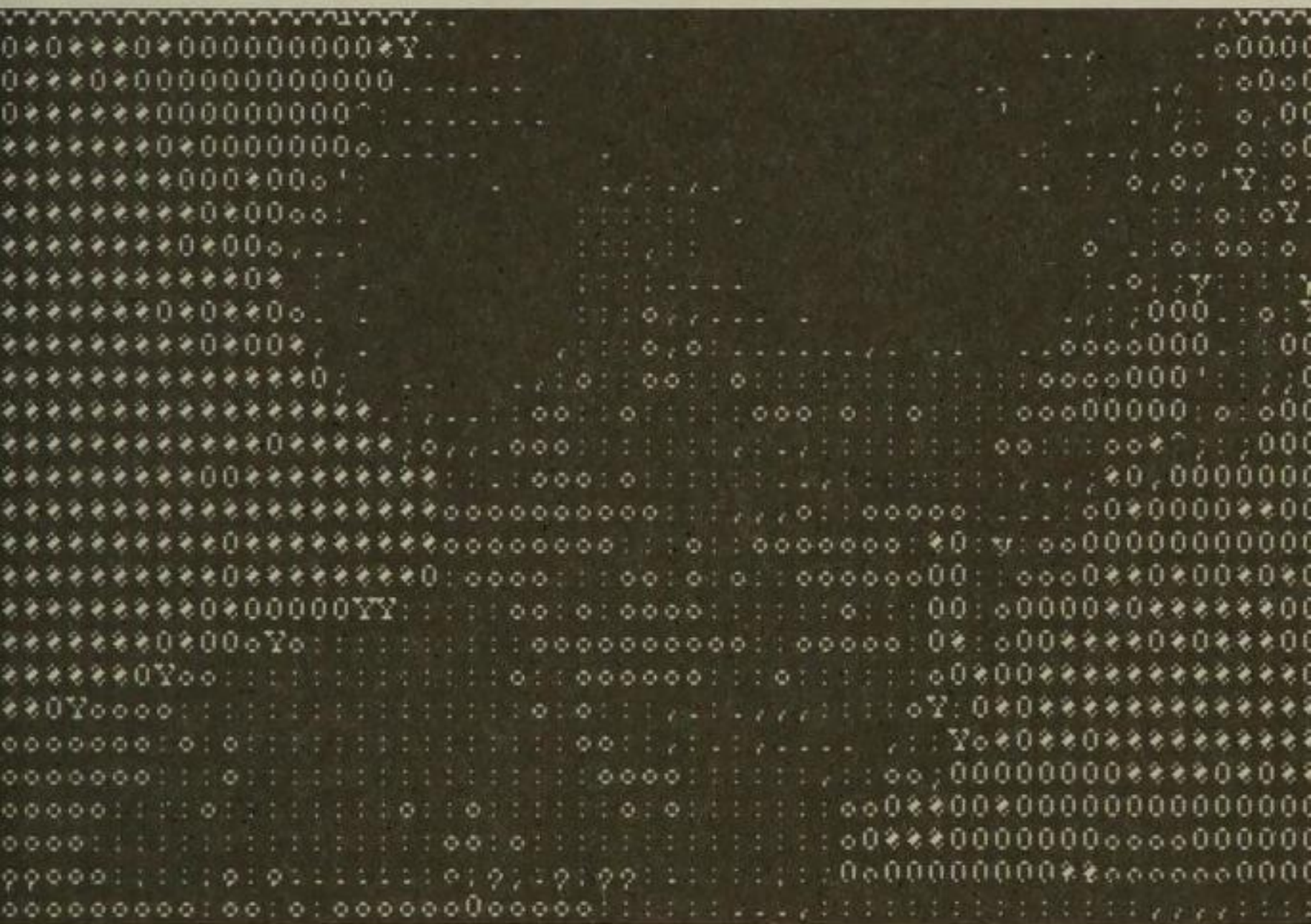
Collective > It sounds like your Internet work was done in a conscious way, specifically for the people that would be perceiving that information.

Cosic > Yeah. Before the Internet appeared in my life, I worked by having an idea that I was interested in first, and then deciding how to realize it. One time I wrote a short story for a magazine. Another time I made a land art piece. At that time, I was always pushing the medium into the background and paying more attention to the content in the foreground. With the web, I had an opportunity to play with so-called “multimediality” and to more directly address questions of the medium—the message if you will. It was logical for me to use the web. I had a lot of fun and it was very beautiful to make one-pixel thick GIF animations and web pages without one single word or graphic.

[looking at the screen]

What you have here are frame borders. It’s not really interactivity—you try to move them but you can’t. In the HTML code, you write `<border = 100>` instead of `<border = 0>`. It is all about understanding the HTML or why browsers crash. It is about doing the opposite expected.

Yesterday, I started thinking about a book-wall. You all have



Still from Deep ASCII, Vuk Cosic
[HTTP://WWW1.ZKM.DE/~WVDC/ASCII/JAVA/](http://www1.zkm.de/~wvdc/ascii/java/)

libraries at home, and you know what video walls are. I'd like to make a video wall that opens books and projects on different surfaces in moving ASCII. It comes out of this project in November, a show in Slovenia about some poet who died—he's like a founder of Slovenian culture. He'd be 200 years old now, God forbid. And it's a big show. So the project is this: have an open book that looks like a first edition of his poetry from 1814. And there with the font that was used in that first edition, I will do this moving ASCII image, similar to my project Deep Throat, only the computer will surf through the contemporary Slovenian television Pop TV channel. Pop TV is one of the most popular television stations in Slovenia, so I think it makes a lot of sense. These are the thoughts I'm having, this book wall. Or ceramics. Things of that type. I want to go away from ASCII. Just like I am trying to get away from the web stuff I've done. I've actually done some stuff lately, but I don't want to focus on that anymore.

mumbling about what is on screen]

So dumb. You could do this in a second. Very stupid, I think.

Collective >

Your version of Deep Throat made with ASCII is very visually attractive. How is this work not just eye-candy?

Cosic >

An ASCII image out of a still from the porn flick Deep Throat? I don't know if we understand the term eye-candy in the same way. Partly why all this ASCII work failed is this concept of the [un]commodifiable art. It's supposed to be this low, ugly, dirty thing that the entertainment industry doesn't want. The entertainment industry wants Terminator 3 now. It wants to create beautiful and sublime imagery that can be used as decoration. In the real world, I don't believe there are any serious consequences of doing ASCII art. There is this whole fad of retro-computing where you get people who never throw computers away, people that actually work

better with their five-year-old software. But I don't think that by doing ASCII art, I'm pushing any single person alive towards thinking about not buying a new computer.

++ **READING** { postmodernity : Duchamp : overload : plumbing }

MARK AMERIKA > *AVANT POP 8: INFO-TOILET*

Amerika, Mark. "The Avant-Pop Manifesto: Thread Baring Itself in Ten Quick Posts." 1993.
[HTTP://ALTX.COM/MANIFESTOS2/AVANT.POP.MANIFESTO.HTML](http://altx.com/manifestos2/avant.pop.manifesto.html).

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

Postmodernism changed the way we read texts. The main tenet of Postmodernism was: I, whoever that is, will put together these bits of data and form a Text while you, whoever that is, will produce your own meaning based off what you bring to the Text. The future of Avant-Pop writing will take this even one step further. The main tenet that will evolve for the Avant-Pop movement is: I, whoever that is, am always interacting with data created by the Collective You, whoever that is, and by interacting with and supplementing the Collective You, will find meaning.

In an Information Age where we all suffer from Information Sickness and Overload, the only cure is a highly-potent, creatively-filtered tonic of (yes) textual residue spilled from the depths of our spiritual unconscious. Creating a work of art will depend more and more on the ability of the artist to select, organize and present the bits of raw data we have at our disposal. We all know originality is dead and that our contaminated virtual realities are always already readymade and ready for consumption! In a nod to Duchamp's Armory Show scandal, the questions we need to ask ourselves are

1. who are we sharing the cultural-toilet with and
2. what are we filling it up with?

JODI.ORG > *D V L1K3 TH15 STVFF*

++
Found in the source code of a page at Jodi.org.
[As of June 2002, the page could no longer be found.]
[HTTP://WWW.JODI.ORG/](http://www.jodi.org/)

fckfckfckfckhl

fckfckfckfck

fck

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sdjghsldkgjsldkfjsdldgk

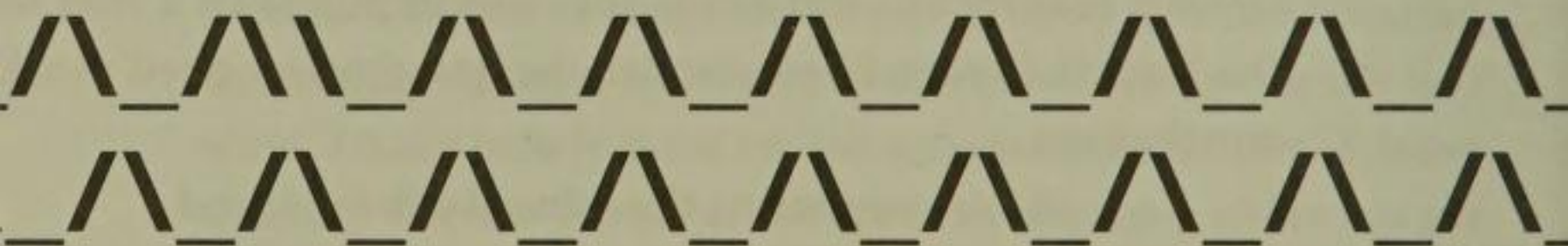
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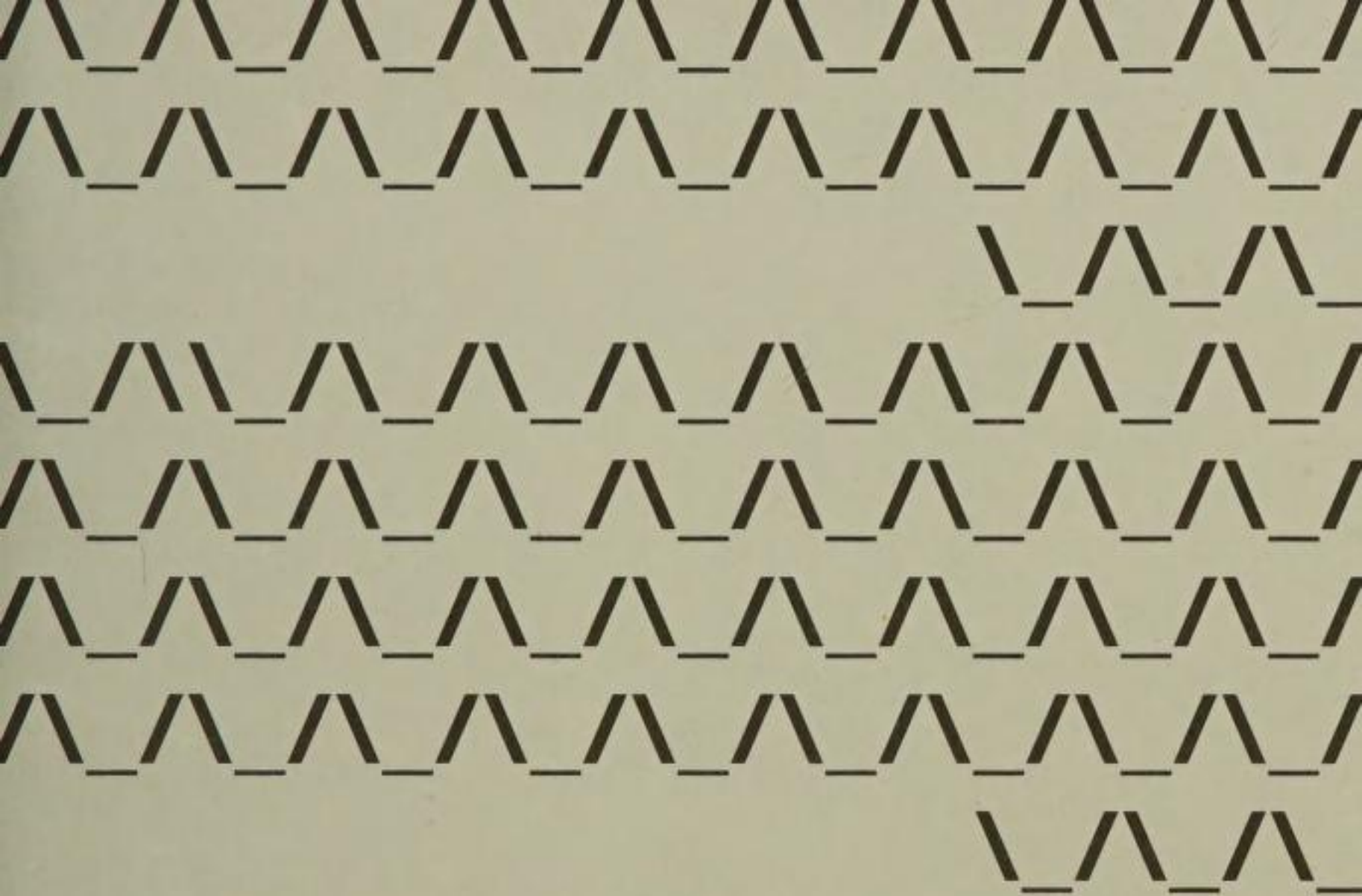
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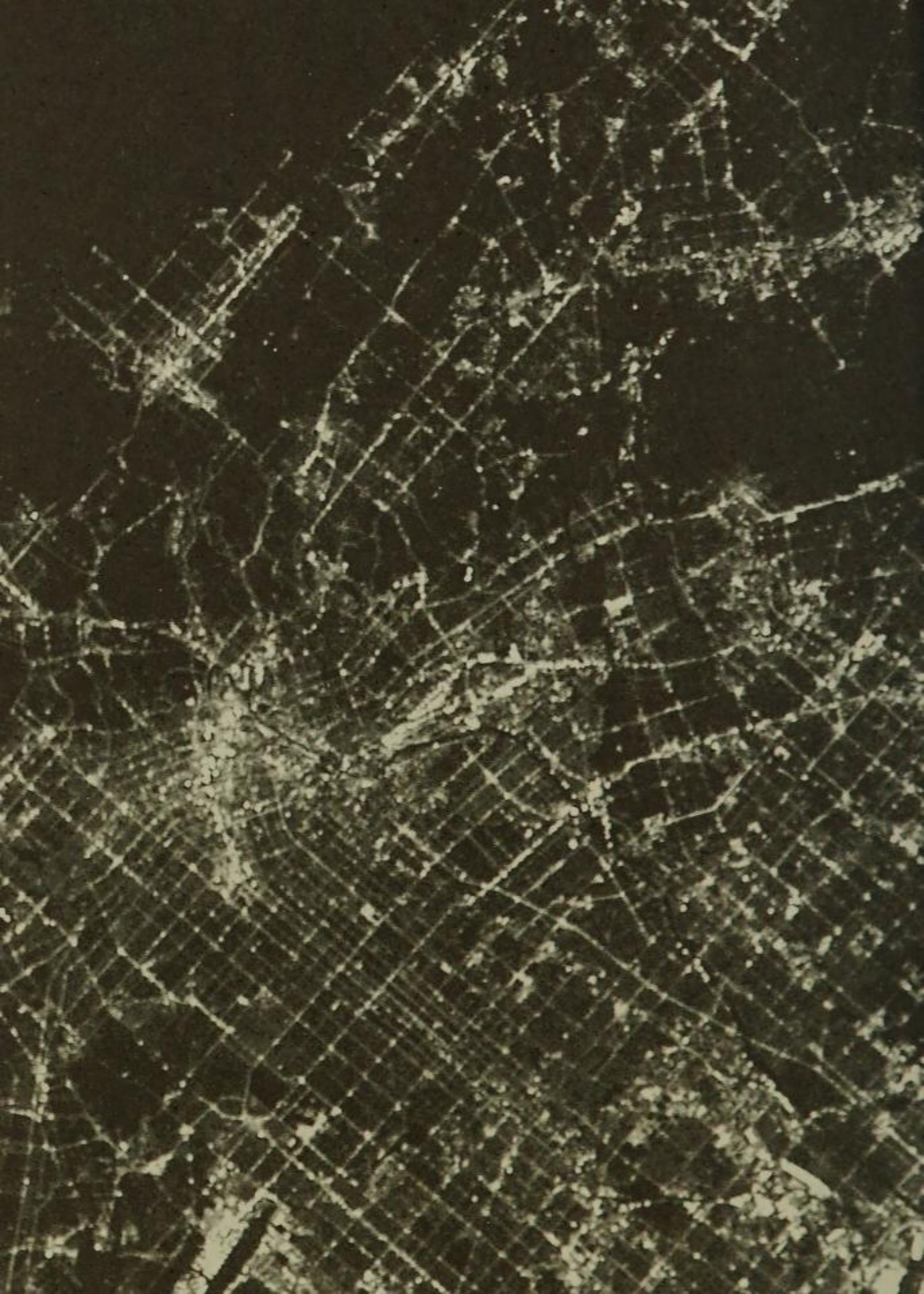
sdjgh

D V L1K3 TH15 STVFF, 1 R1LL

D







Los Angeles from Space, image courtesy of NASA
March 10, 2003, 1 a.m. Local Time. Earth Sciences and Image Analysis
Laboratory, Johnson Space Center. Mission: ISS006, Roll: E, Frame: 36913.
[HTTP://WWW.JSC.NASA.GOV/IMAGES/EOL/2003/LOSANGELES.HTML](http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/images/eol/2003/losangeles.html)

DECAY { memory : fixation : forgetting }

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ITALO CALVINO > CITIES AND MEMORY 4: ZORA

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Translation of *Le città invisibili*. Trans. William Weaver. NEW YORK: HARVEST, 1974. P. 15.

This city which cannot be expunged from the mind is like an armature, a honeycomb in whose cells each of us can place the things he wants to remember: names of famous men, virtues, numbers, vegetable and mineral classifications, dates of battles, constellations, parts of speech. Between each idea and each point of the itinerary an affinity or a contrast can be established, serving as an immediate aid to memory. So the world's most learned men are those who have memorized Zora.

But in vain I set out to visit the city. Forced to remain motionless and always the same, in order to be more easily remembered, Zora has languished, disintegrated, disappeared. The earth has forgotten her.

MATT FULLER > THE NORM OF LANGUAGE

PUTS THE USER IN PLACE

<NET.NET.NET> Collective interview. MAY, 2000. CALARTS.

Each piece of software is a way of seeing, knowing and doing in the world, and many more ways must be created.

Collective > Computers are already used to teach grammar and writing in elementary schools. Do you think people will eventually rely on some type of machine to construct a sentence?

Fuller > I think that it happens both ways. In the UK there is a persistent argument that has been going on for twenty years about whether kids should be able to use calculators at a basic level to multiply and divide and so on. The argument states that if everyone has a calculator, there is no way that they can understand basic computational skills if they do not actually know how to do them without the calculator. On the other hand, I have met people with dyslexia who say that their spelling has actually improved since they started using a computer. So standardization has advantages and disadvantages, but I think the interesting thing is that it is obvious that a word processor is a machine for producing a standardized language. Both of these examples are about how people gain access to a norm which is increasingly "machined." Our interest lies in how you can use that standardization against the grain. How can the noise of language, how can the gibberish and the nonsense that animates language, be present with a mechanized language?

Collective > Microsoft Word allows you easier access to the ruling-class linguistic structures, but if you're writing poetry in your own vernacular language, aren't you still free to do all your internal work and

Fuller > ignore the larger systems?

You can, but in word processing software the linguistic norm is applied automatically. In writing, there has to be an occasion for these norms to breed and mutate. I would like to see mod files for Word such as those for Quake and other games, something available for people to circulate their own collectively produced variants of the language.

At what functional level are you talking about this? I could have a wacky poetic piece and the program is not going to just erase it because it is not grammatically correct. Isn't it mostly just the spelling and grammar check features that you're referring to?

Fuller > It is not like Word has these negative censors inside it—that would be ludicrous because no one could use the program! What I am talking about are the subtle ways in which the software formulates language, all the way down to the autotext. If you can't be bothered to type "Yours Sincerely..." it will do it for you, or you can simply choose the greeting off the menu. Another example is the way it preempts certain types of behaviors. If you start with "Dear...", the program will give you the option to lay out a letter in a standardized way. It's not that Word is some kind of draconian conspiratorial project, but that it lays out an architecture of choice.

There are several, almost competing models of what a document is, what writing is, what "tools" should be made available, operating within Word. So in itself it is not a "conspiracy," not homogeneous. Its mode of construction is to envisage what it sees as every possible mass usage and then to aggregate them into the software, not necessarily in the most coherent way. At the same time there are things that are fundamentally missing from this model of textual production. Compare a text editor aimed at programmers such as

BEdit, or one aimed at scientists, such as LaTeX, and look at where the overlaps are and where they aren't. You'll get a picture of what kind of user is being built, how the user is being put into place by the software. Each piece of software is a way of seeing, knowing and doing in the world, and many more ways must be created.

DECAY { unconscious : nonsense : language : code : prison : incision }

++ **KATHY ACKER** > *EMPIRE OF THE SENSELESS:*
NONSENSE VS. A NEW WAY OF TATTOOING

Acker, Kathy. *Empire of the Senseless*. NEW YORK: GROVE WEIDENFELD, 1988. pp.133-134.

[UNCHANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

Agone hit the tattooer again. Agone thought: I am not serene.

When the tattooer realized that the young man was serious, he drew a knife. He had a knife because he had been using it to experiment with a new way of tattooing.

That part of our being (mentality, feeling, physicality) which is free of all control let's call our 'unconscious'. Since it's free of control, it's our only defense against institutionalized meaning, institutionalized language, control, fixation, judgement, prison.

Ten years ago, it seemed possible to destroy language: to destroy language which normalizes and controls by cutting that language. Nonsense would attack the empire-making (empirical) empire of language, the prisons of meaning.

But this nonsense, since it depended on sense, simply pointed back to the normalizing institutions.

What is this language of the 'unconscious'? (If this ideal unconscious or freedom doesn't exist: pretend it does, use fiction, for the sake of survival, all of our survival.) Its primary language must be taboo, all that is forbidden. Thus, an attack on the institutions of

prison via language would demand the use of a language or languages which aren't acceptable, which are forbidden. Language, on one level, constitutes a set of codes and social and historical agreements. Nonsense doesn't per se break down the codes; speaking precisely that which the codes forbid breaks the codes.

This new way of tattooing consisted of raising defined parts of the flesh up with a knife. The tattooer then draws a string through the raised points of flesh. Various coloration methods can be used on the living points.

DECAY { memory : distortion : cryptogram }

++ **JORGE LUIS BORGES** > *CREPUSCULAR MEMORY OF AN IRRECOVERABLE PROCESS*

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." Trans. Andrew Hurley. *Collected Fictions*. NEW YORK: VIKING PENGUIN, 1998. 68-81. P. 74.

One of the schools of philosophy on Tlön goes so far as to deny the existence of time; it argues that the present is undefined and indefinite, the future has no reality except as present hope, and the past has no reality except as present recollection. Another school posits that all time has already passed, so that our life is but the crepuscular memory, or crepuscular reflection, doubtlessly distorted and mutilated, of an irrecoverable process. Yet another claims that the history of the universe—and in it, our lives and every faintest detail of our lives—is the handwriting of a subordinate god trying to communicate with a demon. Another, that the universe might be compared to those cryptograms in which not all the symbols count, and only what happens every three hundred nights is actually real. Another, that while we sleep here, we are awake somewhere else, so that every man is in fact two men.

DECAY { Burroughs : cut-up : randomness : metaphor : virus : parasite }

KATHERINE HAYLES > *GREEN FISH IN THE FLESH*

++

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. CHICAGO: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, 1999. PP. 213.

The intrusion of randomness is important in another way as well, for Burroughs is acutely aware of the danger that he might, through his words, spread the viral infection he is trying to combat. It is important, therefore, that disruptive techniques be instantiated within the text's own language. These techniques range from his famous use of the "cut-up," where he physically cuts up previously written narratives and arbitrarily splices them together, to more subtle methods such as shifting between different linguistic registers without transition or explanation. Perhaps the single most important device is the insistent pressure to take metaphors literally—or put another way, to erase the distinction between words and things. Language is not merely like a virus, it *is* a virus, replicating through the host to become visible as green fish in the flesh and crab parasites tearing at the base of the base of the spine and brain.

DECAY { culture : archive : possibility }

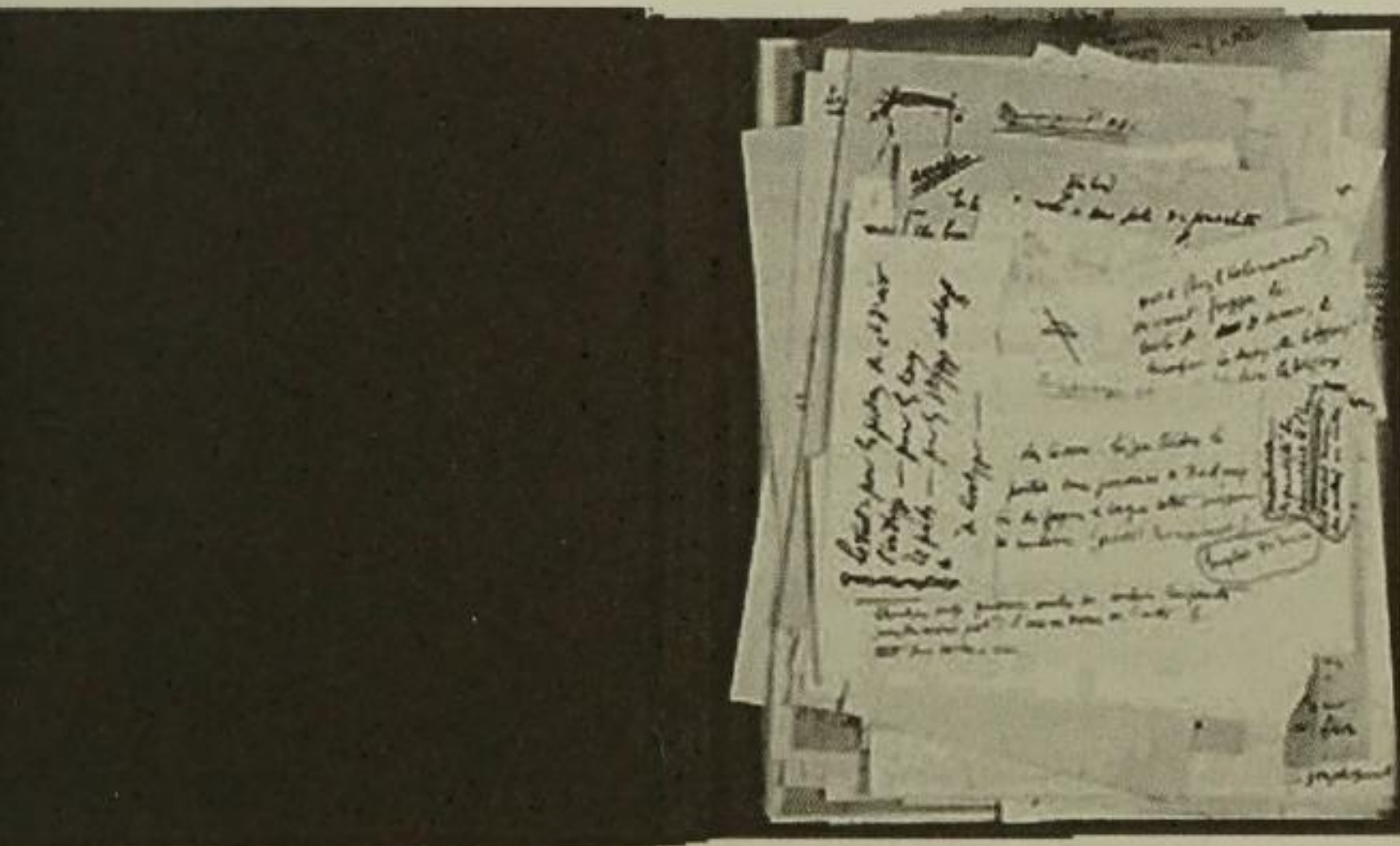
MAURICE BLANCHOT > *THE BOOK IS THE BOOK*

++

Blanchot, Maurice. "The Absence of the Book." Trans. Lydia Davis. *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays*. NEW YORK: STATION HILL PRESS, 1981. PP. 145-146.

[HTTP://WWW.ANGELFIRE.COM/NV/READPISS/THEABSENCEOFTHEBOOK.HTM](http://www.angelfire.com/nv/readpiss/theabsenceofthebook.htm).

Culture is linked to the book. The book as repository and receptacle of knowledge is identified with knowledge. The book is not only the book that sits in libraries—that labyrinth in which all combinations of forms, words and letters are rolled up in volumes. The book is the Book. Still to be read, still to be written, always already



Green Box (with 94 Items), Marcel Duchamp, 1934

This collection of notes, sketches, and scraps went with Duchamp's *Large Glass*.
Image & compression artifacts: Succession Marcel Duchamp, ARS, N.Y./ADAGP, Paris
[HTTP://WWW.TOUTFAIT.COM/ISSUES/ISSUE_1/NEWS/GREENBOXNOTE.HTML](http://www.toutfait.com/issues/issue_1/news/greenboxnote.html)

written, always already paralyzed by reading, the book constitutes the condition for every possibility of reading and writing.

DECAY { map : tracing slang : anticultural: mad science : rupture }

++
GILLES DELEUZE AND FELIX GUATTARI >
*USE IT ACTIVELY FOR FORGETTING INSTEAD
OF REMEMBERING*

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translation of *Mille Plateaux, vol. 2 of Capitalisme et schizophrénie*. Trans. Brian Massumi. LONDON: THE ATHLONE PRESS LTD., 1988. 1992. P. 24.

The cultural book is necessarily a tracing: already a tracing of itself, a tracing of the previous book by the same author, a tracing of other books however different they may be, an endless tracing of established concepts and words, a tracing of the world present, past and future. Even the anticultural book may still be burdened by too heavy a cultural load: but it will use it actively, for forgetting instead of remembering, for underdevelopment instead of progress toward development, in nomadism rather than sedentariness, to make a map instead of a tracing. RHIZOMATICS = POP ANALYSIS, even if the people have other things to do besides read it, even if the blocks of academic culture or pseudoscientificity in it are still too painful or ponderous. For science would go completely mad if left to its own devices. Look at mathematics: it's not a science, it's a monster slang, it's nomadic. Even in the realm of theory, especially in the realm of theory, any precarious and pragmatic framework is better than tracing concepts, with their breaks and progress changing nothing. Imperceptible rupture, not signifying break.

DECAY { theory : incomplete : uninterested }

++ **VUK COSIC WITH TILMAN BAUMGÄRTEL >**

THIS FINAL STATE OF INCOMPLETENESS

Baumgärtel, Tilman. "Interview with Vuk Cosic." *Telepolis*. JUNE 26 1997.

[HTTP://WWW.HEISE.DE/TP/ENGLISH/SPECIAL/KU/6158/1.HTML](http://www.heise.de/tp/english/special/ku/6158/1.html). JUNE 2002.

[APPARENT TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS HAVE BEEN CORRECTED. SPEAKER IDENTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MATCH THE STYLE OF THE PRESENT WORK.]

Baumgärtel > There is a piece on your web site where you encourage people to put footnotes on academic texts. That's another thing I noticed about net art, that it is a lot about theory.

Cosic > Yeah, that's what nettime does to otherwise normal people. Unfortunately I didn't find enough strength in me to pursue this project. Now it is only an invitation for collaboration that never found an echo. There were a few, by Heiko Idensen and Heath Bunting and Pit Schultz, but it wasn't enough. I have them in my mailbox though...

Baumgärtel > Does it matter if this project gets finished or not?

Cosic > No, there is this state of final incompleteness, as Duchamp once said about his Big Glass. I can open this document whenever I want—I call them documents, not art pieces—and do whatever I want to it. It's cool. I don't want it to be finished. I'm not interested in this project very much anymore, though.

DECAY { books : archive : rot }

++ **MATT FULLER > *THE LIBRARY: WORMS SUCK THEIR WAY FROM PAGE TO PAGE***

Fuller, Matt. "World Made Flesh." [HTTP://WWW.AXIA.DEMON.CO.UK/PECKHAM.HTML](http://www.axia.demon.co.uk/peckham.html). JUNE 2002.

Light radiates fly-dust. The card index is polished in finger grease and stray annotations. Books heave in centuries of slow-motion on the sagging shelves as damp swells up their bellies and turns them

sour. Newer books are tatty but still legible, although the edge of each page seems to be growing a fine frayed down as dog-ears gradually collapse into separate fibres. Older books: although they maintain and improve upon their dark brown colour, they have become so fragile that it is necessary for users of the library to refrain from using them to scrape the shit from their shoes as they come in off the road. Pages stick together, fat and glutinous as spat rice. Worms suck their way from page to page among the rubbish, burping the letters back out into the wrong place, until eventually the book is entirely re-arranged, or contains words as indigestible as they were when sat in their neighbour.

DECAY { childhood : memory : loss }

++
GUY DEBORD > *HOWLINGS IN FAVOR OF SADE:*
INCOMPLETE

Debord, Guy-Ernest. "Hurlements en faveur de Sade." 1952. Transcription and translation by Gregor Markowitz. AVAILABLE: [HTTP://LIBRARY.NOTHINGNESS.ORG/ARTICLES/4/EN/DISPLAY/90](http://library.nothingness.org/articles/4/en/display/90).

[PUNCTUATION HAS BEEN ALTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL.]

[SCREEN GOES FROM BLACK TO WHITE]

VOICE 2 > We live like lost children, our adventures incomplete.

[SCREEN GOES TO BLACK AND FILM CONTINUES TO RUN IN DARKNESS AND SILENCE FOR NEARLY HALF AN HOUR UNTIL THE END]

**HTTP/1.1 404 Object
Not Found**

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