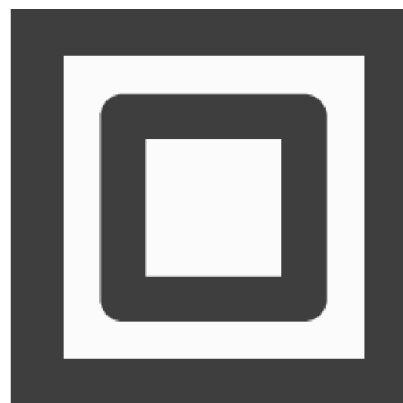
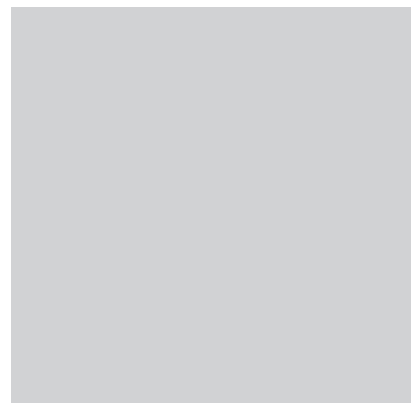
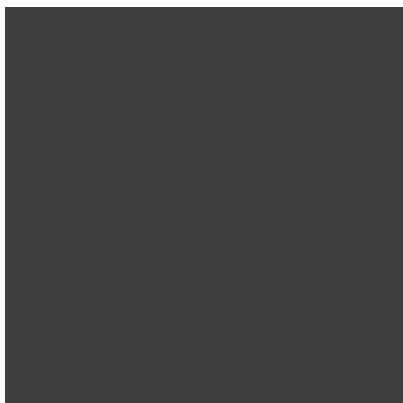
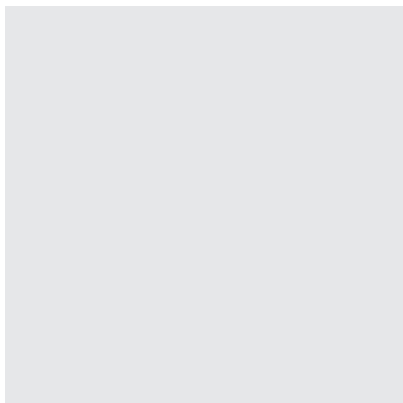


very cyberfeminist  
international  
obn conference

hamburg, december 13-16, 2001



eds. helene von oldenburg, claudia reiche

very cyber-  
feminist  
international  
reader

obn conference

hamburg, december 13-16, 2001

eds. helene von oldenburg, claudia reiche

**credits**

**very cyberfeminist international, obn conference hamburg,  
december 13-16, 2001**

Helene von Oldenburg, Claudia Reiche, Eds.

ISBN: 3-933557-34-8

Published by: b-books, Berlin

Design: baxdesign: bax@on-line.de, Alexandra Bialas: ab@iworld.de

Print: Hein & Co, Hamburg

© 2002 the authors

All rights reserved.

**European Cooperation (organizing and editing):**

CONSTANT vzw Vereniging voor kunst en media ( Brussels, BE)

Les Pénélopes (Paris, F)

MAKE, the organisation for women in the arts, formerly WAL, the Women's Art Library, London (London, GB)

**Association:**

"Cyberfem Spirit - Spirit of Data", Exhibition, November 30, 2001 – Januar 13, 2002,  
Edith Russ Site for Media Art, Oldenburg

Concept: Helene von Oldenburg

Curated by: Rosanne Altstatt und Helene von Oldenburg

<http://www.edith-russ-haus.de>

"technics of cyber<>feminism <mode=message>", Theory Lab, December 7 – 9,  
2001, Frauen.Kultur.Labor thealit, Claudia Reiche, Andrea Sick, Bremen,  
<http://www.thealit.de>

**Publication Series (volume 1-3)**

von Oldenburg, Helene / Altstatt, Rosanne, Eds. (2002): cyberfem spirit-spirit of  
data, Oldenburg, Edith-Ruß-Haus für Medienkunst, (Volume 1), order: info@edith-  
russ-haus.de

Reiche, Claudia / Sick, Andrea, Eds. (2002): technics of cyber<>feminism  
<mode=message>, Bremen, thealit Frauen.Kultur.Labor, (Volume 2) ISBN 3-  
930924-03-X, order: thealit@netwave.de

von Oldenburg, Helene / Reiche, Claudia, Eds. (2002): very cyberfeminist interna-  
tional, b\_books, Berlin, (Volume 3) ISBN 3-933557-34-8, order: b\_books@txt.de

**Thanks**

Brigitte Helbling, Agnese Trocchi, Andrea Sick, Althea Greenan, Anja Westerfrölke,  
Bianka Buchen, Die Höge, Dolores Castro Ruiz, Ceri Hand, Faith Wilding, Frauke  
Behrendt, Christian Günther, Isabelle Massu, Ingrid Molnar, Jill Scott, Kaya Sievers,  
Katrina Crookall, Laurence Rassel, Mana Petzet, Neda Ploskov, Peter Birke, Rosanne  
Altstatt, Susanna Paasonen, Susanne Ackers, Tahani Nadim, Techno Trickster,  
Torsten Flüh, Ulla Otto, Universität Lüneburg.

**Funding:**

With the support of the Culture 2000 programme of the European Union,  
Directorate General Education and Culture  
Kulturbehörde der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg

constant



MAKE



Bildung und Kultur

Kultur 2000



#4 ..... Editorial

#6 ..... Call for proposal/abstracts

#8 ..... Views of the Conference,  
Photos by Linda Putzenhardt

#14 ..... Waltraud Schwab |  
*The gate to the unveiled world*

**#15 ..... net working,  
knot working, not working**

#16 ..... Old Boys Network | 3 questions

#17 ..... Old Boys Network

#18 ..... Frauen.Kultur.Labor thealit

#19 ..... Les Pénélopes

#20 ..... constant vzw

#21 ..... MAKE

#22 ..... plug in

#23 ..... subRosa

#24 ..... Les Chiennes de Garde

#25 ..... Feminist Indymedia Austria

#26 ..... bildwechsel

#27 ..... KünstlerinnenArchiv

#28 ..... Faces

#29 ..... Gender Changer Academy

**#30 ..... The posters**

#31 ..... Rena Tangens, Barbara Thöns

#32 ..... Virtuella

#33 ..... bildwechsel

#34 ..... Nathalie Magnan

#35 ..... vns Matrix

#36 ..... Ulrike Bergermann

#37 ..... Nana Petzet

#38 ..... Andrea Sick

#39 ..... Janine Sack

#40 ..... Claudia Reiche

#41 ..... Gender Changer Academy

#42 ..... Elisabeth Strowick

#43 ..... Christina Goestl

#44 ..... Verena Kuni

#45 ..... Desiree Vreke | Enawa

#46 ..... Natalie Bookchin

#47 ..... Techno-Trickster-Tank™

#48 ..... Galerie Helga Broll

#49 ..... Rosanne Altstatt

#50 ..... Laurence Rassel

#51 ..... Britta Bonifacius

#52 ..... Ursula Biemann

#53 ..... Cornelia Sollfrank

#54 ..... Jill Scott

#55 ..... Cindy Gabriela Flores

#56 ..... Helene von Oldenburg

#57 ..... Ania Corcilius

#58 ..... Les Pénélopes

**#59 ..... f(start) f(shut) f(stop)  
f(open) = new border concepts**

#60 ..... Cindy Gabriela Flores |  
*"The women's place in the Mexico City subway."*

#63 ..... Cindy Gabriela Flores | *Comments*

#64 ..... Corinna Bath, Uli Peter,  
Claude Draude, Jutta Weber, Alice Gössner |  
*TechnoTricksterTank™4Today*

#66 ..... Irina Aristharkova, Maria Fernandez,  
Margaret Tan, Faith Wilding and subRosa mem-  
bers Steffi Domike, Laleh Mehran, Christina Hung,  
Hyla Willis, and Lucia Sommer | *000000011111  
1111000000001111111000000011111111*

#70 ..... Andrea Hapke, Andrea Jana Korb |  
*Travelling hostesses in cyberfemspace.*

#74 ..... Christina Goestl | *s.EXE*

#78 ..... Susanna Paasonen | *Cyber-  
feminism and the question of freedom*

#82 ..... Jill Scott | *BIO-MEDIA ETHICS –*

#84 ..... Neotropic, Donna Neda |  
*WE DEFINITELY KNOW WHAT A SCRATCH IS!*

**#87 ..... borders of 'terror' -  
media- and war techniques**

#88 ..... Ariane Brensell, Waltraud Schwab |  
*»No Accomplices«*

#92 ... Nina Stuhldreher | *»I Am A Programme«*

#94 ..... Nasya Bahfen |  
*The Taliban dating agency*

#98 ..... RAWA Statement on International  
Women's Day, Mar. 8, 2002\*

#104 . RAWA | *Some of the restrictions imposed  
by Taliban on women in Afghanistan*

**#107 ..... obn's principle of  
disagreement**

#108 ..... Cornelia Sollfrank |  
*The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism*

#114 ..... Claudia Reiche |  
*Disagreement with Cornelia Sollfrank's  
'The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism'*

#118 ..... Helene von Oldenburg |  
*OBN – A Fiction and/or the real thing?*

#120 ..... Verena Kuni |  
*Some Thoughts On The  
New Economy of Networking*

#128 ..... Janine Sack | *The very video*

#129 ..... Claudia Kapp | *on/from the con-  
ference 'very cyberfeminist international'*

#130 ..... contributors

we have become aware of the ways in which cyberfeminism has become an influence within discursive fields of gender studies, media theory, political theory and action, concepts in art etc. and hope to contribute to the rise of cyberfeminist works and studies. cyberfeminism is not merely enacted in these regions, the input of cyberfeminism alters the fields themselves and affects our attempt to map them and our activities within them. The term cyberfeminism literally means 'feminism in relation to digital media'. As you will see in these articles, cyberfeminism is many things to many people, and we will not attempt to give a concise definition of it here.

The volume should serve as an initial orientation within the diverse territory of cyberfeminism. The field is still in the process of defining itself, as is proper for any new discipline.

The articles in this collection, although widely divergent in areas of inquiry, all mark areas where cyberfeminism has altered or undermined the basis of disciplinary practices and cultural analysis.

This reader is the extended product of the conference 'very cyberfeminist international' held in Hamburg 2001 by obn. The principal organizers were claudia reiche, cornelia

sollfrank, Helene von Oldenburg, Verena Kuni. European partners in organizing and editing are in Belgium 'CONSTANT VZW Vereniging voor Kunst en Media' (Laurence Rassel), in France 'Les Pénélopes' (Isabelle Massu), in the United Kingdom 'MAKE, the Organisation for Women in the Arts, formerly The Women's Art Library, London' (Althea Greenan, Katrina Crookall, Tahani Nadim). Starting out as a documentation of the 'Very Cyberfeminist International' conference we have decided to include several new texts that were not presented at the conference in Hamburg, in order to broaden certain subjects.

In the first section, 'networking - knot working - not working?', you will find selfrepresentations of networks, initiatives and institutions somehow or other alerting the reader to categories and concepts of networking.

In the following section 'f(start) f(shut) f(stop) f(open) = new border concepts', essays provide various aspects of borders, between media and users, between wishes and facts, science and fiction, between today and tomorrow - dealing with, defining or researching problems and/or promises.

With the section 'the borders of terror - media- and war techniques' we focussed on the changes in global politics and war techniques triggered by the events of September 11 last year, concentrating on their consequences for women.

For OBN crisis voyeurs we recommend the final section 'OBN's principle of disagreement'.

The selection of cyberfeminists included in this reader is, obviously, far from comprehensive. For additional reading and information see the catalogue of the exhibition 'Cyberfem Spirit - Spirit of Data' at the Edith Russ site for Media Art in Oldenburg and the book 'Technics of Cyber<>feminism <mode=message>', continuing the work of the Thealit Lab on Cyberfeminist Theory.<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to the contributors:

Helene von Oldenburg, Claudia Reiche

# #1 call for proposals/abstracts 04.09.2001

## 'very cyberfeminist international', hamburg 2001

organizer: old boys network (Verena Kuni, Helene von Oldenburg, Claudia Reiche, Cornelia Sollfrank)

date: december 13-16, 2001

This will be a three-day conference addressing different themes each day, and including evening programs.

### 01. opening reception

At the opening reception OBN introduces itself in a performative way. All speakers of the conference as well as other additionally invited CYBERFEMINISTS present their personal approach to CYBERFEMINISM during a poster presentation. 20-30 presenters are standing in front of their individual posters and explain it to the audience. The single presentations do not exceed 10 minutes and will be 'looped'. Everybody will be talking, playing and performing at the same time.

### 02: CYBERFEMINIST NETWORKING - KNOT WORKING - NOT WORKING?

Due to the underlying dynamics of networks there is a permanent need to clarify the changing organizational structure and the way that individual members see the network and their roles within it. It is important that members express their divergent ideas of structure and networking and develop them into a common structure which only can be the basis for networked action and reality. Using an open format, the past, the present, and the future goals of obn will be discussed, and all kinds of utopian visions for obn's future will be aired. A next step will be to go beyond our own network, and to look at the condition and the potential of self-organized structures as an alternative to institutional forms within the art system, academia and politics, and discuss their relations and interdependencies.

### 03: (start) (shut) (stop) (open) = new border concepts

Mathematical functions are the core of algorithms that operate computers. Temporal and spatial borders can be written as interacting functions. Closings and beginnings, endings and openings combine and cross, thus modeling the experiences of borders we enjoy or suffer. Breakthrough, shelter, prison, invasion or escape are not neutral in terms of control. For: who is able to manipulate those functions? They are always political.

Liberation was another word for a hack in the system's functions in operation, inserting the border of the real into the reality of the operating system. New border concepts per-

form the relations of power as well as the dynamics of variable temporal and spatial functions.

CYBERFEMINISM is no game without borders, but a playing with borders that takes them seriously, a work at the boundaries of that 'contested zone' in which the so-called real and virtual diverge, and which mines utopias of transgression, understanding them as a potential for transformation. If CYBERFEMINISM is also a utopia, then its utopian designs can be fictions as well as specific political options. In the field of CYBERFEMINISM utopias offer differentiated models for discussion which can invent new forms of communication, open up new articulations of space and time which do not only function in cyberspace, or suggest models based on genetic technologies, operating new life or gender models.

The borders between political utopia, science fiction, and technological innovations have always been fluid - beyond judgment as to value. CYBERFEMINISTS take an inventive, tactical part in furthering a perforation, diffusion, conversion, transgression, subversion etc. of cultural forms with new technological possibilities. Some points of critical and creative attitudes towards fluid borders and special concern are:

- new forms of global control and subversion through the electronic networking technology: how to obtain and secure privacy? How to react to the globalized economy and to the growing influence of global trusts on national governments?
- realities and utopian fantasies of leaving the limitations and rules of the known world behind, in outer space as in cyberspace
- manipulations of human consciousness with drugs/ pharmaceuticals, psychological control, or media-related brainwashing
- incorporation of technology into the human body and genetic engineering, how to understand and invert, use and misuse the possibilities?
- new imaginations of gender with and without medical creations and redefinitions of sexual organs etc.

### 04: VERY TRANSGRESSIVE

On the last evening of the conference there will be party, including concerts, DJs and VJs - an evening when everybody will be crossing borders!

The live acts within 'very TRANSGRESSIVE' give an insight into technical, cultural, political and economic inventions of electronic music and sound production. They present working methods, with a special focus on the underrepresentation of women in this field. What does "feminist" mean for a female commitment in electronic music? It is a question of "technique" - a possible musical, theoretical and political "technique" in discussion with the level of media technological development.

**os: live media presence**

In addition to changing possibilities of production we find a complete restructuring of distribution, which opens up via Internet and new methods of data compression. New relations between producer and receiver have been introduced, and provide new possibilities for individual and collective production.

Every contribution to the conference will be broadcast via live stream simultaneously through the Internet, and partly through the local radio station FSK in Hamburg.

**"very cyberfeminist international"** hopes to address many of the issues introduced above. We invite intense conversations, controversies, speculations, papers, projects, presentations in many forms. We invite paradoxical approaches and diverse interpretations of CYBERFEMINIST theory and practice. Our hope is to expand our connections and our horizon, to include an even greater mixture of CYBERFEMINISTS than participated in the 'first' and 'next' CYBERFEMINIST International, and to work out an operational structure for obn which will allow a smoothly running program called 'CYBERFEMINIST future'.

Call for proposals/abstracts: by october 15, 2001

Please send in proposals and abstracts for posters, presentations, lectures, DJing, and music performances.

Mail to: [boys@obn.org](mailto:boys@obn.org)

## #2 call for proposals/abstracts 13.11.2001

dear all,

due to the radical changes which have happened since september 11, we, the organizers of the obn-conference decided to dedicate one part of the conference to a section called

### **the borders of 'terror' - media- and war techniques**

For this section at the old boys network's conference 'very cyberfeminist international' (December 13-16th) we are looking for speakers addressing one or more of the following questions:

- How to approach the (mass) media presentation of the events since September 11th? Is it a 'propaganda war'?
- Which strategy can be analyzed regarding the career of the word 'terror' in the western mass media?
- How does the meaning of 'terrorism' shift compared to the related terms of 'armed struggle for liberation' or 'war'?
- Can 'terrorism' mean symbolic acts of purposefully applying violence of any kind or is it reserved to a questionable 'reality' of physical violence?
- Has killing and/or the destruction of material or cultural symbols become a new guarantee of 'reality' of today's western popular metaphysics?

So far, we have invited RAWA - revolutionary association of women from afghanistan - to speak at this section.

Call for contributions- urgent! please send your recommendations and/or proposals to [boys@obn.org](mailto:boys@obn.org)





#8



2



3





12\_1



12\_2



11



13



14



15

**from left to right:** 2.helene von oldenburg | claudia reiche | verena kuni | cornelia sollfrank 3.verena kuni | cornelia sollfrank 4.bianka buchen 5.virtuella 6.virtuella | janine sack | anja corcilus 7.claudia reiche 8.faith wilding 9.claudia reiche | helene von oldenburg | verena kuni 10.helene von oldenburg | claudia reiche 11.verena kuni | annette schindler 12\_1.ulrike bergermann | alex bialas | cornelia sollfrank 12\_2.ulrike bergermann | alex bialas | cornelia sollfrank | nathalie magnan | maria fernandez | sylvia schultes 13.verena kuni | helene von oldenburg | claudia reiche 14.isabelle massu | laurence rassel 15.anja corcilus | susanne ackers 16.nathalie magnan | maria fernandez 17.gender changer academy: sisi and sarah | claudia reiche 18.susanne ackers | margaret morse | rosanne altstatt | andrea hapke 19.member of rawa speaking 20.claudia kapp 21.waltraud schwab | andrea roedig 22.margret tan | adeline kueh 23.jana andrea korb 24.andrea sick | faith wilding 25.jana andrea korb | andrea hapke | steffi dominke | corinna barth 26.christina hung | steffi dominke 27.isabelle massu | maria fernandez | laurence rassel 28.cindy gabriela flores 29.gender changer academy: sarah and sisi 30.ulrike bergermann | cornelia sollfrank 31.jana andrea korb | andrea hapke | sara platon | claude draude | corinna barth



16



17



18



#11



20



21



#12



22



23



24



25



26



27



28



29



30



31

## The gate to the unveiled world

The very cyberfeminist international in Hamburg in December 2001

Some words are like unfulfilled promises: Hawaii, Venus or virtual reality for example. The words are ideas and as such they are full of magic and mysteriousness. The word "cyberfeminism" provokes similar reactions. Although it is not yet decided on whether the question marks are to be put behind the concept of "cyber" or of "feminism".

In December 2001 the "very cyberfeminist international" was held in Hamburg. As most "internationals" this event too took place in a back room. The networking of women in the new media was on the agenda. There is still much to be done since it is well known that computers are fetishes of the younger male generation. Thus the motto of the conference: The slogan is "where women are not involved they are excluded."

If women do not want to see themselves drown in insignificance they must get hold of new technologies. The art context made this obvious before any other areas. Therefore the "we too" of the media artist was shown at the "documenta X" in Kassel. An "old boys network" <http://www.obn.org> was founded and the "1st cyberfeminist international" was held. Since then the two terms have turned into labels which curators like to see included in their exhibitions. They are being taken seriously, because the possibility is anticipated, that something important could be missed. Yet the question, what it is that could be missed and who the women are that created these networks is not necessarily being asked nor answered.

"Cyberfeminism plays with boundaries. Like the one where the real and the virtual meet" maintains the old-boys-network-ladies, who organised the very cyberfeminist international: Cornelia Sollfrank, Claudia Reiche, Verena Kuni und Helene von Oldenburg. A game with different realities starts. As a consequence of 9/11, however, this concept was radically extended. This is due to the fact that in the end a lot of people were surprised that the fiction can be reality. The images of airplanes crashing into skyscrapers were no longer just images.

More than a dozen xx-nuclei in cyberspace were presented at the conference. There were some which hung onto the old feminist motto that the private is political such as the "ciberfeministas" in Mexico, the "Les Pénélopes" in France, the "subrosas" of three continents. There also were the activists of the "Big-Brother-Award" from Bielefeld, Germany. They copy payback cards and "honor" the German Minister of Interior, Otto Schily, who turned into a surveillance master. The Dutch "Gender Changer Academy" was also present at the conference. They demolished hardware with sledgehammers to demonstrate who is the boss - mankind or machine. "Women are afraid to open a computer because it is so expensive and could break," they said. "Indeed it is expensive and yet we broke it." All the cyberfeminist groups see themselves as platforms from which a different view on public opinion can be provoked. But what view are they aiming at?

There was no unanimous answer given to this question at the conference. The major problem of all: what is the feminist aspect of cyberfeminism? This question had a very concrete focus at the very cyberfeminist international. At the end of the conference a member of the Afghani women organisation RAWA gave her speech. For years they were one of the most if not the most important group of activists against the regime of the Taliban. Their homepage <http://rawa.org> is the gate to the unveiled world. In any case, this gate being open is what really matters.

net wor-  
king,  
knot wor-  
king, not  
working?





**what is the old boys network?**

claudia reiche:  
cornelia sollfrank:

utopia – mistaken for reality  
an ongoing crisis; a big misunderstanding;  
a tool that smart women can use for their purposes

helene von oldenburg:  
verena kuni:

an unstoppable dissolving structure  
(next:) cyberfeminist reality

**what has the old boys network been?**

claudia reiche:  
cornelia sollfrank:

utopia – as a bundle of strong individual, but contradictory wishes  
a promising myth and a lot of work; an instrument that made  
the world talk about cyberfeminism; an experiment

helene von oldenburg:

experimental work for and inventions of an utopian idea of demo-  
cratic structure

verena kuni:

(first:) cyberfeminist utopia

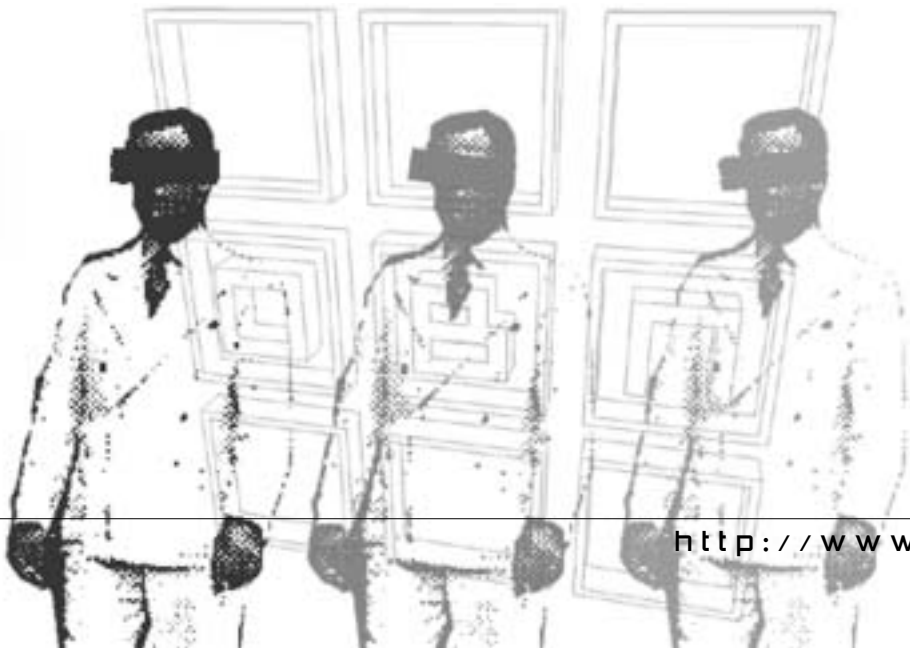


**what is the future of the old boys network?**

claudia reiche:  
cornelia sollfrank:  
helene von oldenburg:  
verena kuni:

utopia, waiting  
to be historical?  
a myth referring to an X – with 1001 possibilities to be told  
(very:) cyberfeminist  
<what?>

find out yourself!



## OLD BOYS NETWORK

### 1. What is OBN?

OBN stands for Old Boys Network. OBN is regarded as the first international Cyberfeminist alliance and was founded in 1997 in Berlin. OBN is a real and a virtual coalition of Cyberfeminists. Under the umbrella of the term 'Cyberfeminism', OBN contributes to the critical discourse on new media, especially focussing on its gender-specific aspects.

### 2. What is an Old Boys Network?

Normally, the term 'Old Boys Network' is used as an idiom, a metaphor to describe an informal interrelation of men [here to be understood as synonym for human beings of male sex]. In this case, the Old Boys of one Network all went to the same elite school/college/university.

The concern of an Old Boys Network is to support and obtain support for individual careers. Older boys in a powerful position help younger ones and stabilize their own position that way. They exchange information, and every single Old Boy profits from the success of another Old Boy.

It should be noted that dictionaries, particularly those, which went into print before 1997, might not contain some important new meanings regarding the term. Nowadays, 'Old Boys Network' may also be in use for: a Cyberfeminist network, a brand for Cyberfeminist activities, a dangerous Cyberfeminist virus... (to be continued).

### 3. Who is OBN?

Since OBN has come into being in 1997 in Berlin, the contributing Old Boys as well as OBN's organizational structure have been in constant flow. At the moment there are several project groups with distinct sets of people (i.e. for the book 'next protocols', for the conference 'very cyberfeminist international', for the relaunch of the website).

### 4. What does OBN do?

OBN is dedicated to Cyberfeminism. OBN's concern is to build spaces in which Cyberfeminists can research, experiment, communicate, and act. These spaces are for example: a Cyberfeminist Server, the 'oldboys' mailing list and real-life meetings (the so-called Cyberfeminist Internationals).

All these activities have the purpose to give a contextualized presence to different artistic, theoretical and political formulations/expressions under the umbrella of Cyberfeminism. At times mysterious, at times very visible, OBN is setting an agenda for communication, intervention, and production.

### 5. What is Cyberfeminism?

The First Cyberfeminist International agreed on not to define the term. The strategy of keeping the term as open as possible was consensual. As a substitute for a definition The First Cyberfeminist International formulated the '100 Anti-Theses': [www.obn.org/cfundef/100antitheses.html](http://www.obn.org/cfundef/100antitheses.html)

### 6. What is the regulating structure of OBN?

The Mode is the Message — the Code is the Collective!

6.1. Every member of the Old Boys Network is required to call herself a woman (without consideration of the biological base of this intelligent life-form).

6.2. The functions of organization, execution, and responsibility of and for the work are shared - there is no chief.

6.3. Project groups with distinct sets of people can be set by the initiative of at least three OBN members. The projects have to be introduced and discussed on the 'oldboys' mailing list. The groups have to report back to the list.

6.4. Every member has agreed to find a personal position in response to the question: What is 'Cyberfeminism', based on her scientific or artistic work. Each will have agreed to share and support the efforts, which will contribute to the potential of this term on an international level. With regard to its contents - the elaborations of 'Cyberfeminisms' - our aim is the principle of disagreement!

### 7. How can I become a member?

Cyberfeminism is not about membership, but about activity. As soon as you have developed your personal approach to Cyberfeminism, you are a Cyberfeminist. And as soon as you actively contribute to the OBN context, you become an Old Boy. Everybody can become a member, who is seriously interested in the Cyberfeminist discourse, and calls herself 'woman'.



## CONCEPT

Thealit organizes programs devoted to the encounter of theoretical reflections and the arts. Thealit installes interfaces between texts and visuals, between concepts, bodies and media. The interaction of scientific and artistic strategies are studied and discussed.

New medias and their influence on the structures of society play an important role in the development of such artistic and scientific strategies.

Thealit supports cultural/esthetics practices, but also a direct intervention into technology itself (Software-Hardware).

Thealit is extremely interested in participating in contemporary discussions on points of division and similarity between art, science and technology, and in taking a feminist stand on these issues with its programs.

## PROGRAMMATICS

Thealit's work extends beyond organization. Thealit's curators and staff are involved in the planning and organizing of programs, in which they themselves participate with their work as professional artists and scientists. Thealit defines itself as place for production and research as well as for organization.

## HISTORY

The Frauenkulturhaus has been in existence since 20 years. It was founded in March 1982 as a part of the new women's movement with the goal of establishing a place for women's art. Since 1990, the former »Fauenkulturhaus« has evolved into the Culture.Project »Thealit« (today: thealit Frauen.Kultur.Labor - Women.Culture.Laboratory)

## PUBLICATIONS (Selection)

### Technics of Cyber<>Feminism

<Mode=Message>,

Claudia Reiche, Andrea Sick (Eds.),  
Bremen (thealit) 2002, 250 p., 200 pict.,  
ISBN: 3-930924-03-x

### Hand, Medium→Körper→Technik,

Ulrike Bergermann, Andrea Sick, Andrea Klier  
(Eds.), Bremen (thealit) 2001, 336 p., 200 pict.,  
ISBN: 3-930924-02-1

**Serialität: Reihen und Netze**, Elke Bippus,  
Andrea Sick (Eds.), Bremen (thealit) 2000 (CD-  
ROM)

## LABORATORIES

**2002** Intervention. Virus, Models, Tricks

**2001** Technics of Cyber<>Feminism  
<Mode=Message>

**2000** HAND. Medium→Körper→Technik

**1999** Serialität: Reihen und Netze

**1998** Tischsitten

**1997** Künstliches Leben:// Mediengeschichten

**1996** Fernerkundung

**1995** Ausdruckstechniken: Organisation des  
Innen

**1994** Maschinen. Künstliche Führungen zu Buch  
und Schrift

**1993** Künstliche Führungen - Konzept Art von  
Frauen

#18

## CONTACT

[thealit@netwave.de](mailto:thealit@netwave.de)

Andrea Sick (director, coordinator)

### Les Pénélopes\*



### Resistance and Creation of Alternative Practices for Information and Communication

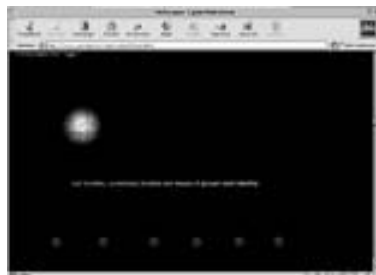
At times when the development of practices and technologies of communication has repercussions into every sphere, be it socially, politically, economically, or culturally - with serious implications on the possibilities for democracy and citizenship -, the politics and practices of communication form a core issue for all movements, which resist and propose alternatives to a neo-liberal globalization process.

Information and communication have been reduced to just another merchandise forced into a universal, neutral and homogeneous logic - a logic narrowing the space for any notion of public interest and citizenship, a logic where women have to 'conquer' their space in order to express their (diverse) realities. In this context, alliances between feminist (and beyond-feminist) networks challenging the frontier between politics, art, the public, economy, the private, journalists, civil society, are strategically important in order to construct an alternative communication process.

Breaking up with the dominant models and practices of communication also requires passing from reflection and discussion to action - creating alternatives allowing for feminist contents, to develop new forms of information treatment. Be it transversal, horizontal, as a media nomad, or without borders, where the bearers of contents are (part of) the media. The goal to develop new and more diverse forms of communication must also be based on an alternative economic logic. Therefore, alternatives created on models of a solidarity-based economy, together with a re-formulation of public-private partnership, are needed to ensure the sustainability and strength of our resistance.

\*Since 1996, Les Pénélopes are active as an independent feminist multi-media network giving visibility to women's initiatives and realities, as well as participating in concrete projects for an exchange of progressive ICT practices between different groups of women. Linking our actions with discursive practices, Les Pénélopes also seek presence in alternative policymaking spaces, bringing in a feminist perspective into the discourses and challenging the dominant communication system!





# constant vzw

based in Brussels since 1997  
operates by associations  
[www.constantvzw.com/cyberf](http://www.constantvzw.com/cyberf)



**MAKE**

**MAKE**  
the organisation for women in the arts

Established in the early 1980s to address and challenge the significant lack of information on women artists, MAKE has become an indispensable resource for anyone wishing to learn more about women's contribution to art practice and theory. Our membership welcomes not only artists, but also art historians, critics and academics, in order to integrate criticism and practice within a continuous dialogue. After 20 years the archive continues to expand on a daily basis. The collection traces the work and lives of historical and contemporary international women artists. MAKE is defined by its lively history of working with a variety of artists, galleries, academics, curators, publishers and of course other similar arts organisations. We remain the only English language resource on women artists outside of North America.

MAKE Resource is a publicly accessible research collection housing over 200,000 slides and transparencies, 5 000 books, catalogues and artists books, dissertations, audio tapes, video tapes and press cuttings on over 10 000 women artists.

MAKE Research offers support to artists, students, academics, curators, independent researchers, and the media researching women in contemporary and historical visual arts. Researchers are welcome to work directly with the collection.

MAKE Publishing is an ongoing programme which has produced a number of diverse publications ranging from catalogues, newsletters, diaries and slide-packs to books and MAKE Magazine.

MAKE Events facilitates arts and educational activities working with a wide range of institutions and individuals. Our events aim especially at initiating and fostering collaborative practices.

For further information on membership and activities please contact  
Althea Greenan (a.greenan@csm.linst.ac.uk) or Tahani Nadim  
(t.nadim@csm.linst.ac.uk).  
Director: Katrina Crookall

**MAKE**  
**107-109 Charing Cross Road**  
**London WC2H 0DU**  
**UK**  
**Tel ++44 (0)20 7514 8860**  
**Fax ++44 (0)20 7514 8864**



**[plug in]**

is an internationally oriented pilot project initiating, sponsoring and mediating innovation in the expansion of artistic interaction with new media. [plug in] decentralizes the concept of curatorship with network agents, who plug projects into our online and offline program.

**[plug in]**

stands for the analogue outlet of the electricity circuit, and for the digital program extensions enabling your computer to interact with another computer. Our name [plug in] describes our ambition: to expand the social hard drive with new artistic discourses, to stimulate participation in dynamic and interactive processes. [plug in] deploys the spontaneity, pace and dynamic change of the new media as a strategy for its own mediation.

The Internet environment allows for an interrogation of conventional ideas of authorship and ownership. The free flow of information, shareware and open source provides access to anyone, anytime. Availability, circulation and par-participatory communication expand an established understanding of art as an object of contemplation. [plug in] is engaged in a cultural production that evolves outside of the representational discourse of the museum.

Media establish a new relationship between fiction and reality. Media virtuality is constantly merged into reality. Reality - which used to be thought of as allegedly firm, has been revealed to be an equally meticulous construction, in which such things as gender or cultural differences are discovered to be rhetorical products in constant manufacture. [plug in] is engaged in culture, which reveals such mechanisms and produces more fluid concepts off identity.

Our program is composed of a network of curators – our network agents. From anywhere in the world, they can plug projects, events, online contributions, presentations, image- and soundbites into our program. In constant participation and in changing constellations, they modify the profile of our program. Our website provides current information on the program.

net working, knot working, not working?

Subrosa





**Nathalie Magnan**

**'Les Chiennes de Garde' – The First Feminist Interactive Website in France**

**What to do?**

At the latest in the mid 90's the knowledge of the great french feminist tradition since the 60's had vanished almost completely from the public's consciousness. Even within the feminist groups and the networks of critique the experience wasn't passed down from one generation to the next. Queers made great progress, but feminism was still a borderline topic, and we know to which extend the French (as a collectivity) are fashion victims! It was frightening to see so many women in their 50's and 60's, broken and symbolically beaten by the system. Few of them manage to resist its symbolic brutality. Where were the famous French feminists? Still, there were some women, who were the heroes of those darks years and who carried on, but they didn't have any media exposure. Then, in 1997, 'Les Pénélopes', started their website, very well connected to the rest of the feminists abroad and in France. Their site quickly became the reference. However, this was not an interactive website. Please visit <http://www.penelopes.org>!



Some years later, a small group 'Les chiennes de garde', started to get lot's of media attention, because of their name: 'chiennes de garde', which means 'female watchdogs'. And they got lots of attention, because they executed a few excellent coups, denouncing the insults powerful women (in politics, famous media women...) were subjected to just on the basis of their gender (the subtext being, if those women can get that insulted, imagine what's happening to unknown ones on a daily basis).

**The Website of 'Les Chiennes de Garde'**

So the idea, for me, was to give the group online existence, and to do it in a way very different from the excellent work done already by 'Les Pénélopes'. The idea was to make it interactive.

Have a look at 'Les chiennes de garde' -website at <http://chiennesdegarde.org>. On the index page was written "this site is optimized for old machines and slow modem" knowing that often women didn't have access to cutting edge equipment.

You'll find some position papers from the collective, but my further goal was to open an online space for feminist discussion, all level mixed up, in order to see what's out there. I first opened a mailing list in the fall 2000. Within a week the frequency was about 20 messages per day, way too much, hence I opened a php forum. At the same time the president of the collective was on TV to sell her book, which is a very sharp and funny feminist book. Hence within a month there were something like 100 postings a day until by mid June we reached 300 postings a day, thanks to a good media tactic. I quickly asked a few women to help me with the moderation of the list, so by September we were about 7 moderators. Even several MA thesis' were being done about our site. One of the participants, classified by hand all the messages according to several topics, so that a newcomer had a better approach to the topics already discussed. Basically all the subjects of feminist concern were brought up. It also became a place where women were telling about the violence they went through.

There are many problems with this forum, but it is very alive. For me it's too early to draw a perspective on this project. It is nevertheless one of the best chronicle of daily sexism in a feminist decoding of the everyday, I know of. Now I passed the site to dynamic php, hence it is even much more open to construct arguments through articles; there is a selecting committee, built through cooptation and the articles are starting to come in – so the site is becoming even a more efficient tool. What this experience allowed me to see, is that indeed there are many feminists in France – an unknown thing to me up to then. And yes – I think numbers are important.

## Feminist Indymedia Austria

### Start up.

The Austrian structures of political resistance received more attention and developed more activities since the swearing in of the new coalition government in February 2000. This has led to a highly heterogeneous presentation of the concepts of resistance. Rapid networking through the Internet was a first sign of this new movement. Nonetheless, another persistent sign of the new development was minimal visibility of any feminist resistance within this network.

'Feminist Indymedia Austria' decided to bring together the varied forms of presentation – be it virtually and beyond that – , to begin our exploration of an interactive medium whose main characteristic is its procedural character. In this context, we will examine the influence of so-called "new communication technologies" on the development of feminist resistance strategies in Austria and attempt to broaden their area of influence while also countering women's prejudices related to the use of the Internet. Our video project and Internet project flow into and from each other, merging in what we see as a borderless realm of representational tactics for active feminist theory.

Emerging from the 'Feministischer Widerstandskongress' (feminist congress of political resistance) October 2000 in Vienna, was a group of women involved in the arts, academia, and other ventures determined to create a loose structure for the continued intensification of networking of feminist media in Austria.

These women came together and first founded a 'Feminist Video Workshop' in order to

- make available the necessary hardware for the production of video films (cameras, editing stations etc.)
- pass on the knowledge of what to do with the hardware
- offer a feminist platforms and support feminists interested in producing political videos and the development of feminist multimedia contexts.

The work does not focus exclusively on visual techniques, but rather, the attempt was made to bring together the most varied forms of media presentation. The framework of feminist media presence has been expanded under the label 'Feminist Indymedia' by initiating and offering media-accompaniment of the highly diverse political events related to themes such as, "economic globalization processes", "work", and "gender performance".

The goal of our project is to develop possibilities for collaborative work with structures of new information and communication technologies to expand feminist presence in all realms, including cyberspace.

In the development of resistance strategies aspects such as 'gender swapping', 'cyberspace', and 'frameworks of art projects and new technologies' are slowly entering feminist discourse. Nonetheless, when these topics do enter discourse, the main emphasis is on the concept of identity and less on the development of political strategies.

Where does subversion begin and end in cyberspace?

Is a feminist cyber-version already a sub-version?

Is membership in the new, higher than upper cybourgeois class necessary?

What is possible with which tools?

We would like to examine the connection of political discourse and political action at the most varied levels from dismissal to attack. Central is the consideration of how the individual and individual groups develop their strategies, how they work out coalitions, and how they use the Internet as a background for communication.



founded in 1979 mainly by students of the hamburg college of fine arts, bildwechsel is one of hamburg's longest-running women's projects. when it was first launched, its main aim was to strengthen the presence of women in the audiovisual media arts.

#### **[the conception]**

the conception that the founding members had of themselves was oriented on artistic or political 'groupings'. the project did not provide for proper jobs or paid work. everything was paid for by the project itself and we provided the equipment and materials ourselves - with the help and support of others. this type of project work had the advantage of offering its members shared work spaces and production equipment. another equally important objective was acting as a women's center and a public space where the artistic work of other women could be shown.

in 1986, the structure of the organization changed. the group had dwindled in size and was no longer willing or able to act as a base for the various associated project activities.

#### **[the structure of the organization]**

the idea of a bildwechsel umbrella organization emerged from this situation: at present, various differently organized sections and shorter and longer-term activities coexist on the basis of a common space and a common infrastructure.

the objective they all have in common has remained the same: promoting women('s) art and culture in the audiovisual media arts. however, organizing this aim for the women interested in project work and for the artists involved requires imagination and a willingness to adapt. the sections, activities and associated initiatives that are part of the bildwechsel umbrella organization are presented in brief here.

#### **[woman agents]**

the kind of impact we have on the "outside world" and the way art and topical issues are perceived in other cities and countries is unthinkable without women agents and a whole network of assistants and promoters. they take along information material about the umbrella organization and make contacts for the archive.

on-site they take care of material like videos, books and catalogues and negotiate with artists about the conditions under which their works will be held in the women artists archive or the video collection.

they pass on information and act as contact people in the cities where they live or visit. this way we also keep abreast of political developments, and projects being launched or closed down. We maintain good contacts - an easier feat to accomplish now thanks to e-mail - with berlin, nuremberg, vienna, london, glasgow, san francisco basel and chicago.

**bildwechsel**  
Kirchenallee 25  
D-20099 Hamburg  
T: +49-40-246384  
info@bildwechsel.org

#26



## The Women Artist's Archive

das **Künstlerinnen** Archiv

The women artists archive collects works by international fine artists of all eras and material on the representation and portrayal of women, art and "the work of art" in relation to art / culture / media/ society / politics and the times. We also maintain a reference library. The archive section and the collections relate to the representation of women artists, theoreticians, academics, groups of artists, associations, exhibitions, conferences and venues.

As a rule, women artists/theoreticians and collectors compile and donate material and documents so that their work can be presented within the framework of the women artists archive. We expand our collections with the help of financial and material contributions from donators.

We would therefore like to take this opportunity to ask you for pictures and writings, personal archives and collections and any other additions you might like to donate to our archive.

If you would like to come and visit the women artists archive, it is best to make an appointment in advance.

### The Video Collection

The video collection at bildwechsel is an audiovisual archive offering a panoramic view of video and film work by women over the last twenty years. The collection is classified into various archive sections and presents German videos/films as well as works by foreign women artists. As a specialized archive, the video collection is dedicated to women artists and women in video/film and their work.

The way the archive expands is by us making contact with the individual women working in video/film and receiving their videos/films for our archive from the filmmakers themselves. We do not buy videos or record films from television. since 1993, we also offer the option of archiving the original formats (all video systems, 16 mm, super 8, slide-shows).

The videos/films in all of the archive categories can be viewed on our premises under optimum technical conditions, both by individuals and groups (in-house viewing is exclusively available to women). We provide an advice service for women interested in media arts, and those working in the field, as well as for festivals, or women artists and others seeking information from germany and abroad.

We differentiate between reference works, which are only available for viewing on our premises, and copies, which we also lend out with the written consent of the video/film donor. In addition, we provide a distance lending service for a number of specially compiled videos/films.

The video collection at bildwechsel could be the place where your video/film is still accessible and available for viewing in 10 years time. Write to us, call us and come and visit us. Have a look at the video collection and bring your videos/films with you.

### Collections

Within the women artists archive separate collections and editions are classified into sub-sections, such as: The "Cinenova Collection" - containing recent shorts and experimental videos/films from Britain and the US, from the British women's film distributor cinenova (London)

The "Pelze Collection" - comprising documents and materials (texts, copy art, photos, slides, videos...) on events held in "Pelze Multimedia", a place that offered women artists in Berlin an "empty space" for their ideas and activities.

The "Fassade Collection" - with footage of events, discussions and interviews in the field of women's culture. And now we proudly host the collection of posters done for the "very cyberfeminist conference" 2001, represented in this reader - to be seen at the archive or to be lent out for presentations.

**Künstlerinnen Archiv**  
Kirchenallee 25  
D-20099 Hamburg  
T: +49-40-246384  
info@bildwechsel.org



The faces list began operation in the spring of 1997, a pragmatic response to the needs of a small but growing number of women in media. Initiated after a series of discussions that took place on the margins of European media arts and media culture events, via email, and in the dimly lit corners of bars begged the question "Where are the women?" This constant question, and the desire to find out what women were doing with new media defined a gap in the existing structures and networks. Parallel to these discussions, the 'Face Settings' project began to create informal settings that invited women to come to the table for a good meal and to discuss their work.

It was the start to what would become an international network of women in media: artists, programmers, theorists, designers, curators, activists & djs, along with an assortment of other digital workers.

In the autumn of 1996, the simple solution of setting up a mailing list was introduced at a Face Settings dinner in Vienna. Even back then, it was hardly a novel or innovative approach to existing technology - but it did mark a profound shift in the practice of a small number of women. These women were already seeking out 'the rest of us', researching and following up on leads, gathering contacts to women and information about their work. The faces list would provide a space for exchanging all of those details within the existing minor network and also allow that network to be more inclusive, open up to new women in the field of media. Through faces, and the network behind it, that gap in media culture has partly been filled, the need to locate the women and to know what they do has partly been met.

In the nearly seven years since its inception, through informal contacts and by word of mouth, the list has grown from 30 to 50 to over 300 women in 2002. The number is significant - not in terms of its mass, but in terms of its quality. The 300+ women represent an incredible body of work, knowledge and output in the field of media that is phenomenal. The faces list has grown into a potent network of women that work with all areas of new technology. While the list itself provides a certain frame, what takes place within that is up to the subscribers, who use it mainly as a channel to exchange information about projects, find collaborators, and discuss events. Perhaps the most beautiful and useful side effect is that it also works as an informal bed and breakfast for faces visiting different cities.

In keeping with the emphasis on network building, faces occasionally hosts informal get togethers, dinners, and open mic sessions parallel to various media events. These real life meetings offer a chance for some good old fashioned face to face, and generate a powerful female presence that highlights how many women actually do work in media. Of course, in the international context of media art and culture, the question remains "where are the women?" While faces can create a marginal platform for women, not much has changed in the main programs of most media arts and culture events in the past years - they still present very little of the work women do. For this, the events organized by several women's groups and networks in the broad 'neighborhood' of media culture are deeply appreciated by many faces. Despite these positive steps, the kinds of questions that have inspired these many initiatives still beg to be asked. "What gaps remain unfilled?" "Where are the rest of the women?" "What are the issues that need to be addressed?" Perhaps the most important question is what pragmatic response will fulfill the needs of a thriving community of interrelated networks of women actively working with media?

## Gender Changer Academy

### About the Gender Changer Academy

The Gender Changer Academy (GCA) is a non-profit organization started by women, run by women and established for women. It's primary goal is to improve women's understanding and skills with regards to information and communication technology.

The initiative was borne out of the ASCII (Amsterdam Subversive Code for Information Interchange), a free internet workspace located in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Momentarily the GCA is run by a small group of volunteer women. This female tech collective was founded in Amsterdam in March 2000 by a small group of wild, wicked and absolutely crazy women, fighting the patriarchy on all levels (in fact we are not \_that\_ wild but you have to have that image as a shield if you intend braking the gender barriers in tech). On a chilly day in december three of us boldly took the train to Utrecht and bravely gave the very first class of the GCA in the PUSCII (Progressive Utrecht Subversive Code for Information Interchange). Like ASCII, PUSCII is a free internet workspace. The class was a success.

None of us had any or very little experience with the mysteries of computer hardware when we decided to start the GCA. We all worked with computers in one way or another, using word processing programs and surfing the internet now and then, but none of us had tried to look inside the case and actually touch stuff. At a certain point we decided that we wanted to learn more about the processes within the computer itself, to be able to localize and solve problems that occurs. Since we could not get the help we wanted and needed, and perhaps more important, not in the \_way\_ we wanted, we decided to put up a computer hardware course of our own.

The aim of the course is to get more hands-on practice on computer-hardware, and to give women a chance to look beyond the computer screen in the company of other women. Together we encourage women to crash computers, turn them inside out and, to put it all back together again; preferably with an improved installation.

### The Future of the GCA

We have lots of wild ideas and dreams about the future. We would like to see an equal gender balance in setting up, maintaining and improving new technology systems. Also we want peace on earth, no homeless people, and to solve the mystery of black holes in outer universe.

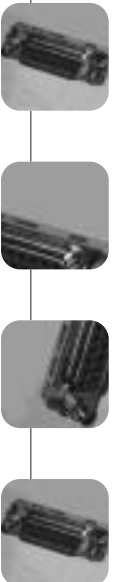
One start is continue giving a course in computer hardware for women. Another one is setting up a course in installing the free and open source operating system, Linux. After this, we want to offer courses in all alternative and especially open source software: from browsers and email programs to programming and web-page design. A new project we just started is a workshop in how to set up a live streaming (web)radio show. In conjunction with our courses we distribute course readers, made for reading and not only for browsing thru.

Last but not least there is already a non-profit tech carnival being home grown called the Eclectic Tech Carnival, or /etc for short. The carnival is meant to be an open and international space where women can experiment and learn about computer hardware and using free software products in publishing and communication.

To be continued...

### Related links:

The Gender Changer Academy: <http://genderchangers.org>  
Open Source: <http://opensource.org>  
ASCII: <http://squat.net/ascii>  
PUSCII: <http://squat.net/puscii>  
Eclectic Tech Carnival: <http://etc.genderchangers.org>



The posters  
are answers  
to the open  
question:

"What is your  
vision of  
cyberterrorism?"

Alphakinder tragen  
Grau. Sie arbeiten  
viel mehr als wir,  
weil sie so  
schrecklich klug  
sind. Oh, wie froh  
bin ich, daß ich ein  
Beta bin und nicht  
so viel arbeiten  
muß! Wir Betas sind  
etwas viel Besseres  
als Gammas und  
Deltas. Gammas sind  
dumm. Sie tragen  
alle Grün, und  
Deltakinder tragen  
Khaki. Nein, ich mag  
nicht mit  
Deltakindern  
spielen. Und  
Epsilons sind noch  
schlimmer. Sie sind  
zu dumm zum Lesen  
und Schreiben.  
Außerdem tragen sie  
Schwarz, und das ist  
eine abscheuliche  
Farbe. Oh, wie froh  
bin ich, daß ich ein  
Beta bin.

Alpha children wear  
grey. They work  
much harder than we  
do, because they're  
so frightfully  
clever. I'm really  
awfully glad I'm a  
Beta, because I  
don't work so hard.  
And then we are  
much better than  
the Gammas and  
Deltas. Gammas are  
stupid. They all  
wear green, and  
Delta children wear  
khaki. Oh no, I  
don't want to play  
with Delta  
children. And  
Epsilons are still  
worse. They're too  
stupid to be able  
to read or write.  
Besides, they wear  
black, which is  
such a beastly  
colour. I'm so  
glad, I'm a Beta.

# BIG BROTHER AWARDS

[www.bigbrotherawards.de](http://www.bigbrotherawards.de)



"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

# Virtuella

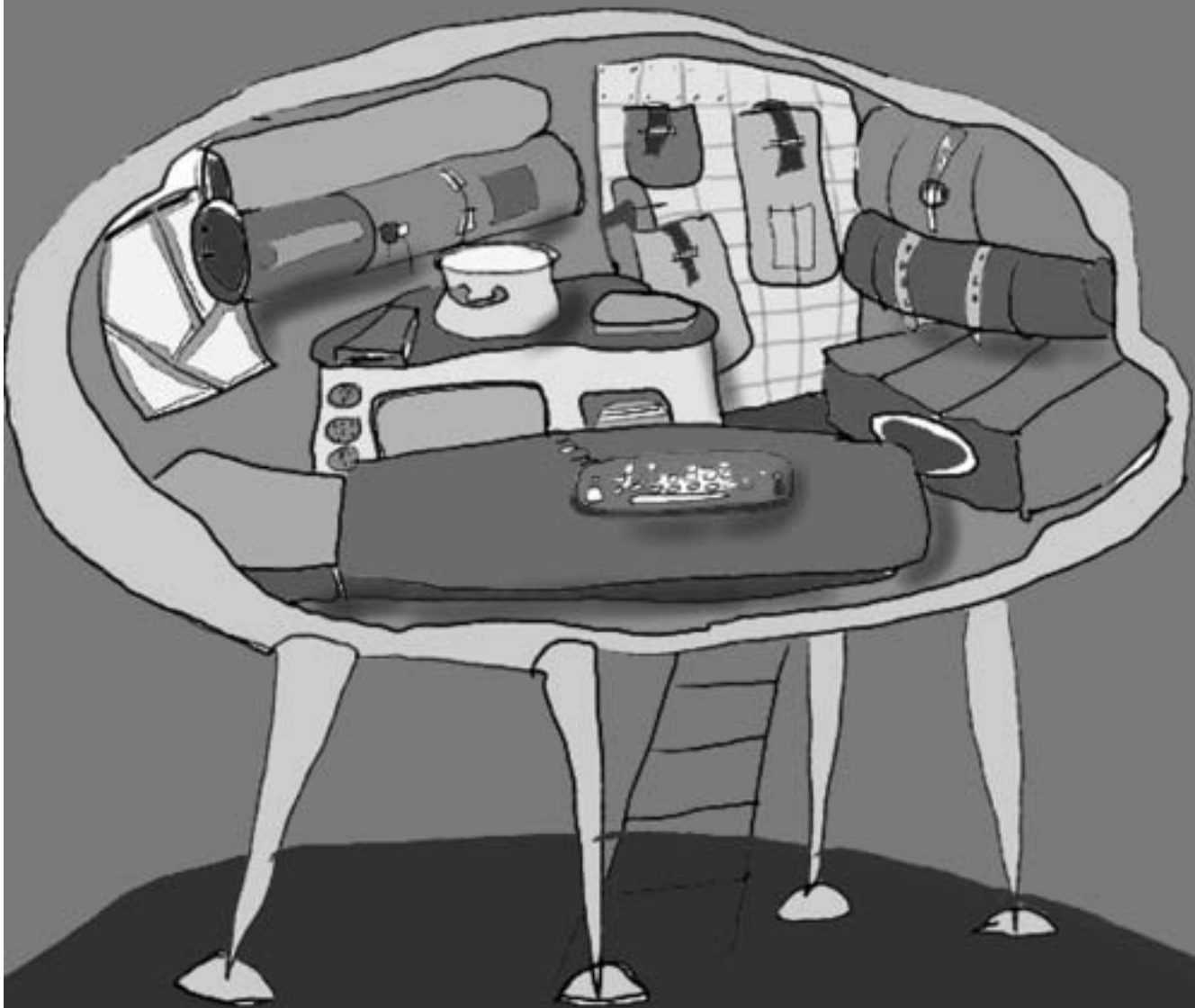


#32

digital gender

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

*enjoy cyberfeminism.*



Etat des lieux, France 12.2001

# pour une femme *il est plus facile*

**d'** être enterrée au **Panthéon**

*Aux grands hommes, la patrie reconnaissante*  
(inscrit dans le marbre du fronton)

1 / 75

**de faire partie de l'Académie française**

*Les immortels sont aujourd'hui habilités à être des juges éclairés du bon usage des mots, et donc à bien définir les notions et les valeurs dont ces mots sont porteurs.*  
(site web de l'Académie française)

3 / 37

**d'être ministre de la Culture**

*L'incompréhension du présent naît fatalement de l'ignorance du passé*  
(site web du Ministère de la Culture)

3 / 13

**que** d'être enseignante

au Studio Création Art Numérique de l'Ecole nationale d'art de Nice

0 / 16

**d'être directrice**

de l'Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris  
depuis sa fondation en 1863

jamais

**d'être artiste**

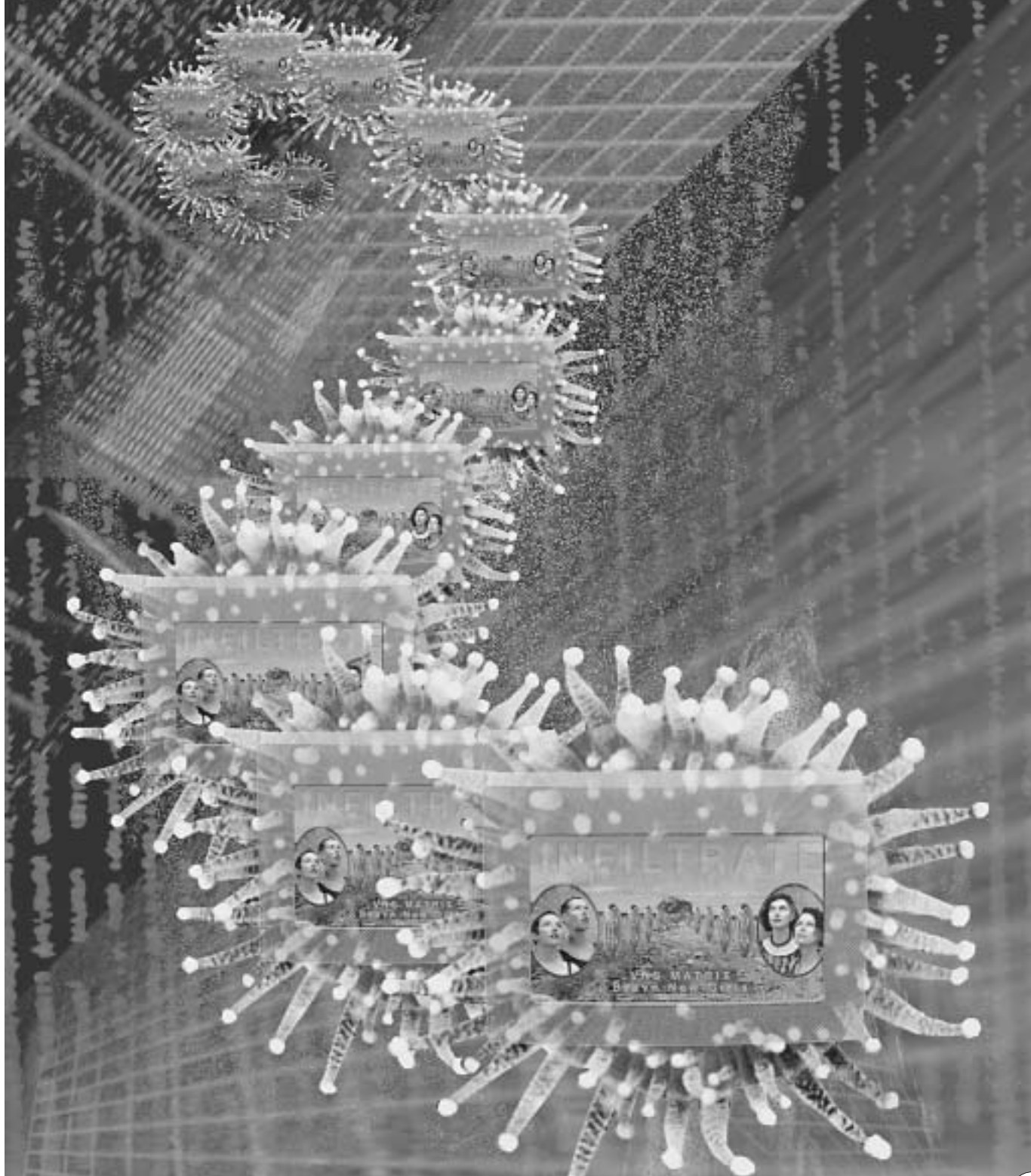
au Pavillon français de la **Biennale de Venise**

0 en 49 ans

December 2001, in France: for a women it's easier to be buried in the Pantheon 1/75. "To great men, fatherland grateful" (inscribed on the frontpiece of the building). To be part of the french academy of letters 3/37. "The immortals are today accredited to be the enlighten judges of the good usage of words, therefore to well define the notions and values those words represent" (site of the academy). To be the Culture Minister 3/13. "Today's lack of understanding is fatally born from ignorance of the past" (site of the culture ministry). To be a professor at the Studio Creation Art Numérique of the art school in nice (which, by the way, is the window of new technology in art education in the pilot art school in France) 0/16. To be director of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-art in Paris. Never since it's foundation in 1863 (to be expected). Be exhibited in the french pavilion at the venice biennale. 0 in 49 years.

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

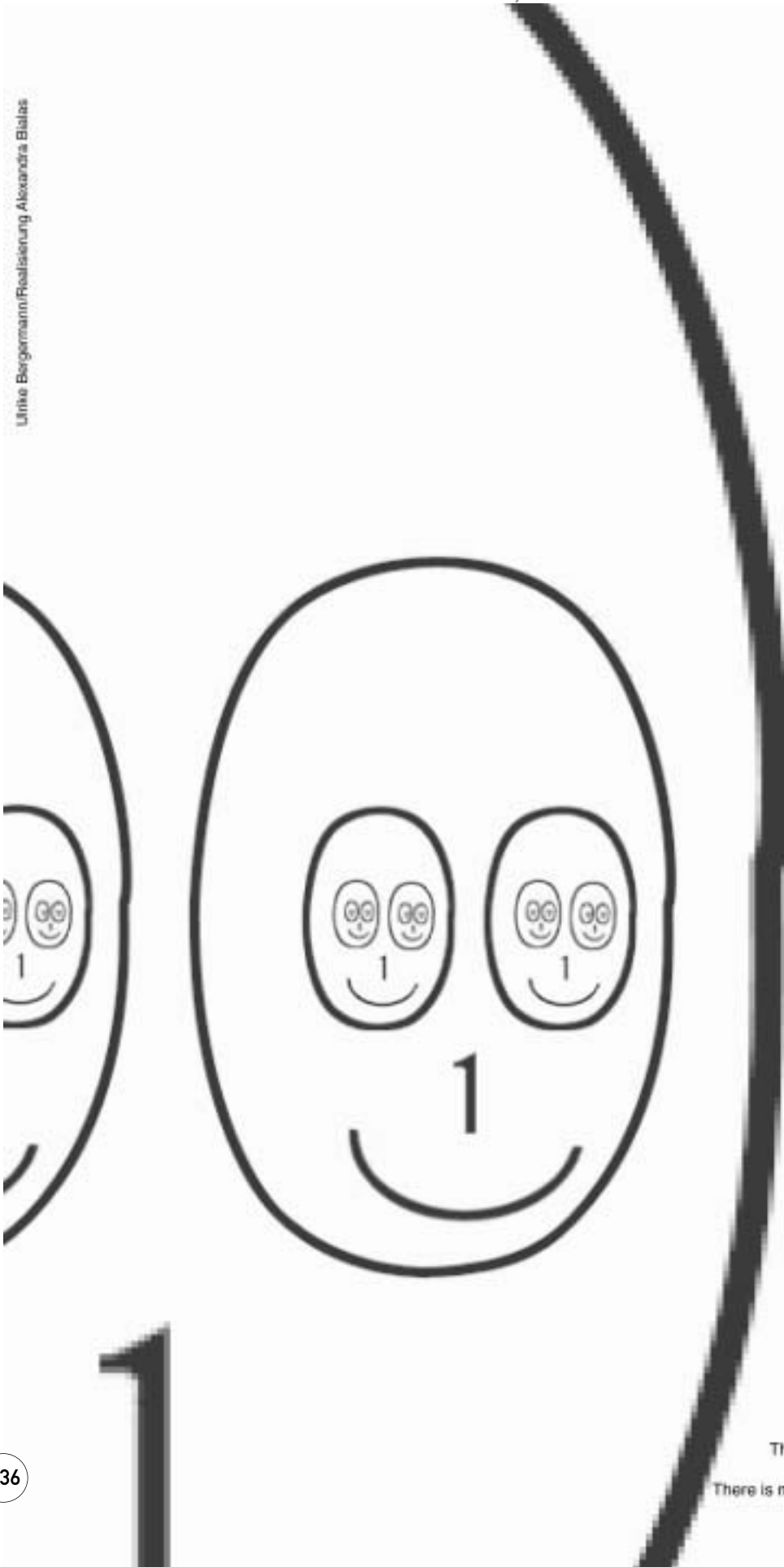
**The clitoris is a direct line  
.....to the matrix**



**...the future is unmanned**

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

Ulrike Bergmann/Realisierung Alexandra Blais



A cyberfemme's infinite smile  
Read my eyes  
The deep throat in the face of cyberfeminism  
Parts of a new equation  
There is more to zeros and ones than meets the eye  
High Definition Mathematics  
3D-philosophy in the I of cyberfeminism  
Print density as a measure of infinity

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

## NANA PETZET SYSTEM SBF – Inventarisierung der Sammlung mit Hida Midas

|               |      |   |
|---------------|------|---|
| OBJ-Dok-Nr.   | 5000 | 00000034  |
| Bez.-Verwalt. | ob28 | Verwalterin   |
| Ort           | 2864 | Hamburg   |
| Art           | 2890 | private Sammlung  |
| Abteilung     | 2930 | Objekte   |
| Invent-Nr.    | 2950 | 1999.0016   |
| Person        | 2910 | Petzet, Nana  |
| Zugangsart    | 9020 | Erbe & Fund   |
| Zug-Datum     | 9022 | 1999  |
| Bez.-Verwalt. | ob28 | Vorbesitz   |
| Ort           | 2864 | Bad Mitterndorf, AU   |
| Ortsteil      | 2862 | Neuhofen  |
| Art           | 2890 | privater Hausrat  |
| Gelt-Dauer    | 2996 | bis 1998.01   |
| Person        | 2910 | Dupré, Hermann & Erika  |
| Zugangsart    | 9020 | Kauf  |
| Bez.-Künstler | ob30 | Herstellung   |
| Name          | 3100 | Dupré, Erika  |
| ber. Funkt.   | 3475 | Reparateurin  |
| Intention     | 3490 | Sparsamkeit   |
| Dat-Art       | 5060 | Reparatur   |
| num. Dat.     | 5064 | um 1960/1998  |
| Entst-Ort     | 5130 | Bad Mitterndorf (Österreich)  |
| Obj-Titel     | 5200 | ohne Titel (Socken)   |
| Gattung       | 5220 | Objektkunst   |
| U-Gattung     | 5222 | bereits reparierte Objekte  |
| Sachbegriff   | 5230 | Wollsocken (grau)   |
| Formtyp       | 5240 | Socke   |
| Material      | 5280 | Wolle (grau) & Garn   |
| Technik       | 5300 | gestrickt und gestopft  |
| Werkzeug      | 5350 | Stopfnadel  |
| Höhe          | 5362 | 34 cm   |
| Breite        | 5364 | 12 cm   |
| Bez-Ereign.   | ob70 | Anlaß   |
| Art           | 7100 | Beschädigung durch Benutzung  |
| Ort           | 7070 | Bad Mitterndorf (Österreich)  |
| Bez-Ereign.   | ob70 | Anlaß   |
| Art           | 7100 | Reparatur   |
| Titel         | 7110 | gestopft  |
| Aus-Kurzt.    | 7790 | Private Werte 1999 & Ekka Fraenka 2000 & Models of resistance 2000  |
| Foto          | 8450 | Foto  |
| Fotograf      | 8490 | X   |
| Erhaltung     | 9105 | gut & kleine und größere Löcher & gestopft (verschiedenfarbige Garne)   |
| Kommentar     | 9990 | X   |
| WR-Notizen    | 99wr | Datenfeld MOTIVATION (Asp.Nr. 3491) einfügen (bei Erika Dupré: Existenzangst) Projekttitel: System SBF-Inventarisierung der Sammlung mit HIDA/MIDAS |
| Datum         | 9900 | 2000.11.14  |
| Urh-Autor     | 9904 | N.P. & H. S. & K.S.   |



## Explore the secrets of »NATURE™«, create your C<>F-VIRUS!

C<>F-VIRUS (Cyberfeminism-Virus)

### You will get a border-engineer:

- ✦ It's a biological molecule.
- ✦ It's a computer program.
- ✦ It's a theoretical model.
- ✦ It's a political model.
- ✦ It opens up a system and expands a net.
- ✦ It develops a transfer of »information«.
- ✦ It changes gender.
- ✦ It converts the system into another.
- ✦ It destroys any system.
- ✦ It's a tactical approach.

The C<>F-VIRUS is going to be a powerful label and a famous technique.



Your model could become autonomous and suddenly gets activ, out of control, it's going to spread and you won't know why and where!

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"



sackjane@hotmail.com



"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"



claudia reiche

[mimicking]

[normal]

[tying]

[careless]

[killing]

[destructive]

[moralizing]

[effective]

[lacking]

[self organizing]

[sentimental]

[ignorant]

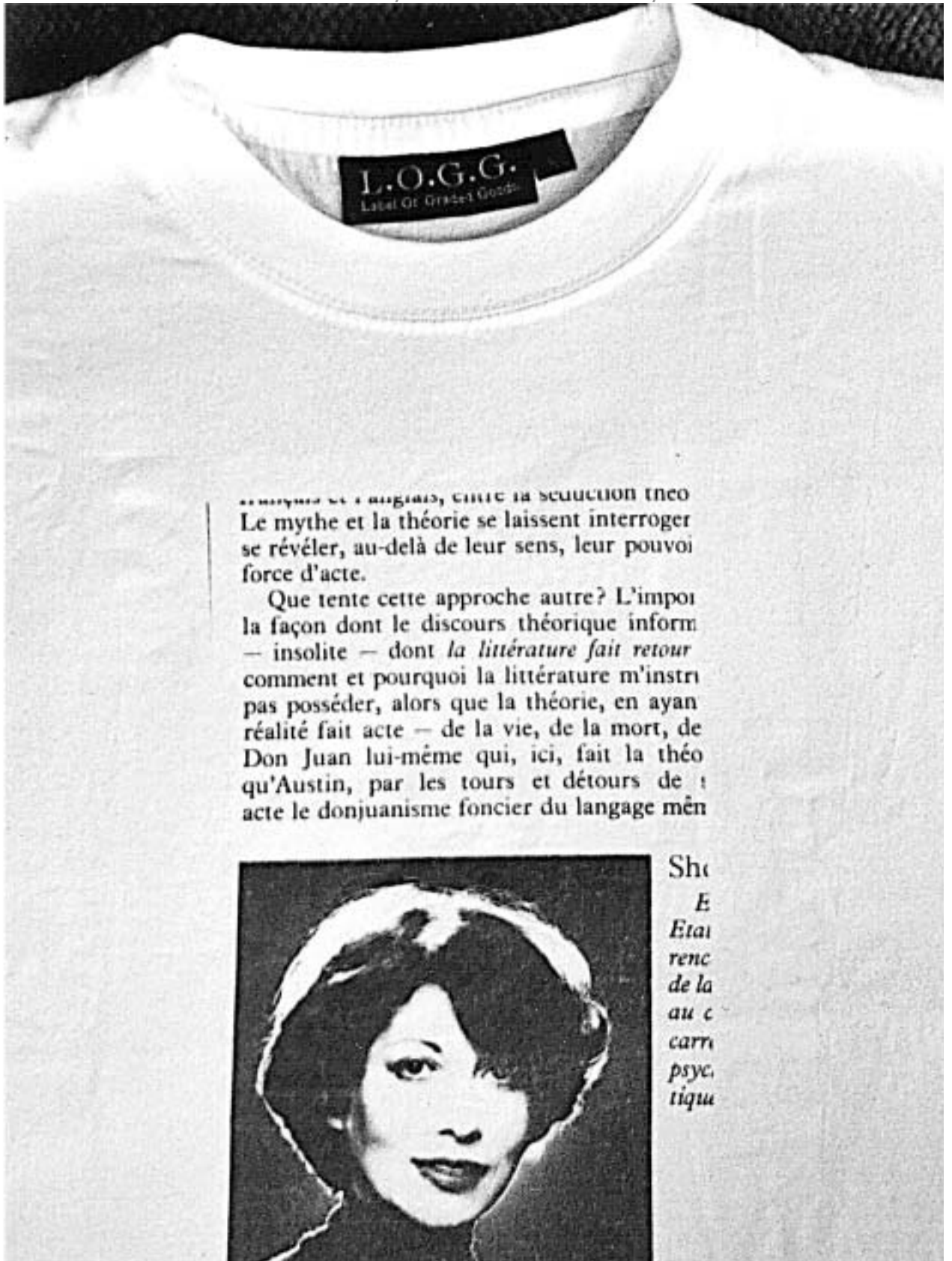
[merciless]

[void]



"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

Elisabeth Strowick



Le mythe et la théorie se laissent interroger se révéler, au-delà de leur sens, leur pouvoi force d'acte.

Que tente cette approche autre? L'impos la façon dont le discours théorique inform — insolite — dont la littérature fait retour comment et pourquoi la littérature m'instr pas posséder, alors que la théorie, en ayan réalité fait acte — de la vie, de la mort, de Don Juan lui-même qui, ici, fait la théo qu'Austin, par les tours et détours de l'acte le donjuanisme foncier du langage mèn



Sho  
E  
Etai  
renc  
de la  
au c  
carri  
psyc  
tiqu

### ... so addictive

Shoshana Felman, *Le Scandale du corps parlant. Don Juan avec Austin ou La sduction en deux langues*, Paris 1980

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

**my.img = alt.img = tmp.img = img.shift**



"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"



## European and North American WomenAction a new name and a new web site

[www.enawa.org](http://www.enawa.org)

**ENAWA**- European and North American WomenAction is a network of media, ICT, information and advocacy organizations. **ENAWA** strengthens and integrates a feminist analysis in the information and media landscape in relation to social movements and the women's movement in the European and North American regions and the world.

- ❖ The **ENAWA** web site at [www.enawa.org](http://www.enawa.org) publishes weekly news reports in English, French and Spanish. It also publishes **Dossiers** on major international meetings and events. After September 11th **ENAWA** opened a dossier devoted to messages by women's organizations and feminists, developing a Culture of Peace. Women's organizations are invited to send their messages, statements and petitions for this dossier to the IIAV for posting on the ENAWA site. Send to [d.vreke@iiaav.nl](mailto:d.vreke@iiaav.nl)

**ENAWA** was formerly European and North American WomenAction 2000. Throughout 1999 and 2000 the network provided a knowledge sharing environment for women's organizations participating in the review process of the UN's Beijing Platform for Action. European and North American WomenAction 2000 hosted a web site ([www.iiaav.nl/european-womenaction-2000](http://www.iiaav.nl/european-womenaction-2000)), hosted electronic discussions, produced daily news publications and provided onsite internet facilities at relevant UN conferences, and published online all the European and North American national NGO reports.

The **ENAWA** web site is hosted by the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement (IIAV) and produced by the participants in **ENAWA**. For more information contact: Lin Pugh, Program Manager for International Cooperation at the IIAV, [lpugh@iiaav.nl](mailto:lpugh@iiaav.nl), tel +31-20-6651318



Or contact **ENAWA** participants:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Barbara Anello, <a href="mailto:dawn@thot.net">dawn@thot.net</a> (DAWN) Canada  | Kate Burke, <a href="mailto:kateb@ariva.org">kateb@ariva.org</a> (AVIVA) UK  |
| Joelle Palmieri, <a href="mailto:info@penelopes.org">info@penelopes.org</a> (Les Pénélopes) France                    | Jo Sutton, <a href="mailto:diamond@fox.nsn.ca">diamond@fox.nsn.ca</a> (Womenspace) Canada  |
| Karen Banks, <a href="mailto:karenb@gn.apc.org">karenb@gn.apc.org</a> (APC WNSP) UK                                   | Ann Goodman, <a href="mailto:goodmanann@aol.com">goodmanann@aol.com</a> (Women's Network for a Sustainable Future) USA                       |
| Lenka Simerska, <a href="mailto:gender@ecn.cz">gender@ecn.cz</a> (KARAT) Central and Eastern Europe                   | Charlotte Thibault, <a href="mailto:c.thibault@total.net">c.thibault@total.net</a> (FAPFA) Canada  |
| Susan Bazilli, <a href="mailto:sbazilli@loak.ca">sbazilli@loak.ca</a> (Networked Intelligence for Development) Canada | Sharon Hackett, <a href="mailto:hackett@cdeact.ca">hackett@cdeact.ca</a> (CDEACT) Canada   |
| Christina Fraga, <a href="mailto:ameco@nodo50.org">ameco@nodo50.org</a> (AMECO) Spain                                 | Elena Turifa, <a href="mailto:eletarhe@teleline.es">eletarhe@teleline.es</a> (Dones Periodistes) Spain                                       |
| Montserrat Boix, <a href="mailto:boix@nodo50.org">boix@nodo50.org</a> (Mujeres en Red) Spain                          | Christiane Jungblut, <a href="mailto:c.jungblut@RZ.HU-Berlin.de">c.jungblut@RZ.HU-Berlin.de</a> (LOLApress) Europe, Africa and Latin America |
| Alexandra Spieldoch, <a href="mailto:aspieldoch@coc.org">aspieldoch@coc.org</a> (US Women Connect)                    | Fusun Tayanç, <a href="mailto:info@kady2000.gen.tr">info@kady2000.gen.tr</a> (Kady2000) Turkey   |
| Malin Björk, <a href="mailto:bjork@womenlobby.org">bjork@womenlobby.org</a> (European Women's Lobby) Belgium          | Kristina Mihalec, <a href="mailto:babe@zamor.net">babe@zamor.net</a> (B.A.B.E.) Croatia  |
| Nena Sudar, <a href="mailto:nencika.sudar@zg.tel.hr">nencika.sudar@zg.tel.hr</a> (CROW), Croatia                      | Frieda Werden, <a href="mailto:wings@wings.org">wings@wings.org</a> (WINGS: Women's International News Gathering Service) USA                |
| Nicole Nepton, <a href="mailto:nnepton@cybersolidaires.org">nnepton@cybersolidaires.org</a> (Cybersolidaires) Canada  | Erin Leigh, <a href="mailto:erin@awid.org">erin@awid.org</a> (AWID: Association for Women's rights in Development) Canada                    |

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"



## Managing the Bioenhanced Office Worker of the Future A Transgenic Virtual Pet Game

by ACTION TANK: N. Bookchin, J. Lee, C. Davis, M. Allen, and others

*MetaPet is a virtual pet strategy game set in the near future. As a manager in the office of a top biotech company, your challenge will be to supervise a transgenic human pet and become a significant part of history in the making.*

*The MetaPet is the first successful genetically engineered human, created in the year 2005, when scientists took an obedience gene from a trained dog and inserted it into a human to produce a more cooperative and loyal worker. Scientists were optimistic that human inefficiencies could henceforth be eradicated, ushering in a new era of global productivity. The experiment was immediately hailed a success despite a minor aesthetic side effect, the growth of a dog-like tail on the MetaPet.*

### CORPORATE CREATIVITY MEETS BIOTECH INNOVATION

*Players, in the role of a manager, begin by selecting a worker, otherwise known as a MetaPet, and choose between three biotech firms in which they and their MetaPet will work. Players overcome the limitations of their MetaPet's mind and body by using state-of-the-art technologies such as genetic screening tests, the latest biochemical pharmaceuticals, and body surgeries.*



### THE METAPET CYBERFEMINIST POSITION

**WOMEN, MEN AND TRANSGENIC ORGANISMS ARE  
EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THE MANAGEMENT.  
MAXIMIZING DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE  
PROFITS US ALL.**



#46

*Metapet is a project by ACTION TANK commissioned by Creative Time Inc. in association with Hamaca, Barcelona. Additional support comes from MECADUMedia Center of Art and Design, Barcelona.*

*ACTION TANK is an independent agency developing cross-over entertainment products to mobilize critical thought and action. Deploying high-leverage technology to reflect changing global realities and to maximize social engagement. ACTION TANK loads seemingly innocuous consumer products with unexpected ammunition.*





"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

cyberfeminism

cybertfeminism

invites to act

hält mit semifik-

between more

tiven Positionen

differences.

Ränder.

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

# **CURATING A CYBERFEMINIST SHOW**

## **pros**

- + pluralism of positions
- + funding
- + PR

## **cons**

- no defined criteria
- curating with a label  
(cyberfeminism)
- few art market connections

**Or are the cons actually pros .... ?**

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

# ***Galena Levitt Norris Clinic***

[www.galenaclinic.com](http://www.galenaclinic.com)

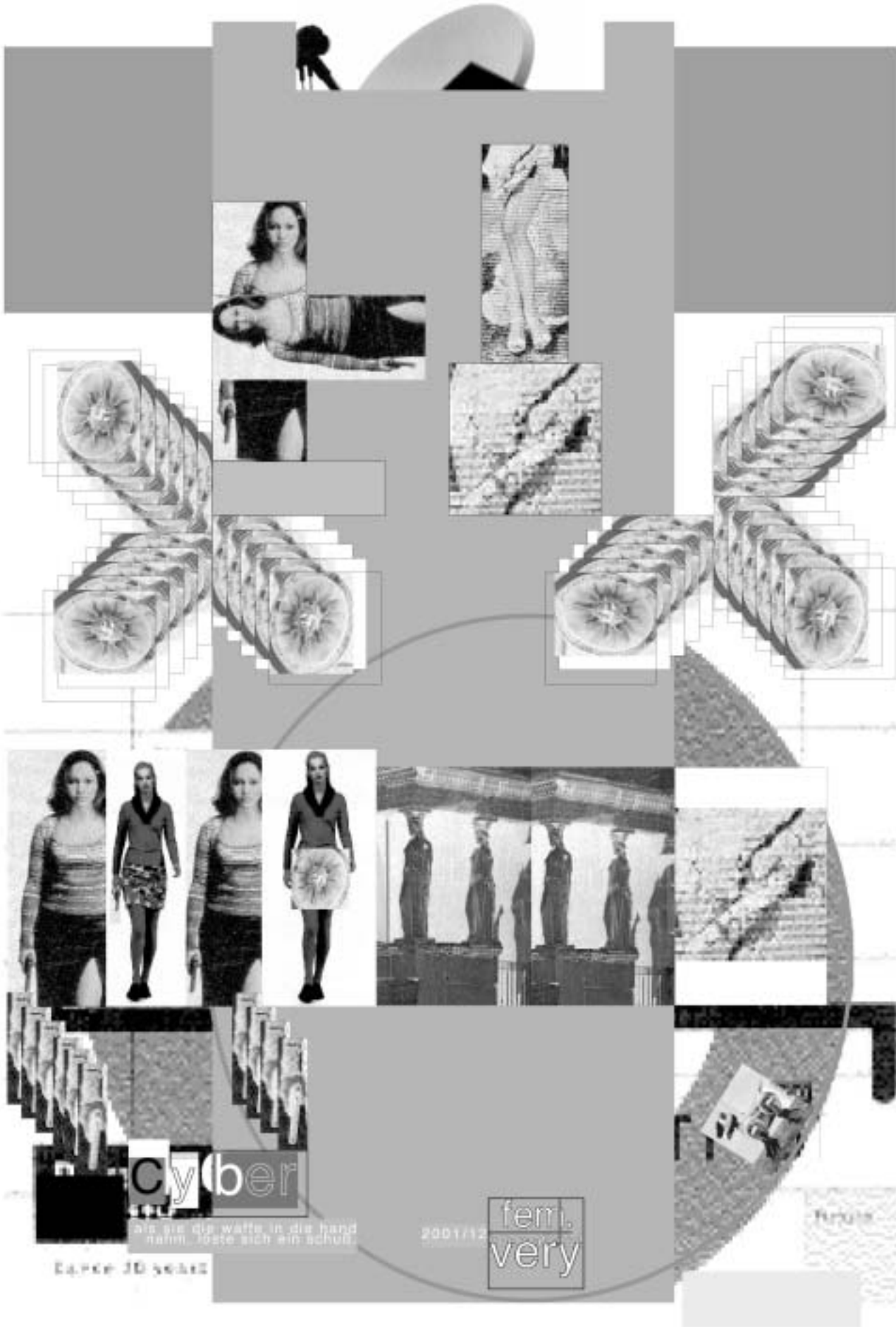


*"A good physical appearance,  
feeling well with oneself,  
produces a better quality of life and definitely more  
personal achievements"*

***Fat Rejuvenation  
Neck Replacement  
Chemical Nose Peel  
Breast Pampering  
Eye Removal  
Ear Augmentation  
Face Reduction  
Low Risk Eye Blepharoplasty***

*A fully registered clinic. Highly experienced surgeons with the relevant certificates.  
for your FREE confidential Consultation or Information please call 07968 141 152  
or email: [info@galenaclinic.com](mailto:info@galenaclinic.com)*

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"



Cyber

als sie die waffe in die hand  
nahm, löste sich ein schuß

2001/12

fem.  
very

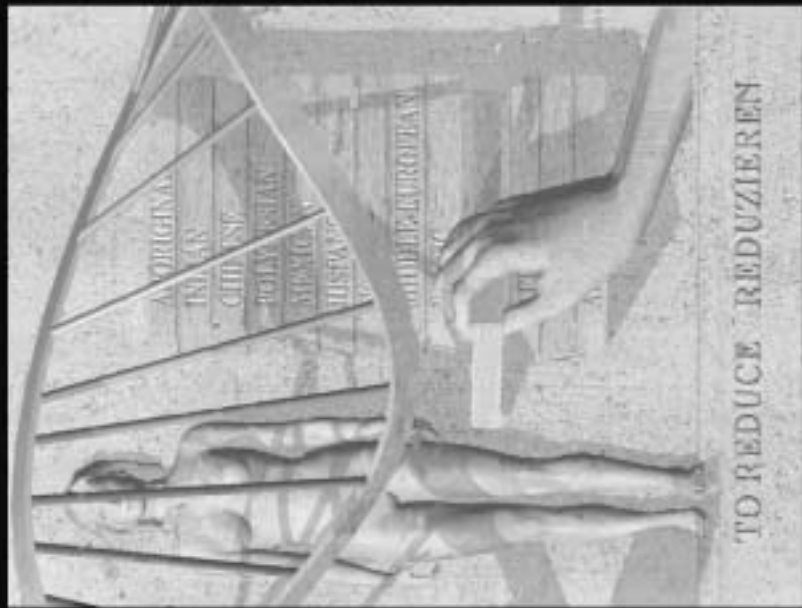
Expo 2001



"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"



"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"



"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

**ciberfeminista.org**

Very Cyberfeminist International

Ciudad de México

d.g. monica presas / maryscl monales



# DANGEROUS

## **Registered Cyberfeminist On Stand-by**

### **Report Suspicious Behavior to:**

**+49(0)173-613 24 49 • +49(0)40-43 25 22 83**

**+49(0)4402-8 17 44**

**helene\_oldenburg@hotmail.com**

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

**Watch them:  
they are clever,  
they are fierce,  
they are ruthless,  
they are fun!**

**"Extraordinary!"  
The New York Times**

**"A must see!"  
The Guardian**

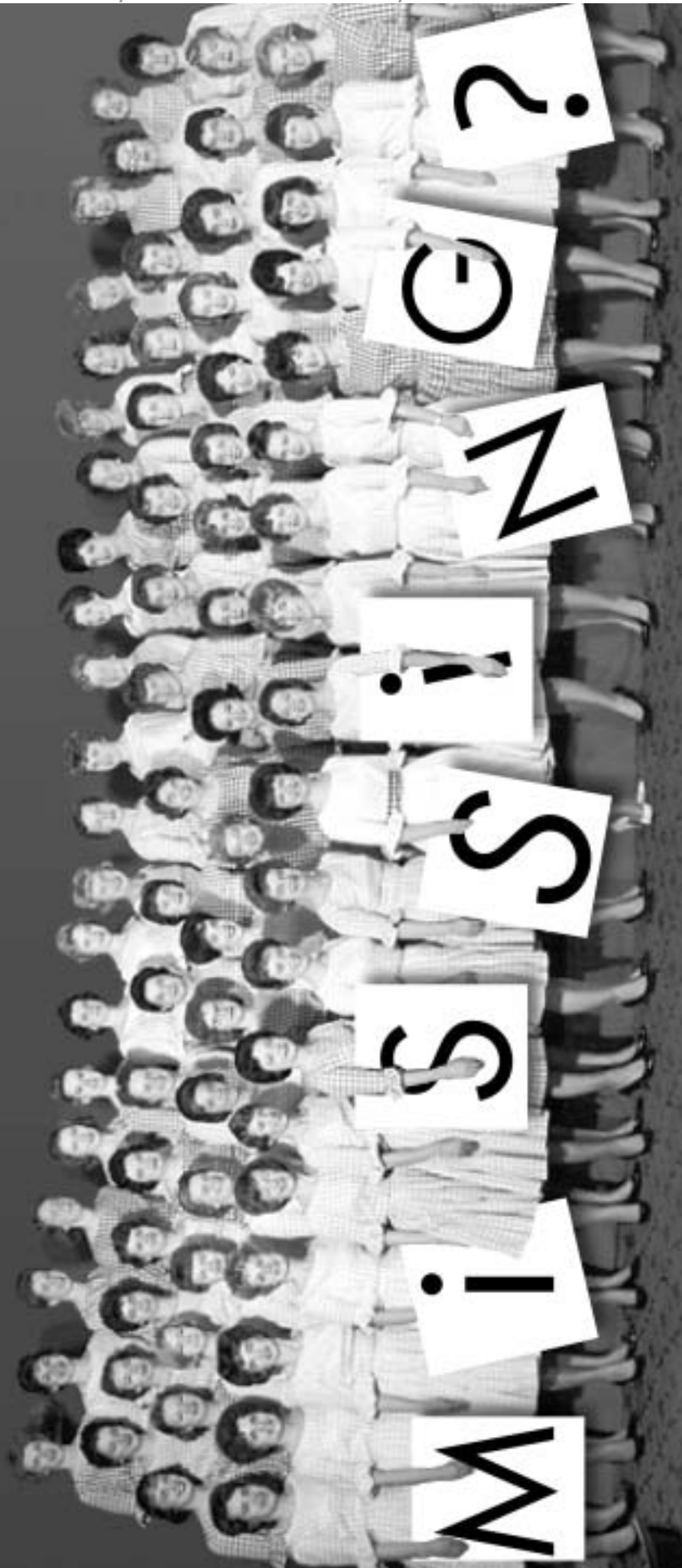
**"Brilliant!"  
Der Spiegel**

# **CYBERFEMINISM THE NEXT GENERATION**

a film by Ania Corcilus

"what is your vision of cyberfeminism?"

anybody



*f*(start) *f*(shut)

*f*(stop)

*f*(open)

= new border  
concepts

Cindy Gabriela Flores

# "The women's place in the Mexico city subway A story about the compulsory gender border"

*It's just another weekday for her. The same evening of everyday. She is coming back from work; like always, tired, thinking, sometimes even smiling...*



*Like I said, for her is always the same line, the same 1.50 pesos, it even feels like the same ticket...*



The México City subway is one of the most efficient and cheapest in the world. It provides daily transportation to more than 4.7 millions of passengers, almost the 5th part of the city metropolitan population. There are almost 180 stations. The price of the ticket is only 16 cents of american dollars (it is subsidised by the government in more than 50% of its cost)

*Its almost like an endless ocean where the waves are countless faceless human beings. The crowd, the lines, the signals, the sounds, discomfort and routine. It's the same every workday...*



It's a fact, 50% of the women using this underground system have been at one time or another, victim of one kind of crime, the same kind of crime. A crime which usually its even unknown by our gender counterpart, even if they have done it, in the name of the search of pleasure.

Touching a female user its the most common denounce on the subway, even above than theft. Think about it, men don't consider touching a crime: they're not used to such physical intrusion. Official data confirms that men don't consider that touching a women with or without her consent is a crime. They usually justify touching a woman saying they where provoked by the clothes of a woman.

*She walks upstairs, downstairs, behind the gap line... Stop, walk, slow, fast.. The usual action commands.*



Most mexican women think the only sexual abuse that can be denounced is Rape. Most of them don't even know sexual harassment is a crime.

*As always, she is absent-minded when on the subway. But this time she doesn't even notice she didn't walk up to the women only wagon. Its funny, it's the 21st century, we have internet, space exploration, genetic mutations, even cloning, and still women need a wagon for themselves in order to be safe of the eyes, bodys and hands of males...*



*She made a mistake, she walked the wrong way, into the wrong wagon. She isn't in the territory for her, in an enviroment she could call safe. But she doesn't notice it. She's thinking, not even aware that sometimes when men see her they think that she only thinks girls things. She's in the wrong sector.*



***She is not the only girl here, but in these wagons she doesn't have a reserved seat. She has to stand. When he comes, she doesn't even see him. He waits for the doors to get closed... For sure he was looking at her. She looked nice, not like the "kind" of girl who would ride the subway. He must think she smells nice. Do they think when doing this? Now he will touch her like nothing is happening, maybe like an accident in motion. Maybe like why not. This is not a wagon for her.***



Official data indicates there are more than 4 daily rapes in the México City metropolitan area. Non governmental organizations affirm that 2 out of every 10 rape are committed in the subway.

The aggressors are usually men between 16 and 25 years old. And the victims, women between 16 to 30 years old.

In the local legislation, sexual harassment is punished with 3 months to 4 years of jail sentence, but it's not considered a serious offense.



***She can't believe it. It has to be a mistake!! But... No, it isn't... She is angry. Afraid. Sad. Powerless... Completely angry. As angry as she can get. She wants to kill him...***



The last campaign against sexual harassment in the subway asked women to remember to pull the emergency lever in case of an attack.

***A shy passenger girl who looks like a student says: -I wouldn't do that. ¡Calm down! Haven't you heard about the case of the girl who defended herself against a guy and is now being sentenced to two years in jail! It happened here, in the subway.-***



***She is talking about Claudia del Carmen Campuzano Contreras. 22 years old, actress and high school student (in the open school system). On april 1st 1999, when leaving the Hidalgo subway station she was sexually harassed by an unknown guy. Claudia defended herself, afraid she could get raped. Now she is sentenced to two years in jail.***



Claudia was victim of the "statement violence" (as the public workers recognize it). This happens when the aggressor and the victim struggle and injure each other. The case is full of irregularities. The cops harassed her for an hour before taking her to the police station. In the minister office the agents continued harassing her verbally, trying to dissuade her from opening a case. Nowadays, she is completely bankrupt after spending more than 20 thousand dollars on lawyers and bail. After this, she hasn't been able to get a job. And, even after being the victim, she has to come to the police department every week, to sign as a criminal on bail...

***This was the moment when all those posters against sexual harassment she saw before got a special relevance... even a scary meaning.***



- \* Sexual harassment is a crime, denounce it. If she says no, it means NO.
  - \* Nobody can force you to see what you don't want to. Exhibitionism is a crime, denounce it.
  - \* Because a women is more than the seed where time grows. ¡No to her destruction!
- November 25, International day against the violence to women.



Public servants assume that only a few cases of sexual harassment are denounced, mainly because of legal unawareness, but also because of fear to a revenge of the aggressors, and a distrust to authority. Moreover, some of the victims who experience the legal process, get burned out by the long procedures, or frightened by clashes and face-discussions with the attacker. Usually, there is no interest from the police to follow this cases, and the first reaction is to catalog the victim according to her clothes and try to find in that the reason of sexual "provocation".

*There she goes, with a mess on her mind. Unable to do anything than hate everything everywhere. The world. Meanwhile her brain is looping endlessly. She is asking herself "why is this possible?" "why she?" "why is this happening to her?"...*



Subway stations with more affluence, like Pino Suárez, Balderas and Hidalgo are very suitable for sexual aggressors.

*Both girls are unaware of Michelle Corretti's case, a 23 year old italian girl who on december 19 th of 1999 was robbed by 10 guys and raped by 2 of them in the Tacubaya metro station. Michelle came to México to work as an executive worker in Citibank, a year before this happened.*

Michelle's declaration at the police department was taken without a translator (wich in the case of a foreigner is illegal), and in an aggressive atmosphere. The doctors instead of ckecking her as is customary and needed, simply decided to take a brief glance into her vagina, reporting contradictory results (among each others). The psychologists made an examination and profile of Michelle Corretti in half an hour (but first argued that they needed more than 5 hours, simply because they didn't wanted to do it). Later, Michelle was questioned (her story completely on doubt) because she forgot to tell the police about 10 thousand pesos (approx 1000 dlls) which the robbers took away... Maybe they don't know what it feels like to be raped. For sure they don't know the impact of it, which of course its much worse than simply getting robbed. Michelle couldn't leave the police station for more than 11 hours. She couldn't eat or sleep and didn't have access to a telephone. Instead of immediately returning to Italy, Corretti decided to stay in México in order to fight in the case...



*At that moment she decided to always use the female wagons... She noticed that the atmosphe-re was relaxing in there... She observed women in their transitory space... A space which felt suspended in time, always possessed by the fem-e-nine she. She thought about all those spaces where she had been with other woman and no men. She remember how her friends opened up theirselves, how they helped each other... Of course, some times, they fought, but they understood each other. They had a different point of view...*



Due to the high rates of delinquency against women (including sexual harassment) the authorities of the México City subway decided to apply a security manouvre to keep apart women from the impossible crowds. There isn't a census of the number of users according to gender, but the authorities declare that the female gender represents a bit more of the metropolitan population. So there are two wagons committed to female users at the more crowded stations at trafic peak hours. This system has been so succesful, that it has been teached to the subway administrators of other countrys, like Japan for example, 'cause it's an avant-garde operative solution.'



*She feels disappointed, but at the same time, she now has the courage to do something against this situation she dislikes so much.*

*She is not a computer genius, not even a hacker, but she has received so much spam about a lot of unimportant and useless topics, so... Why not take a chance? They call this online activism.*



Internet is accesible outside some subway stations, for everybody who has a dollar to pay for the rent of an hour. Other options which are free include the public libraries, some public schools and other public service offices.



*"After that, many of my friends and I have received a lot of spam from a girl talking about women rights and the construction of a permanent campaign against the gender harassment."*



<http://www.ciberfeminista.org/subway>

**The women's place in the México City subway**  
Created and directed by **Cindy Gabriela Flores**  
**Assistant director:** Fran Ilich  
**Photograh:** Mónica Flores and Fran Ilich  
**Actress:** Cindy Gabriela Flores and Amaranta Islas  
**Web design:** Cindy Gabriela Flores  
**Thanks to:** Sistema de Transporte Colectivo Metro: Adrián García Vinay, Dirección de Línea 1 Rodolfo Robledo y Victor Hugo Ortega Mariano Cruz, Coordinación de Comunicación Social y RRPP Gobierno del Distrito Federal: César Yáñez, Dirección de Comunicación Social  
**Special thanks to:** Arturo Fuentes y Luis Martignon





In 2001, in a rainy grey German city called Bremen, four tricksters weary of well-established cyberfeminism decided to have some fun with cultural and technoscience studies and contemporary social theory (Gesellschaftstheorie). Creating themselves as a mini corporation, TechnoTrickster, they made their first text/art/technowork, 'TechnoTricksterTank™4Today'. With repeated homage to Donna Haraway, they began to play around with the idea of technotricks-terfeminism.

Good old Cyberfeminism is dead. Long live Cyberfeminism! What Cyberfeminism?

Cyberfeminism was meant to be "about ideas, irony, appropriation and hands-on skilling up in the data-terrain." (Julianne Pierce 1997, 10)<sup>1</sup>. Attracted by the ideas of cyberfeminism and seduced by its irony, we were looking for appropriation and hands-on skilling up in the data-terrain, but mostly found only webbased playgrounds and fantasies of technological empowerment.

"What to do?" (Rosa L.)

We thought 'very Cyberfeminist International' must be the right place to have some fun with reinventing political topics in the theory and practice of technoscience.

We pinned our vicious ideas on huge sized cardboards, packed some minidisks & instruments, put our orange pants and our TechnoTrickster caps on and jumped on the train to Hamburg.

First, we had some warming-up gym with music/technology by getting people involved in remixing lectures and popmusic.

Good-bye Daddy Derrida, hello Techno Trickster!

Question the hegemony of artists, art scholars, cultural theorists etc.

in cyberfeminism!

*Questionmark the question????????????*

Cyberfeminism produces clichés of naive merely down-to-earth technicians.

Sophisticated cyber-feminist art for wannabe hip cyberculture elite only?!

Is genderation on your agenda?

Do you believe in watery gender mainstreaming?

Do you really think it helps to sublim-ate the fear of technosphere by doing your fancy website and endless PowerPoint animations?

*Ras le bol (fed up!) du gendermainstreaming!*

*Fed up with talking about gender and technique [better start doing it!]*

*Analogue eats digital*

*[find analogue ways of cyberfeminist practices + networking, the digital world is very sensitive. So my aim is to empower women to the basics, so they're independent (credits to the gender changers!) so it's less exclusive*

**cyberfeminism + modernities & techno-science theory practice= techno//\*trickster\*//feminism**

Corinna Bath, Uli Peter, Claude Draude, Jutta Weber, Alice Gössner

# TechnoTricksterTank™4Today

Later, we forced our huge cardboarded theses – which had been in our way all through the conference – on the audience and asked them to do something after all this hours of sitting and gazing around.

Welcome to the TechnoTricksterTank!

Some smoked, some drank coffee, asked questions, gave comments, wrote and drew on the cardboards, or composed a song on technotricks-terism: "Good-bye Daddy Derrida, hello Techno Trickster! *I think I wanna be shy / I wanna be high / I wanna be sky / I wanna be Brei (mash)*"

Watch out for our theses and look what they made of it. (The comments are in Italics.)

What about a bit more of a political, sociotechnological perspective integrated into cyberfeminist theory and projects - with a little help from modernity theory, postcolonialism and globalization theory? There is more to life than ~~the symbolic~~ Border - nevertheless it is necessary to shift narrative fields of technoscience.

**cyberfeminism + multi-faceted mapping exercise = techno//\*trickster\*//feminism**

Cyberfeminisms was often understood as 'technology' meets 'feminist theory'. Techno-trickster-feminism as a "multi-faceted mapping exercise" (Chela Sandoval) combines strategies and experiences of earlier political movements with subverting the new world order of technoscience's dreams

<sup>1</sup>Julianne Pierce, *Info Heavy Cyber Babe*, in: Cornelia Sollfrank, *OBN (Hg.), First Cyberfeminist International – Reader 1997*.

and nightmares, shiny global capital and the hierarchies of the new economy.

*We can learn from experiences of former + existing political movements.*

*How to deal with disagreements? – small groups – time to discuss – more personal meetings*

*Cyberfeminism is a necessary meeting point.*

**cyberfeminism + techno science studies = techno//•trickster•//feminism**

How to analyse emerging technological semiotic-material worlds? It might not be by chance that cyberfeminists had concentrated their challenge towards cyberspace and internet. We need to subvert technologies and technical applications in the fields of Artificial Life, Artificial Intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology, bioinformatics etc.

But how?

*start with little concrete irritations.*

*construct fake "facts" in biotechnosciences...*

*watch the stock market.*

*and then discover your fake.*

*- make fun of everybody who believed in it & who believes in facts.*

**cyberfeminism taking technoscience seriously = techno//•trickster•//feminism**

We shall overcome the fear of technosphere. Have a closer look at differences between sometimes-naive intentions of scientists, capitalist marketing strategies and contradictory sociotechnical outcomes. Develop new concepts and approaches to differentiate between naturalist rhetorics & material formations and constructivist epistemologies & immanent logics in technoscience.

Invest in contradictions and inconsistencies of technoscience!

**cyberfeminism rethinking technological standardization = techno//•trickster•//feminism**

Science claims its design of technological hard-, soft- and wetware as universal. Cyberfeminists question this claim in critical discourse, but this is not translated into their sphere of technological production. Such things as fast loading text-only versions also readable by screenreader-programs for blind people for example DO exist.

Use it and get used to it!

**cyberfeminism + taking over of technological production = techno//•trickster•//feminism**

There is more to life than subverting 'evil' technology in use. Engage yourself in the construction and development of technology while being aware of mechanisms of in-/exclusions!

**cyberfeminism realizing the impact of global-popcapitalistmassmediamainstream-culture = techno//•trickster•//feminism**

Why is Lara the favorite pop-cultural icon of cyberfeminist desire whereas other phenomena of mass culture like poké-

mon, AOL, playstation II, robot wars are not recognized?

Cyberfeminists are still involved in the deconstruction of western-white-heterosexual-categories which have already been deconstructed by technoscience and pseudo-trickstered by the new economy.

**cyberfeminism + critique of trivialized transsexualism/-genderism = techno//•trickster•//feminism**

While contemporary critical discourse celebrates queer theory and transsexualism, lesbians, gays and others are 'technodigested' and reconfigured as infertile to normalize in vitro fertilization, control of procreation and eugenics. Techno-trickster-feminism is skeptical of the latest Zeitgeist criticisms overcoming 'Geschlecht' (sex/gender) while transsexual surgery is good business. It can't be done without getting locked up in the double bind, but needs suspicion, passion and humor.

**cyberfeminism + transdisciplinarity = techno//•trickster•//feminism**

Techno-trickster-feminism looks for the challenge of building or altering bridges between science studies, the politics of representation *and deconstruction*, and production *and reproduction* of technology, *cooking, child raising*. Artists, technicians, theorists, activists of all genders, races, disciplines, and planets start matchmaking today. Learn to live with stuttering, *pleasures, sleep*, headaches and tensions while developing transdisciplinary forms of communication and *develop new forms of resistance*.

**make matches and burn!**



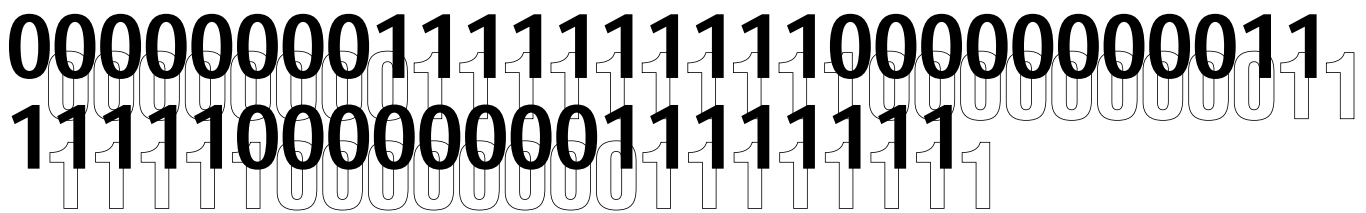
**strategies and tactics for feminist/cyberfeminist collaborations, collective art practice, contestational cultural work, and building networks of solidarity and action.**

It is evident that feminist struggle is currently on the rise in many developing countries. Feminism has a strong history of direct action and cultural intervention. As feminists who are implicated in, and affected by the changing conditions of women in the integrated circuit, we desire to create networks of solidarity and active support between women both locally and internationally. We believe that a politically engaged and activist feminism is one of the best hopes for our own work and lives, as well as for women world-wide who are struggling for survival in every sense under the new conditions of the global market economy. As (cyber)feminists we need to think about what tactics will be most effective in addressing these conditions. Since the majority of women worldwide are

cyberfeminist networks, when 'inferior' or 'fixed' consciousness is assumed on the part of 'global' partners whenever they encounter different frames of reference from their own. At the same time, claiming 'subaltern' or 'otherness' status on the part of 'local' (cyber)feminist communities in relation to the West often obscures power relations within local contexts, which interests me most. Working on critical evaluation of practices and concepts which are effective in particular local contexts would allow both local and international cyberfeminist community to deal with situations opening up and not closing new ways of political work, theory and cultural productions. But often it would mean to leave 'accepted rules games' which have developed between global vs. local players.

2. The problem of on-line communication which is still not reflected upon enough. The point which I made about

Irina Aristharkova, Maria Fernandez, Margaret Tan, Faith Wilding and subRosa members Steffi Domike, Laleh Mehran, Christina Hung, Hyla Willis, and Lucia Sommer



not wired or connected electronically, cyberfeminists need to adapt their strategies to encompass these conditions. We cannot work exclusively in cyberspace as it excludes too many women who do not have access to the technologies that are affecting their lives. On the other hand, many of us are widely scattered geographically and depend on electronic networking for sustaining our work and relationships between flesh meetings. Our strategies must have embodied components, as well as combining technological skills and access with many other methods of networking, support, and resistance learned from feminist cultural and postcolonial theory and practice, and from past activist practices and net activism. Together we can initiate tactical models for direct action, subversion, and coalition building among different groups of women.

'disconnection' and 'misunderstanding'. They should be seen as 'welcomed' phenomena on-line, especially as e-mailing and list-serves are main way of evolving cyberfeminist community. Homogenizing logic of flesh communities is usually reproduced within net-communities unless we make an effort to welcome differences effectively and not only as a slogan. This would mean to welcome misunderstanding and unpredictability of embodied reactions, often ill-digested yet.

Misunderstanding seems to be an integral part of on-line communication, even as an intention. It has to be paid attention to and studied as amount of frustrating factors which are part of such on-line communication interestingly linked to history of feminist movement, from which we should learn much more in cyberfeminist debate than has been done so far. This learning how to pay attention to on-line misunderstanding which would lead to higher awareness and welcoming of heterogeneity has been a part of my involvement in on-line discussion on Russian cyberfeminism initiated by Andrea Jana Korb und Andrea Hapke 'Russian' cyberfeminist strategies <http://userpage.fuberlin.de/~brat/cyberfemin.html>, and which I used for my talk in Hamburg.

**IRINA ARISTARKHOVA:**

My work deals with issues of hospitality and heterogeneity in (net) communities. I discussed two main points:

1. The necessity to have a more ethical relationship between 'local' and 'global, Western' players within cyberfeminist community. This would imply not only self-critical, reflexive and up-to-the-standard position on the part of local (in my case, Russian) cyberfeminist communities, but more urgently, critical and open dialogue on the part of 'global, Western', partners of cyberfeminism community. As a two-way street, this would allow us to avoid 'subaltern'/'enlightening' opposition and attitude which is still pertinent within feminist and

**MARIA FERNANDEZ: DISCONNECTIONS**

In contemporary theory, collaborations, virtual and embodied are foregrounded as a tactic towards the achievement of common objectives. In this short paper I will attempt to sketch obstacles that often stand in the way of successful collaboration, specifically in relation to issues of race and racism.

To dwell upon race might seem outdated in light of recent theories proclaiming the erasure of the colonial concept of race in a world structured by transnational commerce, the scientific understanding of humanity based on genetics, and bodies and organisms progressively transformed by biotechnology. While there is undoubtedly potential in these new conditions, the old concept of race remains active in, if not central to, multiple social economic and political practices. Paul Gilroy asserts that the concept of race is anachronistic and even vestigial but admits that "deconstructing 'races' is not the same thing as doing away with racisms."

Various theorists including Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Cornell West, Trinh T. Minh Ha, bell hooks, Stuart Hall, Chela Sandoval, and Homi K. Bhabha have advocated cooperation and solidarity among people of various backgrounds for the attainment of larger social goals. They recognize that no solidarity can occur if we are unable to recognize the self in the other, or as Homi Bhabha most recently put it, if we are unable to "view ourselves as others see us." Drawing from theories of mimesis as well as Wittgenstein's theory of family resemblance Bhabha calls for the formation of what he calls "semblance solidarity" a form of association simultaneously built on similitude and a coefficient of difference. In his view, this coefficient is not an essence but "that which remains and fluctuates, what makes a partial affiliation possible."

Bhabha's theory can also be applied to the achievement of successful collaborations. But what obstacles stand in the way of mutual recognition? Collaborations always involve more than the individuals involved. That is to say, we bring into every partnership a complex of inherited values, affects and behaviors. I argue that it is not until we are willing to work through these unacknowledged components of collaborations that enduring solidarity may begin. Our Western cultural heritage emphasizes and assigns values to differences. Research into how children learn race demonstrates that by the age of five they can assign specific behavioral, intellectual and even ethical values to aspects of appearance especially skin color. The history of feminism suggests that feminists are not immune to the classification and valorizations of difference. In fact, one of the most 'contentious' differences among feminists has been race. I use the term 'race' not because I believe in its validity as a scientific category but because regardless of how differences are explained i.e. 'ethnicity,' 'culture,' perceptions of 'difference' are still largely based on epidermal schemas. Rhadika Monrahan among many others has argued that in the history of modern western thought, whiteness and blackness assume the status of the Cartesian body and the mind respectively. This opposition is replicated in the legitimization of feminist theory. Various theorists including Chela Sandoval, Gayatri Spivak, and Bell Hooks have observed that the theorization of feminism became a task only allowed and recognized within the hegemonic dominance and approval of a select group of white women. In Spivak's opinion, "hegemonic feminist criticism tenaciously reproduced the axioms of imperialism." It would be worth investigating if this dynamic continues in

cyberfeminism.

As do many other scholars, I recognize that racism is an intricate system of oppression. In a previous work, I have applied theories of embodiment to the study of racism and proposed that racism operates and it reproduces, in part, as a complex of embodied practices which are not necessarily the expression of an ideological position. Embodied practices are perpetuated in the virtual though the mechanisms by which these practices are translated are as yet only partially understood.

Multiple theorists including Michael Oakeshot, Pierre Bourdieu Paul Connerton, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have argued for the primacy of bodies in the production and reproduction of beliefs and social values. In Connerton's opinion, social memory is lodged in the body and activated through commemorative ceremonies, performances, habits, and body automatisms. For Bourdieu, bodily habits are manifestations of political mythologies which in turn reinforce specific ways of feeling and thinking. In his opinion, social habits, including movements, gestures, touch and styles of speech are essentially legitimating performances. These theorists argue that habits are learned through imitation and not by the deliberate application of specific principles. Thus they function beyond conscious awareness and control. This implies that people's behaviors produce and reproduce meanings which frequently differ from their conscious intentions. Because they are unconscious, embodied practices become naturalized, immune to questioning, and extremely resistant to change.

Racist practices also are legitimating performances. In most of the West, whiteness has been construed as a mark of authority and privilege. Some would argue that class is a more significant variable as all groups at the bottom of the social ladder share histories of injustice, abjection and abuse. The brutality of class marginalization cannot be contested. Often, however, it is difficult to disassociate race from class as the lower classes consistently have been racialized, that is to say, they have been construed as racially different from the dominant groups and often 'blackened' (i.e., the Irish in nineteenth-century Britain; in the twentieth century, Jews, Indians, Pakistanis, Turks, Eastern Europeans, Roma etc.). I have proposed that like other social habits, many racist behaviors occur below the level of conscious awareness. Racism can be performed without deliberation; thus, an individual may vehemently oppose racist beliefs and consistently behave in racist ways.

Attitudes to race affect the kinds of relations we build with other women. If our goal is to make collaboration more inclusive, this means that it is time to examine our behavior in the presence of what we perceive as 'racial differences'. What future can collaborations with so-called 'Third World Women' have if in our minds these women remain trapped in the stereotypes we have received? I should also add that 'the gesture of welcoming' is not always enough to free us from habitual attitudes, specially if the encounter does not allow a

working through of mutual preconceptions. As Sara Ahmed has brilliantly argued, "the recognition of strangers brings into play relations of social and political antagonisms that mark some others as stranger than other others." Ahmed explains that the stranger only appears as a threatening figure by coming too close. Illustrative here is the example of the curators of a museum in large urban area of the US who were pressured by donors to Hispanic community. In response to this pressure, the museum officials invited academics from all over Latin America, all expenses paid, to attend a meeting to discuss how the museum should deal with the community. The museum could then boast that establishing links with hispanics had primacy in their agenda. Yet no member of the local hispanic community were included in the conversations. Our attitudes to race permeate our collaborations, fleshed and virtual. Despite the rhetoric of equality and disembodiment that prevails in discussions of cyberspace, racism is alive in digital spaces in overt and invisible forms. If mind and body are inextricably connected, digital representation, textual and visual, must be affected by embodied practices. Thus it is crucial to identify racism in the lived world if we hope to learn to recognize it in cyberspace.

Electronic technologies facilitate contact and the dissemination of information among diverse groups of women throughout the planet. Thus they are excellent tools for a panoply of activist projects. The Penelopes website exemplifies the efforts of a group of European women to disseminate information about the conditions of women in various parts of the world and to form links with feminist activist groups. That this group was active for years, before the threat of September 11 makes their commitment doubly impressive. What electronic technologies cannot do is erase the maps of difference by which peoples, cultures, systems of knowledge and cultural production have been ranked and evaluated. Working through difference involves being mindful of our bodies, our habits, our gestures and being willing to examine how our behavior contributes to perpetuate systems of privilege and marginalization. Elsewhere I have proposed that cyberfeminists could draw lessons from studies of body language and from the experiences of previous political movements, including the civil rights movement and the feminist movement, both of which emphasized the importance of incorporation. By acknowledging the power and the legacy of embodied practices, cyberfeminists can build solidarities based on respect for both commonality and difference. Although in various contexts race is viewed primarily as the obsession of politically correct Americans, ideas of race intervene in collaborations. Until we deal with race we cannot build diverse effective alliances.

**Margaret Tan:**

I'll be talking about my artwork ('Virtual Bodies in Reality') on the Visible Human Project, which will be shown at The Nokia Singapore Art 2001 at the Singapore Art Museum from Dec 9th 2001 - Feb 3rd 2002.

Although the work itself only highlights the translation of

flesh into data and the notions of responsibility in cyberspace, some of the points I would like to critique came from my research about the VHP itself. At the moment, they are:

1)The impact of new technologies, together with medicine and science, on sexual difference, ethnic difference and cultural difference:

E.g. How the male body is still being presented as the standard (norm) for gender-neutral medical information whereas the female body acts only as the variation to the male with parts that are not tied to reproduction being dismissed. How race, ethnicity (genetics) and cultural practices (food, living conditions) are neglected, underscored in the use of the VHP bodies in science and medicine across cultures.

2)How cyberspace, though considered by many as an anarchic space, uncharted, immaterial, non-space, is not devoid of meaning and values:

E.g. The disparity in the reception of the Visible Man and the Visible Women. The former has an identity (Joseph Jennigan) and hence a personal history, was hailed as the 'Internet Angel' and praised as a saviour to science and mankind, despite the fact that his body was made available because he was on death-row for murder.

As for the latter whose body was donated by her husband for the project, she remains anonymous and is only known as the 'Maryland housewife'. She is also deemed as an unsuitable partner to the Visible man because she's post-menopausal and the search is now on for a younger female and children so that there'll be a conventional family unit in cyberspace.

**Visible Human Project (VHP):**

Where a pair of bodies were frozen, sliced (1mm) and digitally photographed (MRI and CT) to create a database of both the interior and exterior of the human body. The data can be obtained from The National Library of Medicine (USA) and is widely used for scientific, medical and educational purposes.

**Faith wilding: subrosa's collective cyberfeminist theory and practice**

"Despite cybercultural claims that we have moved beyond cultural and racial identity, there are particular ways in which the digital revolution participates in globalization's redrawing the lines that distinguish bodies from each other, rather than erasing those lines altogether. For all the celebration of mobility and fluidity, digital technology organizes a world economic order that thrives on a global labor pool of poor non-white people - for whom 'access' to many critical signifying spaces 'legal, symbolic, and electronic' is diminished and even denied." (Coco Fusco, the bodies that were not ours, p. 194)

In the past decade many feminist cultural theorists, writers,



For longer than a year we have been travelling through cyberfemspace in the quest for cyber/feminist agency.

We were and are working at various levels:

- Cyberfeminist strategies were the issue of our M.A. thesis about cyberfeminism in Russia.
- we designed and constructed a documentational and informational website with links, bibliography, glossary, etc.
- and we organized an online-discussion with Russian cyberfeminists and feminists.

travellers (the ones, we have mentioned above and many others), who have theoretically, methodologically and personally accompanied us on our travels to cyberspace.

### Reality and virtuality/Fiction

Our activity towards and in the cyberfeminist space results from our trouble with the rising presence of New Technologies in our 'social reality'<sup>1</sup> – to use the term of

Donna Haraway. We are trying to use this trouble in the quest for a critical feminist agency, embracing both our attitudes of refusal and our curiosity about New Technologies.

Thus we locate feminist strategies as an activity at the border between subversive appropriation and critical distance towards powerful discourses and practices. In the first place our matter is to demystify discourses, to transgress borders, and to develop feminist agencies.

Especially regarding New Technologies, a claim like this must refer to the 'social reality' of women, and must try (and

search for) embodied and located strategies.

Hereby we kept loosing the prefix 'cyber-' in front of feminism - feminist agency seemed to be incompatible with cyberspace: during our argument with cyberfeminist theories and projects, we more and more focused our interest to so-called reality:

- to the globalisation of a gendered and raced division of labour
- the feminization of poverty (in the former SU as well as globally)
- the sexist labour-conditions in the IT-production etc.

Compared to these 'real' facts, the promises of cyber seemed to be irrelevant, pure fictions and false representations.

So why deal with 'cyber' at all?

But why did we think that we really could describe reality? Isn't after all 'reality' consisting of fiction, representations, illusions?

Just gradually we realized that we were not locked in a situation of having to decide, but that we had to resist the ostensible incompatibility of so-called reality and virtuality. That there was no necessity to distinguish reality and virtuality. Since they are closely interwoven, and we find reality in both - the real and the virtual - spaces. Furthermore thinking them together could be productive for our quest for cyberfeminist agency.

Thus we base our cyberfeminist online-discussion on the question about the social reality of women, and are asking: What is the relation of cyberfeminism and women in Russia? This question questioned the notion of 'woman', we questioned ourselves, and the fragment of cyberfeminist reality, which we were producing together.

Andrea Hapke, Andrea Jana Korb

# Travelling hostesses in cyberfemspace

## questions about reality, virtuality, and responsibility

- Currently we are trying to meet at a local level in Berlin, in a cyberfeminist group critically dealing with the label "cyberfeminism" and focussing on issues like racism, exclusion, the production of sexist images, etc.

The very cyberfeminist international we mainly referred to the experiences of our online-discussion-project: In November and December 2000 we organized an online-email-discussion project with Irina Aristarkhova, a feminist and cyberfeminist theoretician from Moscow and Singapore, with the feminist sociologist Larissa Lissjutkina from Köln, with Valentina Konstantinova, a feminist activist from Moscow, and with Irina Aktuganova and Alla Mitrofanova from the St.Petersburg Cyber-Femin-Club.

Our issues were women in Russia and the production of the images of 'woman'- and the relation of cyberfeminism to women. We published all contributions in Russian and English on our website.

Regarding this concrete example we now want to discuss the possibilities of cyberfeminist activity. We also want to contribute to the location of cyberfeminism between utopia and specific political options. To accomplish this we choose an allegedly simple point of view: the level of concrete encounter in the Internet, the level of embodied action.

Furthermore, we will be discussing our questions about the space of this encounter, about the ostensible border between reality and virtuality, about the responsibility of the participants - and this will be our theoretical background for our exploration of two very cyberfeminist metaphors: travelling and hospitality.

At this point we wish to thank the old boys for their hospitality, that we could join the very cyberfeminist international. We also wish to thank all our travel companions and fellow

The contributions to the online-discussion were strongly referring to cultural locations – either by describing one's own local space and wishing to meet in flesh, or by more or less consciously recurring to personal and sociocultural experiences. We filled our discussion about women with personal examples and contrasted it with the dominant images of 'woman', for example the self-sacrificing woman, the mother, the strong woman...

However, our frictions at the border between reality and virtuality became very evident during the course of the discussion. Our 'ideal' of a cyberfeminist encounter (responsibility, commitment, etc.) was confronted by the 'reality' of a very controversial and at times unfriendly discussion, for example concerning our vocabulary of feminism or our different valuation of the images of 'woman'.

Another strong controversy developed concerning the question, who may talk 'about' the experiences of Russian women: May we, being German? May Larissa talk about them, having left Russia years ago?

We couldn't translate the modes of behavior directly, as we knew them from offline-group-meetings or panel discussions etc., to our online-discussion. As well our experiences from mailing lists differed a lot, since they seem to be much less obliging than our online-discussion.

We learned which of the structural and technical requirements, were necessary to make an online-discussion function formally:

- the specificity of Cyrillic encoding within our ASCII-dominated Internet (this mostly was problematic for those of us who did not live in Russia)
- free and easy access to a connected computer (which couldn't be taken for granted neither in Russia nor in Germany)
- our location in different time zones (Singapore, Petersburg, Köln etc.)

Not to forget about general media-unspecific obstacles like language and personal time.

We used Haraway's description of 'social reality' as 'lived social relations'. It was our navigational tool to prevent us from losing grounding within the complexity of virtuality and reality. In the online-discussion her term gained a new significance for us. These relations can only partially and situationally be described and lived. This knowledge leads us to concrete spaces and concrete women, and we question how we deal with each other, how we act together. In the online-discussion our notions of reality, virtuality, and fiction have been confronted with authentic experiences.

Another aspect, again pointing to the cyberfeminist location at the border between reality and fiction, became evident a few days before we finished our M.A.-thesis:

The website of the Cyber-Femin-Club had disappeared. Where we expected Irina Aktuganova's and Alla Mitrofanova's bilingual site, a commercial website for cultural events in St.Petersburg appeared – and no hint of a new URL.

We assumed that the site was being relaunched or moved (as it was), but in this moment we realized the paradox of our activity and the ostensible losing of certain ground for our exploration. This site had been one of the most important points of reference for our journey to Russian cyberspace. It was the starting point for our work with Russian cyberfeminism and our most relevant theoretical source of information. (It was like talking about Cyberfeminism in Germany, and not being able to find obn.org)

Again we experienced the instability and unreliability of cyberspace: it is so very important to produce 'anchoring' in such a space.

Thus we were right on focusing on concrete encounters as one part of cyberfeminist agency.

Claudia Reiche says that Cyberfeminism still is to be invented and is permanently being reinvented.<sup>2</sup> With our activity we have 'invented' Cyberfeminism – and it exists with our work, with our online-discussion, our website. It exists by the links and connections, which have emerged, which still are emerging, which have to be produced and 'reinvented' again and again.

### responsibility

The notion of responsibility stands for the context of feminist critique of science and for our role as scientists. We were confronted with the demands of scientific work and objectivity - holding on to our critique of conventional science-production.

Here we situate the notion of 'feminist objectivity': According to Donna Haraway, we link this with 'limited location' and 'situated knowledge', and thus with responsibility towards knowledge and positions of power in concrete contexts.

Our quest for those methodological tools lead us to a methodology that we call "condensed reflection" (verdichtete Reflexion). In our project we followed several traces, acted at different levels in different roles and positions. Our work was based on texts and lived experiences - our own experiences with computers, Internet, cyberspace, programming (website) and our encounters and arguments with women in cyberspace.

Thus we were and are moving at the border between theoretical and practical work, between science, fiction and personal experience. Situating ourselves became one of the most important and necessary parts of our cyberfeminist activity. On our website, we also 'publish' experience, linking it with theories. We try to show our encounters with theory and its authors. Exchange with others and among us becomes an essential part of our methodological tools.

Concerning cyberfeminist activism – creating and using cyberfeminist spaces and networks, contexts of work, living and desire - responsibility also gains importance: we want to show this with two further 'very' cyberfeminist metaphors: travelling and hospitality. And we try to illustrate our theory with these images.



### Travelling

We see our work with cyberfeminism as a journey: into cyberspace and into social (gendered) spaces.

The terms 'travel' or 'journey' seemed so obvious to us. Especially with Donna Haraway they had a very positive connotation – to find orientation in the vastness of cyberspace. Why had we actually chosen this term 'travel'? Because it promised movement, room for the unexpected, and a changing of vision? Because it is dealing with experience of borders? Because the metaphors of cyberspace suggest this term 'travel'? Because hypertext invites us to search, to interact, to network, to cross-link?

But does it really promise all this? Aren't we actually sitting in front of our monitors – with backaches and tired eyes? Isn't the metaphor of 'travel' all about scientific curiosity, colonialism, tourism, and appropriation? What can we oppose to this? How could a feminist appropriation look like? How could we travel responsibly? Thus we need and use navigational tools, travel companions and fellow travellers...

One of our most desired destinations has been as described above Russian cyberspace. We contacted Russian cyber/feminists and invited them to an online-discussion. We invited them to a space that was specified by time, person, and interest.

What does it mean for students from Berlin (that is: 'German scientists') to travel to 'Russia' and to write about the Russian situation? We find ourselves in a contradiction of our roles: travellers and hostesses. This contradiction also entered our online-discussion, where we had to face conflicts with each other and cultural differences. For example our different stressing of family structures and of the possibility to live independently from familial bonds. Have we still been travelling at that moment? We invited the women to discuss with us at our virtual "kitchen table". Did we create a hospitable space? Didn't we rather act as travellers, visiting our guests? Were we creating a hospitable space for them or were we entering theirs? Is a distinction of the roles of guest and host necessary in cyberspace?

### Hospitality

We owe the term of hospitality to Irina Aristarkhova, who developed its notion for cyberfeminist acting in her text "Hosting the Other" for the next cyberfeminist international. In our online-discussion she also used it as a critical tool to question our behavior towards each other.

We use hospitality as a tool to handle 'openness' and to produce it. Cyberfeminist hospitality implies the technical and political possibilities to visit each other. But it also implies the necessity of deciding to do so – in 'flesh' meetings as well as in virtual meetings.

We like the metaphor, for Irina Aristarkhova's questions: "What happens, if the host is a hostess?" "What happens, if the hostess does not own property?" We like it for her figure of "opening doors" for others and other contents. And we like

it, because it interconnects the possibility to produce spaces in the Internet with an every-day experience, the experience of welcoming a guest.

What do we need for this? Which structure does it give to us? What does it mean to be guest or hostess in Russia? Or in Germany? What does it mean for our parents? And for us? How can we deal with cultural tradition and rituals?

Can we use Aristarkhova's metaphor of hospitality to create such spaces, where people feel good and comfortable with their differences?

Can we be travelling hostesses in cyberspace?

We do not have answers to everything... but, with this concept of hospitality, we can start at the beginning: at any level, at any little level, in any new group...

What we find important, is that the notion of hospitality is based on mutual agreement and means responsibility on both/all sides. It implies an awareness of positions and the construction of a structure of reliability – so we don't get lost in the vastness of cyberspace, so we can encounter and listen to each other. But what does this mean for the creation of our meetings, sites, platforms, mailinglists etc.?

### Reflecting about cyberfeminism and feminism

The unreliability and uncertainty of cyberspace, which includes the danger of closure and the illusion of communication, is being contrasted by our focus on the specific reliability and responsibility of feminist acting. This meant to deal with different experiences in different cultural contexts – thus feminist acting became reality in a cyberfeminist space. Have we been seduced by the quest for the 'real'? Or does the notion of hospitality enable our situating at the border, respectively, our transgressing of the border between reality and virtuality? We hope so.

Cyber-ground has never been stable and certain. We ask now, referring to cyberfeminism, where we could anchor our visions and fictions of a cyberfeminist agency? We notice our growing need of feminism, our (careful) resumption of modernistic feminist terms, values and norms - after and in spite of deconstruction...

We also witness that, within cyberfeminism (cyberfeminist movements), the prefix 'cyber-' is being put in parentheses or that 'cyberFeminism' is being written with a capital F. Did 'cyber' become so much part of our daily life that the question of cyberspace has rather become a matter of feminism than of cyberfeminism only? Has the digital lost its specificity and novelty, so that the prefix 'cyber-' in front of 'feminisms' is becoming insignificant? Has feminism developed to such an extent, that 'cyber-' is becoming one of the many feminist prefixes, attributes and adjectives? Hasn't it always been like this?

In cyberfeminism, feminism must take place - the production of reliability and connections between women. In our Berlin 'cyberfeminist' group we have been asking these very questions and are facing these very conflicts: We are a cyberfe-

minist group that doesn't want to call itself cyberfeminist. We situate ourselves within the mixed networking and computing project 'lotec', but we don't really analyze issues of computing, cyberspace, and New Technologies. We rather discuss issues of racism, society of surveillance, sexist metaphors – with a feminist point of view. On the one hand we are accepting 'cyber' and use it for granted as a tool. On the other hand we do question the media, especially the digital media.

Are we a 'cyberfeminist' group, although we are trying to define ourselves more exactly: we want to specify 'how' and 'to what extent' we could be cyberfeminist (anti-racist, queer, anti-facist, etc.)?

Why is it easier for us to find 100 anti-theses what Cyberfeminism is not like the Old Boys Network<sup>3</sup>, than finding one name, that covers all our doing and wishing? Which feminist prefix covers the 100 antitheses? Prefix-cyber-feminism...

Concerning all this, feminism remains to be a non-identical production of links and reliability. We have learned more about feminism with cyberfeminism: Surprisingly the prefix 'cyber-' has sharpened our vision of reliability within feminism.

Thus, networking in cyberfeminism has become a network, which is not built on the ground of rigid definitions and identities. Cyberfeminism

- is: culture of argument,
- is: performing responsibility,
- is: 'woman',
- is: 'cyberspace'.

In opposition to the illusion of a disembodied world, in opposition to the still dominant modes of production of 'woman', the 'other', and the 'spaces-off', we see cyberfeminism in the feminist tradition of empowerment of the self – in order to change social relations. We understand it as a fiction, which we are building in reality together with others...

<sup>1</sup>"**Social reality** is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction." Donna Haraway, *A Manifesto for Cyborgs*

<sup>2</sup>**Personal record**, paper presented by Claudia Reiche, 01 26 2001 at the Humboldt University Berlin

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.obn.org>

Bonjour. OBN invited me to publish my lecture at the very cyberfeminist international conference. On paper! (– not exactly my chosen media for publishing, although I do have a passion for scribbling on paper.) I work digital and keep my work digital. Now this is a completely different situation than at the conference: I can't see you, you can't see me nor my work. Well, you can see images, yet many of the most pleasurable features are missing: the movements, the interactions, the dynamics.

Today is Women's Day, the 8th of March, and I am sitting here, glued to my computer, working to meet the deadline for this reader, instead of playing with the girls.

Enjoy !!!!!

### introducing myself

I started loving computers the day I bought my very first modem in 1993, and ever since I have been passionately



Christina Goestl

involved in net.art, web design and visual communication, closely following up the many steps of development the 'babymedia' internet has gone through over the years. I consider myself a pioneer. I very much welcome the expansions provided by the internet, particularly its potential to overcome the limitations given by time and space.

### second try

My name is Christina Goestl, I am a cyberfemme feminist, sexpert, artista, interface expert, netizen, traveller, a telecommunicateresse. I understand digital art production not as the construction of objects by means of a computer (Objekt-Erstellung mittels Computer) but rather as a process. My work is committed to system-thinking and not to the concept of the final product (Endprodukt). My focus lies in 'new media', with a special interest in aspects such as 'interactivity' and 'processive working', terms which – unfortunately - suffer from inflation (endangered terms in term-entrophying times, unterliegen einer begriffs-inflation). I am interested in collaborative and interdependent processes based on dialogical structures, with all my arty sexy friends !!!!!

### related links

[www.clitorea.net](http://www.clitorea.net) s.EXE user  
[www.matrix64.net](http://www.matrix64.net) matrix.64  
[www.t0.or.at/~kagran](http://www.t0.or.at/~kagran) web.art compilation  
[clitorea@t0.or.at](mailto:clitorea@t0.or.at)

### introducing s.EXE

s.EXE interactives is a loop-based visual sequencer, created for live acts and individual user interaction. Images are compressed up to temporary superimages. An effect relationship develops between the images. s.EXE interactives invites for play with multiplication, disassembling, repetition, and the dynamics of movement. s.EXE interactives is conceived as an open system with dynamic and interactive structure, which finds its present continuation in the effect relations created by the user interactions. Playful exploration.

"The world shrinks or expands in proportion to one's own courage." Anais Nin

das bild ist nicht nur abbild sondern ausgangsbild um ein bild zu bilden mit anderen bildern. in der ver-dichtung der bilder entsteht das bild der (bild)sequenz. die sequenz befindet sich im konzert mit anderen sequenzen, der prozess multipliziert sich. die kreation einer sequenz kann als temporae-re fertigung eines dichten bildes betrachtet werden - weiterentwicklung bietet sich an. erforschung durch spiel ist das ziel.

I created this application in spring 2001 out of a strong desire to work with moving images and open myself new playgrounds. I had some very distinct ideas about how I wanted to present visuals (not video - not limited in time and space) and since there was no tool that would match my desires I created s.EXE interactives.

### statement

Technology as submissive. (Technologie ist per se submissive.) I practice – and warmly suggest - bold exploitation of technical possibilities for feminist sub-and perversion. Sexy tech – high impact.

my.img = alt.img = tmp.img = img.shift

### releases

s.EXE Her Happy Boldness, s.EXE feat. 'fe/male' and 'Jonny Player Special', s.EXE Madame Mulatresse, s.EXE Pink Foam Sexualized, s.EXE user (web version)

### s.EXE HER HAPPY BOLDNESS

All Photos by Renée Mussai, starring Clitorea and Friends. Madame Mulatresse starring Mulatresse. Styling by Ubah. User-shirt by skinblue. Silicone Dildos by Sh!, London. Locations: Brick Lane, London, and Andreas Garten. Thank you to Boris Kopeinig. Merci Ming Li! Always a pleasure working with you.

"girls girls girls and the freedom to choose: multiple [sexual, racial, cultural] identities, bodily pleasures, above all: narcissism, more, always. "I love myself when I am laughing ... and

then again when I am looking mean and impressive" - Zora Neale Hurston." (Renée Mussai)

"was waere wenn" – kinderphantasie, maedchenfantasie vor dem eintritt in den wertekanon der erwachsenenwelt. die unendliche weite der vorstellungs- und gestaltungskraft (die unangepasste, mit multipler (sexueller) identität, fe-male, die alterslose). mich hat das nie verlassen (her happy boldness), alle meine arbeit gehen von "was wäre wenn" aus. was dazu-kam, durch das frau-(erwachsene)-sein: die reflexion, die gegenueberstellung mit der welt in der ich lebe. ausgangspunkt ist aber immer die freiheit der maedchenfantasie - wie ein weisses blatt papier. (auf das ich blicke bis zum einblick, bis sich die zeichen zeigen, die ich aufgreife (begreife) und verdichte bis zur sichtbarkeit).

"In another moment Alice was through the glass, and had jumped lightly down into the Looking-glass room. [...]

Then she began looking about, and notices that what could be seen from the old rooms was quite common and interesting, but all the rest was as different as possible." (Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking-Glass)

"Childhood: when I was a child the only thing I wanted was to become a pirate. ... pirates lived in the living world because pirates had fun. since pirates lived in my books, I ran into the world of books, the only living world I, a girl, could find. I never left that world.

"Adult: I'm no longer a child and I still want to be, to live with the pirates. because I want to live forever in wonder." (Kathy Acker, Bodies of Work, Seeing Gender, page 158/159, Serpent's Tail 1997)

s.EXE Her Happy Boldness uplifting visuals were presented at several live acts, for the enjoyment of appreciative crowds at Europride and women-only clubbings, as performance for an exhibition opening and at the Ars Electronica 2001 opening night party. During the Ars Festival I also had the pleasure to set up an installation for individual interaction. Users where invited for playful exploration of s.EXE Her Happy Boldness, contributing and composing their own visuals.

#### **s.EXE USER (web version)**

www.clitioressa.net features a further developed online-version of s.EXE interactives, by ways of interlaced images, allowing them to laminate into one another and create complex projections.

excerpt from matrix.64, version for the 2001 century, www.matrix64.net

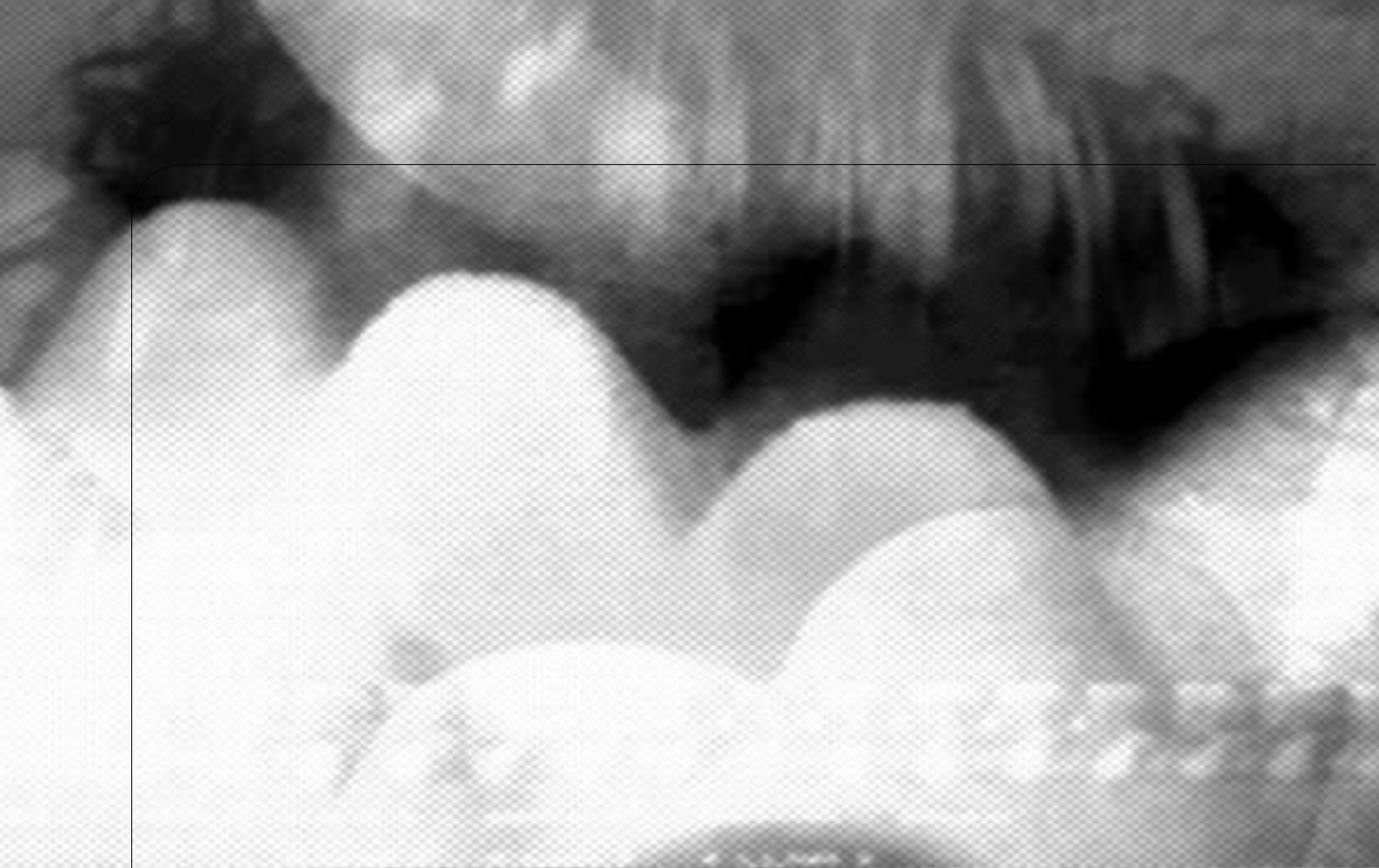
<div class='doclet2' i-D='docen8l2s2'> <a href= 'javascript:show(8)' class='link2' onmouseout='unzoom(8)'> bring condoms, dam's and lube. be educated about sexual transmitted diseases. act responsible towards yourself and

others. play safe, sane and consensual. </a> </div> <div class='doclet1' i-D='docen9l2s1'> <a href= '#' class='link1' onmouseover= 'zoom(9,event)'> form visions. set up a plan. structurize. go for it. design your life. </a> </div>

---fini merci ---

images

All photos by Renée Mussai - s.EXE Her Happy Boldness. Videostill by Clitioressa - s.EXE Pink Foam Sexualized.





sequences on

◀ w scale ▶

◀ x y scale ▶

◀ x y scale ▶

According to its dictionary definitions, freedom signifies among other things 'the absence of necessity or constraint in choice or action; liberation from slavery or restraint; ease, facility.' In what follows, I address the notion of freedom in all these senses of the word in the context of cyberfeminism. Freedom has been a recurrent theme in discussions on gender and the Internet: as freedom from the confines of geography, distance and time; from restraints and markers of bodies; hierarchies of, and discrimination in terms of race, class, sexuality or gender<sup>1</sup>. But what are the routes and implications of such a 'freedom discourse?' What does it mean to be 'freed' in so many ways when 'being online?'

#### identity play and compulsory individuality

The concept of cyberspace, which became appropriated as synonymous with the Internet during the 1990s, was famously coined by author William Gibson in his 1984 novel *Neuromancer* to describe the protagonist's immersion and

have become reiterated to the degree that the vocabulary of 'cyberspace,' and the notions of travel and mobility that it implies, have become items of common knowledge and parts of everyday language, also in non-English speaking countries (i.e. 'Cyberraum,' 'cyber espace,' 'cyberrymd,' 'kyberavaruus'). In popular reiterations, mobility has become formulated as apparently unlimited freedom, as in the familiar Microsoft slogan, "Where do you want to go today?" (Cf. Nakamura 2000a.)

As I argue elsewhere (Paasonen, forthcoming) in a discussion on Sherry Turkle's and Roseanne Allucquère Stone's work on online identity play, there is a tendency to collapse the categories of identity and character (in the sense of textual representation of a person), performatives (utterances with the power to produce that which they depict) and performance as play. The basic principle seems to be, that as in MOOs, MUDs and chats alike one's body can not be seen, and text-based self-representations (or ones based on avatars of some kind) are all others can interact with, this signifies as freedom to 'be whatever.' As the realm of the visual disappears – along with differences read and interpreted from bodies of others – one becomes freed to perform different kind of personae or 'online identities,' which often means engaging in forms of identity tourism (Nakamura 2000b, 714).

Susanna Paasonen

## Cyberfeminism and the question of freedom

disembodied adventure in the realm of data. In addition to reconstructing their bodies with cybernetic implants and body parts, Gibson's characters abandon their bodies while venturing into cyberspace, leaving the 'meat' behind when 'jacking in' the computer terminal. This kind of Cartesian divide between minds and bodies, selves and their 'carnal vessels' is deeply rooted in the rhetoric of cyberspace, as articulated in John Perry Barlow's 1996 'Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace.' For Barlow, the Internet is "the new home of mind," a "global social space" that is autonomous, free from politics and discrimination in terms of race and class, an alternative world freed from power and embodiment: "a world that is both everywhere and nowhere, but it is not where bodies live."

Notions of freedom (from politics, embodiment, power) have "preoccupied the more high-profile literature, as well as much public discussion and common sense about the net" (Miller and Slater 2000, 4). According to these views, people can live parallel lives, make up 'virtual selves' and alternative identities online: Sherry Turkle, for example, argues that "In cyberspace, we can talk, exchange ideas, and assume personae of our own creation. [--] In the real-time communities of cyberspace, we are dwellers on the threshold between the real and the virtual [--] inventing ourselves as we go along." (Turkle 1997, 9–10.) Ideas of fluidity and freedom have been widely embraced and circulated since the early 1990s in media studies, journalism, contemporary fictions, advertisements, guide books and services of different kinds. They

As users are seen free to take up, model, perform and abandon different 'online identities' at will, and to 'become' what one wishes to perform, the self becomes understood as a self-made wo/man. Consequently, transformations in terms of identity are cast as issues of individual will and self-development. These formulations are connected to cyberspace as alternative disembodied world of the mind, as popularised by John Perry Barlow (1996), and criticised by Zillah Eisenstein (1998) for their neo-liberal underpinnings and refusal to address issues of power. For Eisenstein (1998, 74, 94–95), such a cyberdiscourse emphasises free mobility, freedom of speech and self-expression, while little attention is paid to the conditions and limitations of freedom – who are excluded from exercising their rights of free speech and self-expression.

Here the Internet user is an individual engaged in self-reflection and self-reconstruction, often in decidedly intentional manner. Such ideas of the self as process of discovery have been discussed by Anne Cronin (2000), as compulsory individualism. According to Cronin, consumer culture relies on the idea that each person has 'a unique, inner essence,' seen as individual potential that needs to be discovered, expressed and 'found.' (Cronin 2000, 275–276.) In Cronin's (2000, 277) reading, this does not simply translate as voluntarism, since the model of self as a project of expression and discovery is "compulsory in the sense that the expression of selfhood is framed as both a right and duty, and the ambiguous

terms of 'authentic individuality' within consumerist identity politics become one of the few ways to access a legitimised selfhood." In other words, "individuality is not an option but rather the compulsory route to selfhood" (Cronin 2000, 279, emphasis added). The self is performatively produced through concepts of free will and choice that are "generated through the very definitions that constrain them" (Cronin 2000, 283). As the freedom of individuals to improve, discover or remake oneself is emphasised, interiority and individuality become both normative and compulsory.

I find Cronin's reading highly interesting, as it enables rethinking the question of freedom and identity play in terms of normative 'freedom discourse.' The recurrence of freedom as theme in discussions on the Internet has to do with compulsory individualism (i.e. one must [want to] be free), and its neo-liberal underpinnings – individuality, freedom of speech and mobility, possibilities of identity play and authentic self-expression. The notion of individual freedom becomes a credo that is compulsively reiterated, linking ideas of identity play and self-exploration in online communications to the wider framework of what Cronin (2000, 279) calls 'Do-It-Yourself' culture that "revolves around an expression and 'free choice' in the actualisation and transformation of the self." This self becomes something possessed by individuals – and, like property in general, subject to remodelling.

### Freedom from the body

However, it is crucial to note that the discourse of cybernetics and the freedom of remodelling goes back far beyond 1984 and *Neuromancer*: Freedom from bodily constraints has been a recurrent theme in cybernetic analogies between humans and machines articulated since the 1940s, cyborg experiments and their popularisation of the 1960s and 1970s, and cyborg visions in popular cinema and cultural theory since the 1980s (Hayles 1999). In these visions, bodies can be manipulated and reconstructed, their automatic functions can be simulated with machines, bodies can be replicated and replaced by machine ones, and finally the confines of the body can be abandoned in cyberspace. Especially cyborg experiments, funded by NASA in the 1960s, and popularisation of cyborg imageries and terminology in cinema and television, have widely resorted to ideas of 'freeing man' from bodily and earthly restraints. Manfred E. Clynes, who coined the term cyborg in an article co-written with Nathan S. Kline in 1960, explains the formation of the cyborg concept in a 1995 interview: "I thought it would be good to have a new concept, a concept of persons who can free themselves from the constraints of the environment to the extent that they wished. [--] The main idea was to liberate man from constraints as he flies into space – that's a kind of freedom – but it seemed necessary to give him bodily freedom to exist in another part of the universe without the constraints that having evolved on earth made his subject to." (Gray 1995, 47, emphasis added.)

There is something of an obsession towards embodiment – embodiment becomes an other that men try to control,

govern, explain and objectify, defeat, render open to altering and manipulation, or simply leave behind. The tendency to think of bodies as something that one has, rather than something one is and does, leaves unnoticed that bodies are not capsules that 'we' inhabit, but our very beings. Identity categories are inscribed in our bodies, read and performed: thus bodies are "the transparent enabling power and 'zero-degree' or our agency" and yet opaque, "within our agency, yes, but certainly in excess to our volition" (Sobchack 1999, 48). Furthermore, "bodies materialise in a complex set of temporal and spatial relations to other bodies" (Ahmed 2000, 40) and thus identities do not "simply happen in the privatised realm if the subject's relation to itself" (Ahmed 2000, 7). Formulations of multiple and disembodied identities work to render embodied differences insignificant without questioning relations of power, or identity as other than individual construction project.

For Bill Nichols (2000, 112), "[c]ybernetic systems and cyborg as human metaphor refutes a heritage that celebrates individual free will and subjectivity." In other words, understanding people as parts of systems consisting of machines, other people and their inter-connections – in terms of systems and their functions rather than individual desires and goals – means stepping beyond the legacy of humanist conceptions of subject. Nevertheless, discussions on cyborgs have continuously been focused on individuality, minds as separate from bodies, and the centrality of freedom, as in the quote from Clynes above. While some might argue that this is due to humanist notions defending themselves against, or haunting cyborg imageries as anachronistic echoes, I believe that cybernetics and cyborgs have no set meanings in terms of identity and subjectivity, and they can be – and they have been – used in articulating contradictory views. Furthermore, it has been a strong tradition within cybernetic discourses to address embodiment as object, as a system or mechanism. According to Dalia Judovitz (2001, 169), such abstract analogies "whose material logic is informed by the regime of the machine," have been a dominant Western paradigm for thinking about the body since René Descartes. This distanced view of embodiment works – albeit paradoxically – to support humanist views of the subject (as rational, coherent, autonomous individual). The cyborg can be used as figuration for heterogeneous and dispersed subjectivity, as in Donna J. Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto*. However, there are differences between cyborgs, and cyborgs may just as well articulate views of embodiment as a mechanism inhabited by a rational individual.

Ideas of freedom in cyberspace have created certain kinds of 'heavenly bodies' – physical bodies as entities existing as if in a different realm or orbit, and imaginary bodies that can be composed according to one's wishes. The figures of cyborgs that have occupied feminist investigations in technology for well over a decade, tend to rely on abstractions of human-machine systems, analogies and affinities, while the materiality of bodies, markers of difference included, receive less attention. This is somewhat surprising, given that Haraway



discusses her cyborg figure centrally in terms of racial hierarchies and models cyborg politics of partiality, using Chela Sandoval's work on oppositional consciousness, a political identity "born of the skills for reading webs of power by those refused stable membership in the social categories of race, sex, or class" (Haraway 1991, 155–156). As Sandoval (1995, 412) argues, "the body of the feminist cyborg becomes clearly articulated with the material and psychic positionings of US third world feminism." Appropriating the cyborg in return, Sandoval (1995, 408) discusses it as a boundary figure that stands for displacements of unitary subject and disciplinary boundaries alike, for oppositional consciousness that characterises colonised peoples (of the Americas). Here cyborg becomes connected to issues of labour, racism and feminist activism while still remaining a figuration for rethinking subjectivity and the category of the human.

The cyborg, as figuration, refuses origin stories. Yet it is another thing to overlook the theoretical and conceptual framework in which the figuration became articulated. Chela Sandoval (1995, 409) and Maria Fernández (2001) both point out that the issue of racism, central to Haraway's manifesto, is forgotten in the majority of (cyberfeminist) cyborg appropriations. While the discourse of cyberfeminism emphasises difference and multiplicity, differences between women, the workings of racism and othering, as well as the normativity of white heterosexual (middle-class) women, have been less on the agenda.

The tendency to bypass cyborgs as related to hierarchies of race can be read as attraction of disembodied abstraction, as simultaneous effacement of embodiment and ethnicity and race as issues that matter. This also means white-washing, for as race and racism disappear from (or are not included on) the agenda, white women remain the transparent norm. As noted by Fernández (2001), this may mean reproducing the racist bias of the 'second-wave' women's movement. Given that reflections on cyborgs and issues of race have been predominantly produced by women (and men) of colour (Sandoval 1995; Sandoval 2000; Gabilondo 1995; González 1995; Ow 2000), it seems that views of whiteness as the unmarked, as if invisible position (Dyer 1997) are still active among many of us white women writing on cyberfeminism.

### Performing 'cyberspace' into being

The Internet is not an object or entity, but sets of different textualities: its meanings are not fixed in a moment of production, but it becomes to signify in different encounters with users, as well as acts of interpretation and narration (cf. Grint and Woolgar 1995, 45). As Daniel Miller and Don Slater (2000, 1) put it, the Internet is not "a monolithic or placeless 'cyberspace'" but numerous technologies that become narrated, popularised and used in varying contexts. In other words, there is no 'Internet' or 'Cyberspace' as fixed object any more there is gender as fixed essence or natural object. Yet the notion of Internet as textuality does not imply the possibility of unlimited play with meanings where the

medium would be freely re-invented, redefined and re-scripted by users and researchers alike. For textuality also refers to narrative rules, scripts and workings of power within discourse, as well as different meaning-structures of a text (Silverman 1994). In this sense, it is useful to consider studies of the Internet as sets of textualities (journalistic, political, psychological, etc.) in which the Internet (or cyberspace, or cyberculture) are performed into being as certain kind from a certain perspective, in relation to other articulations and for certain ends.

Such performative production takes place in Sherry Turkle's (1998, 18) formulation of computers as embodying postmodern theory and bringing it down to earth. The uses of cyberspace by Sadie Plant (1996; 1997) are another illustrative example: for her, cyberspace is similar in its fluidity to Luce Irigaray's work on the feminine, a dimension where old identifications collapse. It is illustrative of the power of cyberdiscourse, that visions of cyberspace as emancipatory sphere are employed also in texts critical towards race, gender or class discrimination, and the assumed unity of the category of woman. Thus Chela Sandoval (1995, 418) discusses cyberspace as "a world where any activity is possible," "a space of boundless possibilities where meanings are only cursorily attached." Cyberspace becomes a "realm of *différance*" and a site for differential consciousness that enables acknowledging and working with differences and contradictions, as outlined in her methodology of the oppressed (Sandoval 2000, 177). As with Turkle and Plant, Sandoval's definition has less to do with media used by and targeted at women in various everyday situations, than it does with cyberspace as illustration of theory (cf. Miller and Slater 2000, 5).

Uses of cyberspace as such a figure tend to lack reflections on its connections to Internet-as-medium, and in this sense they add to cyberdiscourse. While they may help in re-thinking categories of gender, race, sexuality and class (although the three latter ones tend to disappear in Plant's and Turkle's formulations), they do so by reiterating visions of cyberspace as an 'elsewhere' – in these cases as theory come to life.

Cyberfeminism has become known centrally through manifestos (Haraway 1985/1991; VNS Matrix 1991; Plant 1996), and, as term, it has been both associated with enthusiasm towards the possibilities of information networks and new media, and criticised for this. In Maureen McNeil's (2000, 229–230) view, the possibilities of cyberfeminism lie on its engagement with the attractions of technoculture and technoscience which many feminist critics have failed to address. While this embrace of future possibilities enables a positive stance for feminist appropriations of technology, this embrace should not happen at the cost of losing a critical stance towards both 'cyber' (encompassing the Internet and the diverse technologies related to 'new media,' as well as discourses in which these media are constituted) and the category of woman (acknowledging differences between women, identities as situated, some female bodies as more



"Herstorically" I have been following the evolution of feminism and technology for some time. My media concepts during the seventies, grew out of liberation ideology or the need to be recognized as a contributing member of culture and media was a way to reflect these issues. Comparisons and levels of equality were more based on dualistic role models (i.e. us and them). Difference became the focus, and the rise of our 70s feminism brought on discussions about sensuality, objectification and representation as Lucy Lippard once suggested.<sup>1</sup> In the 80's, many women video artists were conscious of claiming a place in history for

With the above considerations in mind I wish to write here about the utopic concept of Bio-media. For many women, the subject of bio-technology is an ethical issue and the consequence is critical debate. However Bio-Media is also about the level of information and the types of interpretation that the general public are given. It concerns the psychological effect on society of the limited use of utopic and dystopic information and its effect on popular media and on scientific interpretation. In this light I want to mention three issues bio-technology, networked-media and bio-terrorism.

Jill Scott

# BIO-MEDIA ETHICS -

[http://: www.jillscott.org](http://www.jillscott.org)

## bio-technology

Bio-technology is mostly perceived by the general public as a utopic scientific exploration into the realms of organic manipulation, and the media feels responsible to feed into this concept. Therefore, the artistic and mediated interpretations of the body and the bio, are often, by their very construction related to a new and convincing streamlined and animated level of aesthetics. For

themselves. Paramount to this realization was the fact that men wrote history mainly about the achievements of men. Identity became a pluralistic pursuit because each woman artist around me felt that her media images represented many women from the past including philosophers, mothers and prostitutes. This aspect of feminism became the subject matter for my own post-modern theories and it included ethical aspects about women from different cultures. In the 90's, technology was seen as a way to re-invent oneself; choose your own gender and self determine your own identity as well as the environment in which it/they might appear.

example: in the science journals (Scientific American, Nature) slick aesthetics often aim to convince us that genetic manipulation is both a promising and desirable concept, aimed at the creation of a perfectly healthy society. These aims are often accompanied by repetitions of verbs which also promise to ask the funding sources to invest and the public to psychologically support. However, analysis can lead to more critical revelations. Once I traced, extracted and outlined these current utopian concepts and aims of microbiology from the pages of these magazines. I then re-built the outlines and extruded them as 3d forms, winding them together with a DNA model. The over riding aesthetics of the work was streamlined and perfect. However upon a closer look many questions rose to the surface:

A type of mixed reality or integrated techno-zone was the possible outcome: a space which collapsed geographical boundaries and time zones as well as questioned the concept of an artificial world.<sup>2</sup>

The above evolution above depicts a transition from dualistic concerns, to pluralistic principles of investigation and onto a search for a new set of fused paradigms and generic models. However, in other cultures and in other professions similar philosophical metaphors have not evolved with time. Currently as we know, the discourse surrounding today's concept of mixed realities and gender can be mostly found in the fields of western media and technology.<sup>3</sup> However, it may still have to be discovered in other Western professions like bio-technology, genetic engineering or even in media-journalism. In countries where education is on the lowest level, dualism (us and them) may still be a very relevant fight.



### These were bio-ethical questions:

1. Why do we need to manipulate nature?
2. Who is manipulating whom? The rich can afford bio-technology and what about the poor?
3. How discriminating is racial DNA categorization?
4. What kind of ethics do the scientists themselves have?
5. Who owns your genetic code and for how long should it be preserved?
6. How can control be monitored? What are the limits to genetically modified food or the fate of transgenetic creatures, or of bio-chemical weapons?
7. How far can animal testing go?
8. What is inherited and what is environmentally induced?
9. Where is the line between prevention and cure?
10. How in-vitro can in-vitro reproduction be?
11. Perfection Is the perfect clone – why a replicant of us?
12. Is nature just a fertile factory?
13. Can we clean up our mess? Our environment? Are those Nano-technological promises real?



# WE DEFINITELY KNOW WHAT A SCRATCH IS!

any play on the gender thing as I felt almost that it could be a hindrance rather than a help in the beginning – and I was more concerned on what the reaction to the music would be and whether folk actually like what I was doing – and ultimately to me, at the end of the day the art that plays the

The very transgressive party at golden pudel klub december 15, 2001 was focused on female electronic musicians, hosted by OBN. Participating artists were *Neotropic* from London, *dj Babe LN* from Prague, *Slowrapid* djs from Leipzig and *the godmothers part II* from Hamburg. Neotropic and Donna Neda (one musician of the godmothers part II) had an online talk about musical networking after the show at pudel klub.

**Donna Neda:** *What is the story behind your artist name "Neotropic"?*

**Neotropic:** At the time of starting to produce music I hadn't really consider any names as such and as I just didn't want to restrict my music making to just one particular music style – I thought I would be good to have a few guises to work under - and not being one for thinking of things on the spot – I kind of made the word up almost in that Neo being new which is kind of appropriate at the time being a new face n the scene, and I thought I was like stepping into a whole new world out there and tropic seemed to conjure that up for me and that how I guess I came to the conclusion it fitted and felt right.

**Donna Neda:** *... and considering sex "Neotropic" is indistinct, that's why I personally like this name. I told you, that for years I thought you're a male artist, and I was quiet surprised to discover that you are a women. Is it important for you that your name is not significant "female"?*

**Neotropic:** I was adamant from the beginning to not make



most important role – its only now I feel it important that we make some noise in as much that we are as good at what we do if not better than our male contemporaries!

**Donna Neda:** *That's my opinion, too. Quality is the only thing that counts! And I always hate in interviews the bloody*



*question like how do you feel as a female musician on stage, etc. But I think its still important to get in touch with other female musicians. You also have your sister 2 sister project and label focusing on female artists, can you explain what it is particularly and what is your intention behind doing this?*

**Neotropic:** The idea of setting up the sister 2 sister page was just to give other female musicians/artists a place where they could find help, advice and getting their music heard – in fact we have had some great stuff sent through and I know there is a wealth of talent out there waiting to be discovered and if I can help in any way by passing on my own experiences then I feel its can only have a good effect, but its not just about the female talent it is an equal opportunity and in as much as I wanted it be a place of asking questions and looking for advice – we also wanted encourage other musicians whether they be female or not to send us their music – I know how hard it can be to get exposure and that's my real intention that perhaps we can give them that stepping stone in the hope that they may go on and do bigger and better things.

**Donna Neda:** *In Hamburg you showed your film "la pro-chaine fois" combined with a live dj-soundtrack. Are you a filmmaker too?*

**Neotropic:** I guess I have always been a bit of a bedroom film maker more as a hobby – my dad used to take a lot of photos when growing up and I was always intrigued by the idea of image and how powerful they can be, and that's what I wanted my film to project – I had been collecting and documenting all my travels by super 8 so the footage had been there for a while before I decided to start editing it and seeing larger piece developing – so the film was created before the music, I wanted the film to inspire the music and coming from a more emotional point, and I find when I look back at the images it would evoke many memories and emotions experienced in those places some good some sad some funny some bad.



**Donna Neda:** *Maybe that's why film and music gave the impression that they were developed simultaneously. According to the "cyberfem" context of the conference in Hamburg I finally want to ask you if you think the internet is more transgressive and helpful in gender aspects than usual communication platforms?*

**Neotropic:** I think the internet has be an integral part of the way we communicate in general and definitely has benefited people such as us to get in touch with other like minded women around the globe, not only that we have great networks in all areas of this multimedia society we live in today and its import and that we can cross cultural boundaries and share our own ideas and ways of moving forward to the next generation – for my own purposes it has been a great tool and I have made a lot of great contacts via the information highway – but I don't t think we should ignore the more organic approach to communication and that too plays an important role in all of this I just hope it doesn't become outdated to have a chat on the phone or hang out with your mates in the coffee shop for a chat.

**Donna Neda:** *Thank you for your attention and taking time answering my questions.*

for more information and music check: **[www.neotropic.net](http://www.neotropic.net)**

sister 2 sister is a platform for female talent, whether it be musician, artist or designer, if its by a women then here's where you'll find it. Contact: [shellbear@yesmate.com](mailto:shellbear@yesmate.com)

**[www.thegodmothers.de](http://www.thegodmothers.de)** or **[www.diepatinnen.de](http://www.diepatinnen.de)**

**[www.slowrapid.org](http://www.slowrapid.org)**

**[www.jungle.cz](http://www.jungle.cz)**



borders of  
terror  
media. and  
war techni-  
ques

The correlation between war and gender-relations is complex. To reduce it to the slogan "war is masculine" doesn't pay tribute to the chance that an analysis of the gender-related aspects of the current political situation does offer. A deeply gender-biased view provides a critical perspective on the dominant argumentative context that professes that war is the only solution when it comes to responding to the terror of September 11th. What we should be thinking about however are alternatives to these assumptions.

War is the political response of some of the countries of the west to the terror-attacks in New York and Washington. Women like Susan Sontag, Arundhati Roy or Saskia Sassen who fairly immediately commented on the terrorist attacks put the events in a context beyond terror and retaliation. Instead they demanded, that the 11th of September should be read in terms of the politics of the countries of the west and the bloodletting that these politics do cause in most other countries. Thus they analysed the terror-attacks and the war, that was started on the 7th of October, outside of or beyond the context given by the countries of the west that is to say the USA. But whoever dismisses this given context,

position of the bad side. On a visit to Berlin he publicly declared that the west is culturally superior to the Islamic world.

There is one argument which guarantees broad approval among advocates of war but also among its skeptics for this dualism or division of the world into good and evil and the idea it entails of retaliation: It is the plight of women in Afghanistan. The circumstances of life of women in Afghanistan is deplorable. They were made prisoners in their own country just because of their female sex. Feminists wanted this to be put on the agenda already at the UN conference of women in Beijing in 1995. The breach of human rights on women by the Northern Alliance and later the Taliban has however never made western governments to feel compelled to intervene, neither politically nor militarily.

It causes some disbelief when politicians and journalists suddenly focus on the fate of the women of Afghanistan in order to legitimate the war based on the concept of human rights. Considering that 90% of the victims in a war are civilians, mostly women, children and elderly people shows that this argument may well be a farce. (UN figures of 1990)

Ariane Brensell | Waltraud Schwab

## »No Accomplices«

does not consent to war as a solution. The critical zone for demagogues of war begins at this point, because nobody should ever doubt that war could solve problems. In visionary terms Susan Sontag commented on the impact of this in society when she wrote in her article of September 15th in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: "Let's by all means grieve together. But let's not be stupid together".

### civilisation, barbarism and women

The USA did define the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as a declaration of war. Aside from the power to define "when war begins", "against whom a war is fought", "when a war is a success" and "when a war is finished" the USA has also taken hold of the power of defining "why there is a war". A simple and comprehensive scenario is being laid out in which defining the good side automatically points at that party which stands for the bad side. Marianne Schuller, an academic of literature and her colleague Volker Kaiser have found marvelously appropriate words for this dualism. Referring to the 11th of September they wrote: "Understood as an attack against the whole (western) civilization, this immediately demands a counterpart in form of the uncivilized. As a consequence of this, the USA does not only become an incarnation of the civilized world but at the same time it is forced and legitimized, to fight the war of civilization against counter-civilisation." Civilisation versus barbarism – this dualism lends plausibility to the idea, that war is a solution. Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime minister, pointed out who in this scenario holds the position of the good side and who the

### war, women and everyday-life

It is in the interest of the politicians in the USA to maintain that their wars are clean wars and that in their wars almost no civilians are being

killed. What about the refugees? In thousands they die of hunger, illness, failing hygiene, expulsion, injuries caused through explosions of mines, hypothermia. Are they no victims of war, because bombs do not hit them directly? The USA has thrown scatterbombs in the thousands onto Afghanistan, although these bombs are internationally outlawed. Victims hit directly are considered 'collateral damage'. Victims who are going to be killed later when they step on duds, die in 'accidents'. The question must therefore be allowed, whether the concept of war has to be extended to where it has so far not yet been applied to: That is everyday life.

Under genderspecific consideration the organisation of everyday-life and everyday-existence are major tasks of women worldwide. Women are responsible for the reproduction, education, and in many case also the production or procuring of food, and the maintenance of family. "Economies of care" are the equivalent UN-terms. This is domain of women.

For women it is of utmost priority also in wartime to organize everyday-survival. With this however in mind women already act beyond all logic of war. From a female point of view neither terror nor war but a fair distribution and justice come into focus. But when you do not only look at distribution in gender-neutral terms but under gendered perspectives the injustice of the worldorder is further highlighted: Two thirds of the poverty of the world affects women. Two thirds of all analphabets are women. Two thirds of the work done worldwide is being done by women.



**war and gender-hierarchies**

Feminist sociologists of military issues like Ruth Seifert have pointed at the correlation between the ideology of the armed forces and the degradation of women in general. In this context the production of gendered stereotypes is of utmost importance. In military logic emotion is female, rationality is male. Emotion loses, toughness wins. This is a preliminary condition for hierarchies within military structures.

The German chancellor Schröder (male) and the chief of the Green Party Claudia Roth (female) had an encounter which shows clearly what is at stake. Like Mary Robinson, the High commissioner of human rights at the UN Claudia Roth demanded publicly that there should be a halt to the bombing in order to be able to care for the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people. Because of her intervention Schröder called her a "whiner". Because she was no military expert she couldn't make an informed judgement of what is necessary, he said. While Schröder was praised by the media as a real statesman when he showed his feelings at his visit at Ground Zero, Claudia Roth is being derided as woman because she is touched by the misery of the refugee's plight.

The peace researcher Astrid Albrecht Heide proved in her work on the correlation between military forces and gender, that military forces can be considered a "direct proof of patriarchal power relations". Linked with it is a "Ramboisation of everyday-life" as Maria Mies, a pioneer of the feminist movement in Germany said. The situation in Afghanistan serves as an example. The wars of the last twenty years in Afghanistan – representative wars of the super powers – provided the conditions for installing the rigid gender-hierarchies which deprived women of the rights of education, health care, and a self-supported existence. The "war against terror" may have as one positive result that the plight of the women in Afghanistan has become an issue of public interest to the media and the politicians in these parts. However only blind confidence in the logic of war will take a now unveiled face of women in Afghanistan as proof that war in general liberates women.

**war-business and the bodies of women**

There are however even more genderspecific dimensions of war. The female body itself is an object of discussion. Theoretically the rape of women in war is now considered a warcrime and is prosecuted at the international court in De Hague. This impresses neither the Taliban nor the armed forces of the Northern Alliance as the UN reports. In any case sex, as a means to appease the soldiers will play a part in Afghanistan too. Rape is just one aspect. Prostitution is another one.

Take the prolonged presence of armed forces of the west in Indochina. It shows how prostitution and trafficking in women has created new local economies. The profits are enormous. They can be compared to the profits in drug dealing. Women profit the least from it all. With the military presence of the West in Afghanistan there too such a new sex-market

will get established. War is a platform for businesses, one of which is business with women.

**contradictions**

Whoever analyses the events of September 11th and its aftermath under a gendered perspective will touch upon contradictions within the argumentative context of those governments, which try to purvey the idea that war is a solution. These contradictions should not be revealed. They harm the image and self-image of the western countries and they unmask their mission.

Does this explain why feminists of the western countries whose analysis of the war and of the politics of the USA did not comply with the standard version of why war is an adequate answer to terrorism are faced with prosecution like the Canadian professor Sunera Thobani? Does it explain why others are being ridiculed like the north-American writer Barbara Kingsolver? "I have already been called every name in the Rush Limbaugh handbook: traitor, sinner, naive, liberal, peacenik, whiner" she wrote. Still: "It is not naive to propose alternatives to war."

Does this also explain, why abortion clinics of "Planned Parenthood" have received anthrax-threats since 1998? The Boston Globe reports it on the 17th of October. Neither anti-terror-agents nor the media seemed to bother until after September the 11th. The sender of the letters may well spell his name as Christian Fundamentalist.

Does this also explain, why there is broad media coverage of the conference about the future in Afghanistan that was held on the Petersberg near Bonn, but no media coverage of a women's conference on Afghanistan in Brussels at the same time? Mary Robinson opened the conference. She said that without women there is no future in Afghanistan.

Does this explain, why members of the "Afghan Women Council" or "RAWA" have not appropriately been invited to participate at the conference in Bonn? These women's organisations, located in Pakistan and secretly operating in Afghanistan, were the only opposition that stood for years against the Taliban. They organised clandestine schools for girls, they documented violence against women, and they organised health care and other humanitarian relief programs.

The influence of women on the future political development of Afghanistan will have to be watched for carefully anyway. This is crucial because the members of the conference on the future of Afghanistan, which was held near Bonn, did not decide on whether the juridical system will be based on secular law or the sharia.

**Alternatives**

In the first government in Afghanistan after women were given parity of rights in 1964 women were represented in high positions. 20 years of war have obliterated the memory of those times. But why do the western governments still





I'm a special task force for catastrophe. Trained for dramatic situations. But if something terrible does happen I stop for a moment. Pretend not to know how to react: then nobody notices that I actually wait for such occasions. Step back and hope for someone else to give the required aid: so as not to betray myself. Look frightened: so no one sees that little smile whisking over my face. The truth is that I long for such situations. When it gets dramatic I'm happy.

#### I AM A PROGRAMME

Actually I wanted to start out completely different. "Why intact families are so dangerous" was the title I planned to use. I wanted to prove this with the example of my own experience. Wanted to broadcast why my mother used to remind me of many of the female characters played by Jessica Lange. And what a cool counterpart my dad is. I wanted to toughly analyse what the conventional division of gender roles might have to do with the type of man I usually fall in love with, and why I became "heterosexual" in the first place. I even wanted to question my being-an-artist and start demystifying myself as an example and explain that all I do is live out my parents' unfulfilled dreams. Wanted to describe what

strong when others need help. Authorities are no obstacle then; the spirit of protest has been with me from earliest infancy. All I have ever been trained for is emergency situations.

I haven't slept so well in a long time. I haven't had such a desire for sex for ages. I had found myself again. Life felt like back in the 80's... At some point I even put on a Nena song. And then I understood: I am just a programme.

#### CALL IT GROUND ZERO

The CDU isn't that wrong if it insists so hysterically on the protection of the family. It has perfectly understood its subversive potential: the family conditions you. It can be the basic unit for a lot of evil or even good. Despite all efforts to establish comprehensive legal interference the family is still one of the last domains beyond constitutional law. Family means anarchy because within it whole worlds cannot only be imagined but also be implanted into brains. Family is Ground Zero, at least up to a point. Bad enough: if you teach your kids tolerance they might actually practice it. If the last generation just learned that all men are equal, the next already calls for queer marriages! If

the upcoming generation is halfway clear-headed, it will ask for adoption rights from queer marriages. And once little girls are brought up by homosexual parents, the stereotypical fairytale of prince charming as

the saviour on a white horse won't work anymore either. It's not revolutionary theories that make communication agencies shiver, and it's not political waves that makes the Constitutional Protection Office listen - the most feared weapon of our times is the "flexible family structure".

Because halfway intellectual couples and emancipated women don't want to have kids anymore it looks like this matter has taken care of itself.

#### DRAG IT ONTO YOUR DESKTOP (NOT A TALKSHOW)

Psychology could have been such a nice virus. Its first attempt was admittedly quite... let's say: tendentious, and produced crowds of hysterical women. But at least a filter was found which could slow down the stream of consciousness flowing with great speed and little structure. The end of eternity had arrived. And wasn't it really about time, considering the danger of looms with attached punch cards developing higher IQs than their owners? Sunrises, crying cocks, church bells and later on stopwatches had already fulfilled the task of reminding humanity to not just live into the day. Psychology finally represented a tool independent of the structuring coming from outside (or below).

So what went wrong? First, Freud was a guy who thought in the minority, that is he thought as a guy, and had only extremely limited knowledge of Greek mythology. Above all, he had a doctor's license and the subjects of his research were called patients. The chaos of the source text was labelled

Nina Stuhldreher

## »I Am A Programme«

it must have been like for my academic parents, then without much self-assurance, to live among wealthier families. Why this made me quickly understand the market value of intellect and talent. And why the knowledge of those upper worlds might have given me the very tools I needed to succeed on the art market. I wanted to report the cruelty of the permanent obligation to talk everything over with my pedagogue-parents. How it obstructs you from establishing your own opinion, if your parents are so nice and progressive that they can't even function as your enemy. And I wanted to tell how much I envied my best friend when her parents got divorced. From then on she only had to struggle against two individuals, me, though, against a well functioning team.

#### PRIMARY ORDER: HUNT DOWN YOUR ORIGINAL MISSION

But then everything turned out differently. Suddenly the World Trade Center was gone and all channels changed their programmes. So did I. For hours and days I hung around in front of the TV, on the phone, on the internet. Wrote mails of sympathy, petitions, kept debating and debating and spent an incredible amount of time trying to form my own opinion, beyond mass hysteria and government statements. I hardly managed to get my daily work done, not to mention the text I had planned to write. Time stood still and I was really in my element: at last the world was as tragic as I had always known it really was. At last my time had come. At last there'd be a demand for my type! I had never been prepared to survive daily life... But I spot injustice, wherever it appears. I get

illness – and who wants to have anything to do with that. Therefore everything was as it had always been: a few individuals were said to be sick because of something that was actually normal in everyone. The majority was safe again. But also capital didn't sleep. Capital understood that program errors could only be fixed line by line, without an entire system update, and then began to repair workers according to production needs. When slackness loomed up and work enthusiasm decreased a few hours with an analyst were fitted in and the gross national product was saved again.

The talk show idea was quite clever, too. It wasn't the sick who were invited but people with reconciliation needs, special sex practices, thirst for revenge or weight problems. They were even grateful they didn't have to pay for the session. (So were the TV stations, by the way.) Pretty handy also that the spectators could be cured at the same time – even without realising that they had had problems themselves. In this way everyone became richer, freer and more relaxed and there was no need to change anything.

#### **HACK IT**

But let's come back to hysterical women. First they were locked in and exhibited, later on relieved of their personality by a little stab through their nose. At least in Hollywood movies women finally were allowed to resolutely ride through military zones and prevent dangerous missile tests. Perhaps guys weren't all wrong with their idea of the wandering womb. Let's look at it this way: nobody would deny evolution is a fact. Its function of adapting species to changing conditions is scientifically proven. How about the idea that those nasty little things slowly begin moving towards the exit – "ex utero", so to speak – because the role of women as exclusive machines of reproduction has almost come to an end? How about the idea of evolution being something that could be influenced by cultural progress? What a tempting thought... (If we consistently keep on wearing jeans for a few more generations it might give us those cool narrow hips guys have.)

#### **THEN RELOAD**

Last night I finally got maternal instincts. I saw George Bush jr.'s speech before the Congress: a little boy who desperately seeks acknowledgement. How pleasant and long-desired those standing ovations must have been. (Wasn't there a smile of satisfaction whisking over his face from time to time?) But to risk world peace for this personal experience is a bit much indeed. How could I forget – it's quite fashionable these days to once again use the whole world for your private salvation. To force upon the whole world the views and needs of a few. There is a name for this: globalisation.

*(The German version of this text was published in "Familienblatt" as part of the project "Pedigree Pal - New Definitions of Family" at Shedhalle Zurich, 2001. Translation: Anita Fricek)*

**some reactions of muslim women to email content following september 11**

*"The status of Muslim women can be improved through the use of email but it really depends on how we use it."  
(Female Muslim student, 2002)*

Within western critical theory the Internet was contextualised within paradigms that were present before the widespread use of the medium – notably Habermas' public sphere, Anderson's 'imagined communities' and MacLuhan's global village. From a Muslim woman's viewpoint the Internet could be the means by which the patriarchal overtones of many Muslim-majority countries could be dismantled by setting in motion a digital reformation, involving the appropriation and dissemination of information relevant to Muslim women. But this is not to infer that the two contexts are mutually exclusive, and this can be seen from the responses of Muslim women to the content of email sent by Muslims following the September 11 attacks in New York.

The emails discussed here were among many I received in

been caused by people of Middle Eastern origin, bearing Muslim names...This fuels more hatred for a religion and a people who have nothing to do with these events."

But where Yusuf Islam was able to distinguish between the alleged perpetrators of the WTC attacks and what he termed "a people who have nothing to do with these events"; the email about the Taliban dating agency could not and instead ignored the fact that the women of Afghanistan were the victims of a particularly chilling and repugnant set of circumstances. In the words of an Australian student of Afghan descent who responded to my survey, "That one was not funny. Just like the Taliban, the Western world was also putting women down." Similarly, a young radio presenter in Singapore states that

"...it makes a mockery on the women wearing *jilbab* [the Malay term for veil]...personally I do not find this amusing. In fact I was rather outraged because it is indirectly making a mockery on Islam."

Apart from the reflections and conspiracies, amongst the emails forwarded by Muslims after September 11, there were also instances of dark humour with a level of intertextuality:

"Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon calls US President George Bush on September 11, 2001 and tells him, 'I am very sorry to hear the news. Such a tragedy, such great buildings, so many people... I just want to assure you that Mossad had nothing to do with this.' Bush replies, 'What buildings? What people?' Sharon: 'Er, what time is it in Washington?' Bush tells him it's a quarter past eight in the morning. Sharon: 'Oops! Sorry, I'll call back in an hour.'

(Author Unknown (a), 2001)

Email can be thought of as the most public of private discourse. Take the case of the email sent by an exiled Afghan living in America, to his friends. It spread throughout the world (Seligman 2001) telling his unintended global audience of his view that any US military campaign against Afghanistan would be a fallacy.

"...why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, hurt, incapacitated, suffering...There are millions of widows. And the Taliban has been burying these widows alive in mass graves...These are a few of the reasons why the Afghan people have not overthrown the Taliban."  
(Ansary, 2001)

As the case of Tamim Ansary shows, the ease with which information can be reproduced means there is no guarantee that what you write in a quick memo to your friends or colleagues will remain a personal interaction, thus blurring the line between public information and private communication. Perhaps this characteristic of email use is in keeping with the notion of computer-mediated-communication being the

Nasya Bahfen

The Taliban dating agency,  
an Afghan-American and the-artist-formerly-known-as-cat-stevens

my inbox from September 12 onwards. Although I received these from other Muslims (friends, colleagues and relatives) and although I forwarded them to other Muslims I knew, it is of course entirely possible that such emails were also sent to non-Muslims. The responses to these emails come from young Muslim women in South East Asia and Australia. They were the initial responses to a research project in its infancy – the exploration of Muslim Internet usage in this part of the world. One post September 11th email that was circulated depicted the photos of various veiled Afghan women in a 'Taliban dating agency'. The names attributed to the women were typically 'Arabic' or 'Islamic' in nature. I think it was supposed to be funny. But it wasn't just insensitive jokes that abounded in cyberspace following September 11. The poignant thoughts of musician-turned-Muslim Yusuf Islam made the rounds not long after the attacks. Although starkly different in tone and intention to the 'Taliban dating agency' email, the forwarded article by Islam shared one similarity in that it mentioned the intersection of names and religions. Islam (2001) recalled how

"... sadly, the latest horror to hit the US looks to have

domain of open and unrestricted debate by all parties regardless of race, gender or class – the embodiment of a democratic marketplace of ideas.

Habermas, who placed public discourse within values popular during the Enlightenment period in the 18th century, elaborated upon such a marketplace. During this time, scholars believed humankind consisted of autonomous, mostly white, male beings that could shape nature and existence by virtue of their superior values of reason and logic (Gaynor 1996). Habermas stipulated that such discourse could exist in a public sphere where true democracy was conducted, provided certain conditions were met (such as freedom of expression and speech, and the lack of external coercion on participants). Rheingold (1997: 403) explains, "Habermas formalised what people in free societies mean when we (sic) say 'The public wouldn't stand for that' or 'it depends on public opinion'". Subsequent critiques of Habermas' ideas about the public sphere noted the lack of involvement by women and others disenfranchised in society.

The formation of such a 'public' (i.e. the collection of individuals motivated by the Enlightenment's insistence on the values of logic and reason) could be traced in part due to the rise of the print media alluded to by Benedict Anderson, who argued that the matrimony of print-capitalism (the term he used to denote the book publishing industries which expanded rapidly during the sixteenth century) and vested socio-, cultural and/or political interests (such as the Protestant and Catholic Churches) together gave rise to a new literate public (Anderson 1991: 46). McLuhan took this analogy a step further. Following the rise of the 'public' which was the consequence of the expansion of the print industries, we saw the emergence of a subsequent term to describe large audience-based groupings – the 'mass', the public's successor, which came about due to the rise of the broadcast media in the 20th century. But if, as McLuhan states, the print media can be associated with the 'public', and broadcast media with 'the mass', what relevant social identity can be used to describe us in the age of the Internet? "If the Web and other forms of Internet communication represent nascent forms of something yet to be fully defined, will they usher in a third form of humanity? What comes after the mass?" (Moulthrop 2000: 268).

The mass, and before it the public, were illustrative of Carey's transmission view of communication (Carey 1985: 16) that has dominated Western discussion on the media/audience relationship. In this view, the sender and receiver are two separate entities, and the information flow was viewed as one-way. But the Internet turns that theory on its head, for email and the World Wide Web (to name just two forms of the Net) mean the sender and the receiver can be one and the same. The Internet has the potential to level the playing field, by challenging the hegemony inherent in more traditional media forms such as print and television, and allowing the disenfranchised a medium through which to speak. On the net, there are not hundreds but thousands of different

'publics', all consisting of members who shared common fundamental values within, but not necessarily across the various spheres. Our construction of identity on the Internet is disparate, and incongruent, separated along fault lines of race, religion, gender, sexuality and class. So as Moulthrop asked, *what comes after the mass?* Whatever it is, we cannot assume that there will be a singular 'third form' of receivers-who-are-also-senders, but instead, third forms – not one social identity but several, not humanity but humanities. The heterogeneous nature of the audience and the hypertextuality of content in email and the World Wide Web illustrate how, as the penultimate postmodern media form (so far :p), the Internet provides the perfect foil to what Lyotard called 'metanarratives' – the linear, dominant Western paradigm through which culture and discourse are portrayed.

Of all the voices missing from older media's mainstream political and cultural discourse, one of the most conspicuous must be that of Muslims in general, and Muslim women in particular, who bear a double burden – the brunt of anti-Islamic feeling external to their communities, and the brunt of misguided, sexist cultural practices posing as religious aphorisms. Historically, the relationship between Islam and the West has been uneasy at best, and violent at worst – despite the Western emphasis on equality and freedom of association, speech and religious practices, and despite the Islamic teachings of respect and tolerance that must be accorded for followers of other religions provided they do not oppress or act against Muslims. The Islam/Western dichotomy has been played out on the battlefield (the Crusades, the Middle East wars), in economic terms (for example, sanctions) and in the public relations arena (through print, electronic and digital media). It is becoming problematic to pit one civilisation against another a la Huntington (1993), and Islam and the West may not be mutually exclusive terms for much longer (for example, significant numbers of Muslims now reside in diasporic communities based in Western countries, and the West is dependent on many Islamic based nations for supply of resources such as gas and oil). Nevertheless the Western portrayal of the Muslim world as a whole can be said to have been tainted with subtle and not-so-subtle prejudice and hatred which (not surprisingly) worsened following the September 11 attacks. The Western portrayal of the Muslim world is seen as ethnocentric, particularly with issues that are hotly contested among Muslims such as the role of women in Islamic society. The prevailing viewpoint among Muslims is that the West doesn't, and can't hope to, understand why, for example, the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet Muhamad appear to treat women differently.

Because many in the Muslim world distrust the output of Western cultural production industries which they view as being inherently anti-Islamic, they prefer to have their information needs fulfilled by narratives that speak to Muslims. Where the post-September-11 metanarrative posited Osama bin Laden as the mastermind of the attacks, the smaller narrative (smaller in terms of audience and impact) used

email to point the finger at either Israeli or US governments and/or their intelligence agencies, and portray bin Laden in a starkly contrasting manner:

"I know that Osama Binladin [sic] is a true Muslim with in-depth knowledge of the Qur'an and teachings of the Prophet and I would never suspect that he would do anything against the teachings of Islam and harm anyone who is a civilian, and [who] has not taken up arms against Islam or Muslims."

(Author Unknown (b), 2001)

It would have been rare indeed in the aftermath of the attacks to find any mainstream Western media painting bin Laden in such a positive light – or, in fact, any light at all other than that which portrayed him as a madman or a global threat. The fact that this email, in my case, was sent by a Muslim to me (I am a Muslim) and several other recipients (who were all also Muslims) is indicative of the peculiar nature of this form of communication. Despite having no fixed mass audience in the traditional sender-receiver context such messages were widely disseminated amongst a group of human beings whose beliefs and way of life lay on the fringes of mainstream Western culture (particularly with regards to Muslim women). This would appear to indicate that the Internet's role as champion of minority voices is being fulfilled to an extent. But even if previously marginalized voices such as those of the female Muslim populace can make themselves heard via the Internet, the question is to whom? Even if email does make it possible for Muslim net users to propose and disperse the idea that US or Israeli interests were behind the September 11 attacks, and not Osama bin Laden, who is listening?

So far we've concentrated on how Western philosophy has conceptualised the Internet – within frameworks such as that of the public sphere, and that of realising some of the ideals espoused by Lyotard when he spoke of alternative voices to challenge the 'metanarrative'. The parallel theme running within certain Islamic-specific analyses arising in response to the spread of Internet usage was to view the technology as a lost opportunity regained. In the sixteenth century Islam's religious scholars (the *ulama*) successfully banned the printing press from the Muslim empire for two hundred years, and "Arabs have been trying to close the gap ever since" (Dickey 2001). The *ulama's* reaction to the discovery of paper in the eighth century after the Christian era was to embrace it and understand how the invention of paper could be used to enhance the status and development of members of the far-flung Muslim empire – in short, as one means with which to fulfil the Qur'anic command to 'Read' (Qur'an 96:1) and Muhammad's advice to his followers that "seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim man and woman." Sardar (1993) recounts how the word that occurs the most number of times in the Qur'an (after *Allah* or God, and Rabb or Lord) is *ilm* which can roughly be described as 'knowledge', and that this idea (which encompassed not just knowledge, but the accumulation, preservation and dissemination of knowledge in the name of God) was the basis of Islamic civilisation. While Europe was in the Dark Ages the

Islamic empire championed the cause of learning – pioneering great strides in astronomy, physics, medicine, science, mathematics and philosophy. It seemed strange in the utmost then that subsequent Islamic leaders would prove so reactionary to the introduction of the printing press, unlike their European counterparts. There were two possible reasons: firstly the concern that widespread duplication of Islamic holy texts (which would've been made possible by printing equipment) might have left religious teachings open to wild misinterpretation by unqualified readers – a valid concern due to the "irrational and exploitative behaviour that was being justified on the basis of Qur'an and hadith" (Sardar 1993: 52). Secondly the *ulama* feared that having an educated Muslim public would undermine their authority. The effect of the ban on Islamic society was devastating – indirectly, it prevented the formation of a corresponding 'reading public' alluded to by Anderson that arose in Europe as a result of the spread of print capitalism.

The Internet is thus described as a chance for the Islamic world to regain some lost ground and that in some way it could be the tool for a digital reformation – not of the religion itself, but of the way its teachings are (mis)interpreted so that misogynistic and/or oppressive practices (such as forced marriage or female circumcision) conducted in its name are abolished. Dickey (2001) warns that if the reaction of some leaders in the Muslim world to the Internet is similar to the reaction of the 16th century *ulama* to the printing press, then they would "easily condemn the Arab world to the dark side of the digital divide." Mazrui and Mazrui (2001) pose the idea of the Internet doing for Muslims what the first industrial revolution did for Christian Europe: provide a means with which the populace could challenge dogmatic rulers and find out more about their own beliefs in order to return to a pure version of the faith – in this case, the Islam practised by the Prophet Muhammad that had as its foundations peace, basic human rights for both women and men, respect for your fellow human and most of all the search for *ilm* or knowledge. This process would facilitate a realisation of some of Islam's original aims such as enhancing the status of women.

One such method by which the Internet could be used to empower Muslim women is in the area of work. Because the Internet emphasises the de-physical (i.e. through permitting interaction to take place without two people physically present in the same spatial area) it could play a practical role in altering entrenched mindsets in patriarchal Muslim-majority societies regarding the role of female believers. Although Islam gave women the right to work and seek income, some societies, because of cultural practices or whatever, do not permit this on the basis that women ought to be protected and secluded. Interestingly, this argument was used by the Taliban to justify the temporary non-provision of female education – that the environment was unsafe for women, so therefore they could not work or go to school (in direct contrast to the policies regarding women that were practiced during Muhammad's time). But such an argument would carry no





**Partisans of freedom, sisters and brothers,**

When celebrating March 8th last year, RAWA expressed the fond hope that in the coming year, i.e. 2002, we will be celebrating International Women's Day inside a free and liberated Afghanistan. During the course of the past year the world community was shocked by events emanating from Afghanistan and contemporary history has been drastically changed by them. Many things have come to pass in Afghanistan – not the least of which is the fumigation of the Taliban pestilence and their al-Qaeda carriers – but it is with bitter disappointment that despite all these momentous changes our unhappy land is still far from enjoying freedom and liberty. The women of the world celebrate International Women's Day with spirit and enthusiasm; in Afghanistan women still don't feel safe enough to throw away their wretched burqa shrouds, let alone raise their voices in the thousands in support of freedom and democracy. There is still a wide chasm between us and the glorious future we have fixed our eyes, hearts and minds upon. It is as if Fate has decreed that this most pauperised nation on earth should not be able to throw the chains and shackles of despots and vampire fundamentalists away so easily.

porters inside Afghanistan and abroad:

**1. RAWA and the US military campaign against the Taliban and the Osama band**

RAWA has consistently emphasised the fact that the Taliban, Osama & Co. and other fundamentalist bands in Afghanistan are creatures of myopic US policy vis-à-vis the Afghan war of resistance against Soviet aggression. As long as such Frankenstein monsters were useful for the pursuance of US policies, successive US governments supported them and persistently turned a blind eye to the higher interests of the people of Afghanistan and to the consequences of such support for freedom and democracy in our country and the region. RAWA takes great pride in the fact that we persistently condemned this US policy and never caved in to pressure nor "circumspection", nor to the lure political or financial opportunism.

We look upon the American nation as a great people who have made immense contributions to human civilisation, social and scientific progress. It is the conscience of the people of the United States that is scourged first and foremost

by the slaughter of innocent Afghans in consequence of US bombardment in Afghanistan. Proof of this is amply shown in demonstrations against the war in Afghanistan in most American cities. RAWA has been inundated by thousands of emails from across the United States expressing sympathy with our people and condemning the US bombardments, which claim innocent victims. Visits to Afghanistan by groups of bereaved Americans who have lost dear ones in the September 11 tragedy to sympathise and commiserate with the victims of the bombardments is

a shining example of the humanism and love of peace typical of the people of the United States. Such gestures will never be forgotten by the people of Afghanistan. The tears of anguish of thousands of mourning Americans and grieving Afghans will give rise to a fountain of love and sincere bonding of the peoples of the two countries. We take greater pride in the fact that our organisation, ever marginalised and sidelined by successive US administrations and US government institutions, has enjoyed immense moral support and the unbounded material generosity of thousands of American men, women and children. The implementation of many of our diverse projects would not have been possible without such generous American aid. Our heartfelt gratitude to the American people is our response to allegations that "RAWA is anti-American".

We look upon the US military campaign in Afghanistan not as an aggression against Afghanistan or a war on the Afghan people, or as an aggression against Islam or the Muslims but

RAWA Statement  
**RAWA Statement**

**on international women's day, Mar.8, 2002\***  
<<http://rawa.org>>

**Let us struggle Against war and Fundamentalism and for Peace and Democracy!**

To give voice to such agonised musings is by no means an indication of despair or lack of faith in a better tomorrow. For over two decades, RAWA has intrepidly and steadfastly been treading a precipitous path of tears and blood. We know full well the perils and the dangers of the road ahead of us, and we will not for an instant falter in our resolve to continue to fight crazed religious fundamentalism and its patrons who stand in our way of reaching our goals of peace, democracy, progress and women's emancipation. And in the course of this travail we will succumb neither to misgivings nor to delusions.

Despite the fact that in the course of the months after the horrendous attack of religious fanatics on New York and Washington we have on several occasions set forth our views and stances on pertinent issues, we avail ourselves of the present opportunity to once again reiterate our principled positions on key issues. We hope that by so doing we will have responded to numerous queries posed by RAWA sup-

as a fracas between patron and ex-protégés. In contradistinction to some mealy-mouthed, colluding women's organisations, the total obliteration not only of the Taliban and their al-Qaeda props but also of the criminal Jihadis is a top RAWA political priority. The bloodshed and misery visited upon our innocent fundamentalism-scourged people - the euphemistically called "collateral damage" - in consequence of the US punishment meted out to its rebellious former agents cannot but incite our opposition to America's war in Afghanistan. We had many a time in the past proclaimed that a meaningful, decisive and timely UN injunction on all countries in regard to supplying funds and arms to the Taliban, coupled with a loud and clear call to all countries to support anti-fundamentalist and pro-democracy forces in Afghanistan were the means to contain the Taliban and the al-Qaeda and to shorten the life span of these vermin.

## 2. RAWA and the war on terrorism

One fundamentalist band cannot be fought by siding with and supporting another. In its war on the Taliban and the al-Qaeda, the US has taken the "Northern Alliance" into service through wooing and arming certain infamous warlords. By so doing, the US is in fact abetting the worst enemies of our people and is continuing the same tyrannical policy against the people and the destiny of Afghanistan which successive US administrations adopted during the past two decades. The Taliban and the al-Qaeda cannot be eradicated through military and financial might alone. War on the Taliban and the al-Qaeda is not only a war on the military and financial fronts, it is a war on the ideological front too. Until such time as mindsets and thoughts characteristic of the Taliban and Osama & Co. remain, it is inevitable that we shall witness their trademark barbarism erupt yet once again, be it in Afghanistan or in any other part of the world. The den of these evil criminals in Afghanistan is under siege. Democratic and anti-fundamentalist forces in Afghanistan need to fight the Taliban, the al-Qaeda and their fundamentalist brethren relentlessly and resolutely until total eradication of terrorism and fundamentalism in all its forms in our country. Only with the taking root of democracy in Afghanistan with the unreserved support of the international community can final victory over terrorism and fundamentalism be achieved.

## 3. The situation after the fall of the Taliban

The Bonn gathering on Afghanistan was convened with the aim of forming a transitional administration and deciding what needs to be done in the long term after the pulverisation of the Taliban and the al-Qaeda. With the exception of supporters of the former king, over three fourths of the participants of the gathering were comprised of ignominious representatives of the "Northern Alliance" and affiliates of the infamous terrorist organisation of Golbodin Hekmatyar. Therefore, despite the vociferous benedictions of the Western media, the Bonn gathering cannot be a harbinger of peace and democracy for our people. The parcelling out of key ministries amongst figures whose horrendous crimes still haunt our people and the worsening of the security situ-

ation in Kabul and in other provinces have borne out for the umpteenth time the veracity of our predictions based on the track record of the "Northern Alliance". The existence of one or two showpiece women in the transitional administration (one belonging to a party infamous for being a lackey of the Iranian regime and the other a former high-ranking member of a party which epitomises treachery to the motherland) is more an insult to Afghan women than a symbol of the restoration of their status and legal rights. The women of Afghanistan have not been liberated. This fact has been most succinctly summed up by the New York Times in its issue of November 19, 2001, when writing about an Afghan widow with eight children to feed: "Now, at least she is free to beg"!

RAWA has repeatedly and consistently asserted that under the prevailing circumstances no power except the Afghan people themselves can or will succour them against fundamentalism, and there is no precedent in history wherein a foreign nation or nations who have themselves been patrons and abettors of agents of bondage and fundamentalist affliction have granted liberty to a nation held in thrall by those



<http://rawa.org>

very same agents. It was for this reason that RAWA persistently called on our people to rise up against the Taliban, the al-Qaeda and other fundamentalists. Such was the precondition for averting the circumstances which have brought about US bombardment and the slaughter of innocent people, and for preventing any group of religious vampires from having a share in power in post-Taliban Afghanistan.

Mr. Karzai, who does not have the backing and support of any indigenous organisation or armed force, together with a number of his like-situated colleagues are hostages in the hands of "Northern Alliance" criminals. Mr. Karzai, not a fundamentalist himself, has a history of colluding and hobnobbing with Burhanuddin Rabbani and his band, and has therefore deluded himself into thinking that putting up with the criminals he has around him and honouring arch-warlords like Rabbani would bring him political dividends. Unfortunately he either does not know or does not want to

know that his key ministers are perpetrators of heinous crimes against our people – infamies which are manifold times more unpardonable and inexpiable than those of the Taliban. Mr. Karzai can rest assured that the Rabbani gang he has around him, having already had a taste of a number of years of power and government and unfettered drug trafficking and legendary hoarding of wealth under the cloak of diplomatic immunity, will never be content with the simple usurpation of key government posts. They will bide their time to once again seize undivided and uncontested power.

The revolting efforts by the Rabbani group to canonise their icon, Ahmad Shah Massoud, and their fervid political ululations under his portraits are all in preparation for conspiracies in the offing. The "gentlemen" of the Rabbani gang, ex-fundamentalists and reborn "democrats", have worn the collar of fealty to the ilk of Abdullah Ozzam and Osama bin Laden much more than the Taliban, and have fed much longer on the crumbs falling from their tables. With their ridiculous newly-acquired obsession with their "civilised" appearance and their aping of the latest European menswear fashions, they may succeed in masking their real political and ideological features and backgrounds from the eyes of superficial people particularly in the West, but they will never succeed in hiding their bloodstained sleeves from the eyes of our people. The recent falling upon each other of fundamentalist Jihadi predators in Paktia and Ningarhar provinces, the growling and snarling of Karim Khalili in the Hazarajat region, the thuggeries of Rashid Dostum and his gang of scoundrels in the north of Afghanistan, the most recent political whorings of Ismael Khan in the Herat area, and the intrigues of Rabbani and his murderous band in Badakhshan, etc. etc., all show the cloven hoof and are prodromal signs of more treacheries to come. With the establishment of peace and democracy and the beginning of the march towards development and progress, all these "gentlemen" will find themselves out of the sovereignty-through-infamy-and-religion-hustling business and will lie in wait to once again drench Kabul in blood and extend their rule over the country.

The murder of the aviation minister, Dr. Abdurrahman, is a not-too-subtle hint to the ex-King, Mr. Karzai, and his friends; it is a small glimpse of the intrigues and infamies the most depraved enemies of our people Mr. Karzai has around him are capable of in order to protect their criminal interests. Dr. Abdurrahman was done away with because his murderers did not trust him to keep the shameful secrets he knew about Ahmad Shah Massoud, Dr. Abdullah, General Fahim and other leaders of Jamiat-i-Islami. Any spilling of the beans by Dr Abdurrahman would have torn away the shreds that remain of the masks they continue to don and hope to fool everyone with.

Mr. Karzai: It may be that the Afghan people will forbear from naming you a second Shah Shuja or a second Babrak Karmal because you were placed in the position you are in exigency circumstances and as an alternative to murderers of the kind of Golbodin Hekmatyar, Sayyaf, Khalili and their ilk; but they

will not forgive the indefinite continuation of your spineless leniency, or your concurrence with Jihadi cutthroats – a concurrence that will ultimately stand you in no good stead. The litmus test of your – or any other Afghan leader's – worth, competence and honesty is your political conduct towards fundamentalists and their foreign masters, and your fidelity to the principles of democracy.

There are some who raise the issue of the need for national reconciliation in Afghanistan and cite the pardon of the Nazis in Germany and in other countries by way of an example. If such allegorisation is not a product of ignorance in regard to the nature and track record of Afghan fundamentalists, it can have no other meaning short of requesting Afghans to be jubilant and festive at the funeral of their most beloved ones. How can the Afghan nation be expected to pardon and reconcile themselves with bands and individuals who from 1992 to 1996 perpetrated such heinous atrocities and treacheries, and brought about so much devastation? To boot: not only do these "gentlemen" not show the slightest compunction in regard to their past, they recline in their ministerial and ambassadorial portfolios with unspeakable haughtiness and disdain for the people they have wronged so much. To take up the Nazi simile: firstly, there may be no Nazi of leadership caliber who has not received or been sentenced to capital punishment; secondly - and more importantly - second rank Nazis who were not killed or brought to justice were not given the reins of government and the destinies of the people neither in Germany nor in any other country of the world. Would that the world community know that the atrocities perpetrated by Afghan fundamentalists are not paralleled either by the Nazis or Fascists or any other inhuman political entity; even the Afghan fundamentalists' Algerian brethren-in-creed who think nothing of cutting the throats of newborn babies would shrink from raping their compatriot mothers, sisters and sons, a favourite practice of the "Northern Alliance" predators who first rape their victims before killing them and plundering their belongings. There can be no reconciliation with such depraved criminals, especially as long as they are in a dominant position. Until such time as such criminals are brought to justice, the trial of lesser criminals by international tribunals at The Hague or elsewhere on charges of war crimes or crimes against humanity are at best defective, biased and travesties of justice. Serbian and non-Serbian criminals are innocent children when compared with their Afghan confreres. If deployment of troops and military action against the Taliban and the al-Qaeda is a just cause, prosecuting the bone-chilling crimes of the "Northern Alliance" is the sine qua non for peace, democracy and justice in Afghanistan.

There are some who ask, "Why can't RAWA finally approve of any government in Afghanistan?" The answer is simple: because we do not deem any present or past political force coming to power as democratic and believing in the inalienable rights of women. We can have no understanding with hellhounds who have the brand of years of atrocious criminality against the people on their features.

#### 4. The establishment of peace

In conditions when – even with the presence of several thousand foreign troops in Kabul – the capital cannot be deemed a safe and secure place, there is no alternative to the deployment of an effective UN security force across the country to ensure secure conditions for the convocation of a Loya Jirga and, more importantly, countrywide suffrage. Despite all the criticism that is being levied against the UN modus operandi, RAWA much prefers the presence of UN troop to the unleashing of Jihadi psychopaths on the Afghan population. Such UN troops should not, however, comprise troops from countries who have hitherto aided and abetted fundamentalists and brutal warlords, e.g. Turkey, which has been a prime supporter of the criminal Dostum.

#### 5. Neighboring countries

It seems that the Iranian regime, after years of cuddling Golbodin Hekmatyar and setting up the "Cyprus process" for the furtherance of his interests, is now divorcing him. Such a break-up, however, can fool no one. The sole aim of the blood-drenched Iranian regime from this Split-Up-With-Golbodin show is a smokescreen to hide its dangerous, deceitful maneuvers to prevent – through strengthening and supporting its trusted lackeys, Ismael Khan and Karim Khalili – the reunification of Afghanistan. With the collapse of their Taliban cousins-in-creed, the Vilayat-e-Faqih regime in Iran shook to its foundations, and in order to keep the waters muddy in Afghanistan, did not desist from granting safe haven to Taliban and al-Qaeda escapees to Iran.

If it is a dire misfortune for our ill-fated country to have as bloodthirsty a regime as the Iranian one incumbent in our neighbouring country to the west, it has the double misfortune to have incumbent to the east – a neighbour with which we share a border stretching for hundreds of miles from the northeast to the southwest – Pakistani regimes that during the past 23 years have based their Afghan policies on blueprints in which leaders, intelligence services and Islamic fundamentalist parties have worked hand in glove to create, nurture and train criminal Jihadi and subsequently Taliban bands and unleash them on the people of Afghanistan. The current Pakistani government has taken steps to muzzle terrorist Pakistani fundamentalist parties, but as stated in a RAWA declaration, such steps cannot be adequate to secure the trust of the Afghan people unless 1) hundreds of assassination, abduction, extortion, torture, and other criminal cases against leaders and key members of terrorist Jihadi organisations, including first and foremost Golbodin Hekmatyar's criminal band – created in response to suits brought up by families of the victims – have been processed and justice meted out; and, 2) leaders and members of the Jamiat-e-Khoddam al-Furqan (Association of the Servants of the Quran) including Mullah Abdul Hakim Mujahed, who are none but a re-cast Taliban band, are arrested, tried and punished.

Likewise, the governments of Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan can gain the trust and goodwill of the Afghan people only by releasing documents pertaining to the assis-

tance they have given over the years to the "Northern Alliance" terrorists and pledging to desist from any form of further support to their erstwhile protégés.

#### 6. Afghan reconstruction

The pouring in of billions of dollars into a country where the fundamentalist mafia are still in power can little benefit the Afghan people. Under the circumstances, the only result from the flow of money will be the filling of the coffers of the religious Cosa Nostra and consequently funding their terrorist agendas inside and outside Afghanistan. In a country like Afghanistan where there is no trace of a legal infrastructure or even a quasi-democratic government, most social and economic issues must be addressed as political issues. The satisfactory management of social and economic problems in Afghanistan and their resolution in the interests of the people of Afghanistan depend first and foremost on the formation of a democratic Afghan government. We draw the serious attention of all countries interested in contributing to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan to the point we have highlighted above.

#### 7. Loya Jirga (Grand Council)

RAWA does not consider a Loya Jirga a democratic institution compatible with the exigencies of national political life in the contemporary world. However, we believe that under the current circumstances in which the shadow of the fundamentalists' beards and bayonets fall tall and ominous on the land, the anachronistic Loya Jirga can still play a positive national historical role. We have our strong reservations, though, in that none of the 21-member Preparatory Committee for the Convocation of the Loya Jirga has any background of struggle against Jihadi criminals, and some of them have records of spineless silence and compromise vis-à-vis the Taliban. With such a preparation committee, the nature and competence of the Loya Jirga come into question. It is "amusing" to note that one of the women members of the above mentioned committee, in addition to being a former member of the Parcham faction of the disgraced PDPA (Soviet quisling party), was brought into the limelight by the international media simultaneously with the entry of the Rabbani band into Kabul. Who does she represent?

As is evident, Mr. Lakhdar Barahimi's indigenous advisors have unfortunately, in the matter of selecting members of the Preparatory Committee for the Convocation of the Loya Jirga, advised him in a direction contrary to the aspirations of the Afghan people. Mr. Barahimi needs to know that should the stench of fundamentalist composition rise from the Loya Jirga – as it does from the Transitional Administration – the UN and the UN only will be held responsible for the renewed Afghan tragedy, as no one will ascribe the blame to his indigenous advisers. Selection of players for any role or function in any institution solely on the basis of their religious or ethnic affiliation is highly inadequate and totally misguided. The crucial issue needs to be freedom from fundamentalist contamination for representatives of each and every religious or ethnic denomination. Otherwise, it is highly likely

that the composition of the Loya Jirga will comprise representatives from all tribal, ethnic and religious groups in Afghanistan, but most or all of them will be carriers of the fundamentalist contagion. The outcome is in need of no elaboration.

One of the women members of the Transitional Administration, who deceitfully denies belonging to the leadership of an ethno-chauvinistic fundamentalist party, has rightfully admitted that she does not represent the people of Afghanistan. Not to be representative of a people for having lived away from them for long periods of time is not crucial; what is crucial is to have a mindset free of fundamentalist filth which would allow one to stand steadfast in the patriotic, democratic, progressive front in the sanguinary ideological war against Jihadi and Taliban treachery. If the Loya Jirga is not made into such a front, it will merely be a vile instrument for adoption of decisions along fundamentalist and anti-democratic lines.

### 8. The constitution

The 1964 Afghan Constitution can, with the following amendments, be acceptable to the majority of the people of Afghanistan (except the fundamentalists):

- >Expunction of references to official religion and schismatic religious branch. Constitutions of many Islamic countries have no such references. Why should the Constitution of Afghanistan be void of such a democratic characteristic? Why, through recognising one religion and one religious branch, should adherents of other religions or religious branches be marginalised? In order to forge the Constitution itself into a formidable barrier against the emergence of fundamentalism and religious strife, it must be stipulated that use of religion for furtherance of political objectives is strictly prohibited and prosecutable by law.
- >Secularism and separation of religion from politics and the State: RAWA has repeatedly asserted that the only way for preventing our nation from being blighted by fundamentalism or any other pestilence in the garb of religion, whether now or in the future, is separation of religion from politics and the State. The inclusion of this explicit provision in the Constitutions of other Islamic countries has not been deemed alien or anti-Islamic. There is no reason why the Constitution of Afghanistan should be void of such a central democratic tenet. Those who consider calls for secularism as an "anti-religious penchant" do so, if not out of sheer ignorance, in order to wittingly or unwittingly serve fundamentalist interests.
- >Establishment of a constant allotment of seats for women deputies in any future parliament.
- > Abrogation of torture and execution under whatever name or excuse.

RAWA will present its more elaborate proposals at a future opportunity.

### 9. The future Afghan state

In view of the composition of the Transitional Administration, RAWA does not deem it fit and competent to perform on the basis of democratic principles. Even if Mr. Karzai and a select few of his team sincerely pledge their faith in democracy and their adherence to its tenets, they are enmeshed and paralysed in the tentacles of the avowed enemies of democracy who have them encircled.

RAWA calls for a future Afghan State which will be based on the following principles:

- >Unqualified adherence to the principles and criteria of democracy and its major tenet, secularism
- >Strict prohibition of all forms of decrees, fatwas, etc. in regard to women and what they should wear, etc. (Isn't ten long years of suppression and waging of a savage and vile war on women enough?)
- >Total and absolute abrogation of political police organisations or other institutions of civil espionage, torture or harassment, be it of the type of the Parchami, Khalqi, Jihadi or Taliban regimes, or in any other form. (A museum of shame should be established to record the totality of the infamies perpetrated by these successive regimes.)
- >Prosecution of all individuals who, during the past 23 years have committed high treason, war crimes, blatant violations of human rights and plunder of national assets.
- >Abolishment and proscription of all religious madrassas and other terrorist dens where Jihadi and Taliban mindsets are promoted and trained.
- >Investigation and extraction of hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of funds embezzled and misappropriated by Jihadi and Taliban thieves from public coffers or from international financial assistance funds. (Such investigation and extraction should include the \$10,000,000 given by the then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Sebghatullah Mojadedi, the first Jihadi "President" of Afghanistan. This sum is inconsequential when compared with misappropriations of hundreds of millions of dollars by other Jihadi leaders, but fortunately it is well documented.)
- >Debarment of higher-echelon individuals of Jihadi and Taliban parties from hold high public office. Likewise, debarment of intellectuals who, whether inside or inside Afghanistan, shamelessly put their talents, pens and voices at the service of Jihadi and Taliban criminals. The extradition of such Taliban and "Northern Alliance" ideologues should be requested from US, Canadian, European and Australian authorities, and authorities of all other countries of refuge of such elements. Legal proceedings should be initiated against such individuals for their venal servitude to Jihadi and Taliban scoundrels.



The following list offers only an abbreviated glimpse of the hellish lives Afghan women are forced to lead under the Taliban, and can not begin to reflect the depth of female deprivations and sufferings. Taliban treat women worse than they treat animals. In fact, even as Taliban declare the keeping of caged birds and animals illegal, they imprison Afghan women within the four walls of their own houses. Women have no importance in Taliban eyes unless they are occupied producing children, satisfying male sexual needs or attending to the drudgery of daily housework. Jehadi fundamentalists such as Gulbaddin, Rabbani, Masood, Sayyaf, Khalili, Akbari, Mazari and their co-criminal Dostum have committed the most treacherous and filthy crimes against Afghan women. And as more areas come under Taliban control, even if the number of rapes and murders perpetrated against women falls, Taliban restrictions – comparable to those from the middle ages – will continue to kill the spirit of our people while depriving them of a humane existence. We consider Taliban more treacherous and ignorant than Jihadis. According to our people, "Jihadis were killing us with guns and swords but Taliban are killing us with cotton."

**6-** Requirement that women wear a long veil (Burqa), which covers them from head to toe.

**7-** Whipping, beating and verbal abuse of women not clothed in accordance with Taliban rules, or of women unaccompanied by a mahram.

**8-** Whipping of women in public for having non-covered ankles.

**9-** Public stoning of women accused of having sex outside marriage. (A number of lovers are stoned to death under this rule).

**10-** Ban on the use of cosmetics. (Many women with painted nails have had fingers cut off).

**11-** Ban on women talking or shaking hands with non-mahram males.

**12-** Ban on women laughing loudly. (No stranger should hear a woman's voice).

**13-** Ban on women wearing high heel shoes, which would produce sound while walking. (A man must not hear a woman's footsteps.)

**14-** Ban on women riding in a taxi without a mahram.

**15-** Ban on women's presence in radio, television or public gatherings of any kind.

**16-** Ban on women playing sports or entering a sport center or club.

**17-** Ban on women riding bicycles or motorcycles, even with their mahrams.

**18-** Ban on women's wearing brightly colored clothes. In Taliban terms, these are "sexually attracting colors."

**19-** Ban on women gathering for festive occasions such as the Eids, or for any recreational purpose.

## Some of the restrictions imposed by Taliban on women in Afghanistan

**Taliban restrictions and mistreatment of women include the:**

**1-** Complete ban on women's work outside the home, which also applies to female teachers, engineers and most professionals. Only a few female doctors and nurses are allowed to work in some hospitals in Kabul.

**2-** Complete ban on women's activity outside the home unless accompanied by a mahram (close male relative such as a father, brother or husband).

**3-** Ban on women dealing with male shopkeepers.

**4-** Ban on women being treated by male doctors.

**5-** Ban on women studying at schools, universities or any other educational institution. (Taliban have converted girls' schools into religious seminaries.)







obn's  
principle  
of  
disagree-  
ment

**before obn**

When the Old Boys Network was founded in 1997, the term Cyberfeminism was not new. It already had a short history (since 1991)<sup>1</sup>; however, beyond some speculative assertions about the intimate and subversive relation between women and machines, the meaning was still pretty vague. Despite my initial dislike of the term – I considered it to be nothing less than wannabe cyber-hype, or a bad joke – I started to realize its actual potential. One advantage was that it was not already attached to associations and another is the effect that the fusion of two apparently contradictory terms has. It worked. Suddenly, I found the new word attractive. It was not just weird, but also promising. Perhaps the best quality of the term was that it was irritating, and thus lit up a glimmer of hope for feminism(s) to find a way out of the doldrums – with the help of technology.

Unfortunately, Cyberfeminism did not have much to offer toward making that hope for renewal into reality – at least yet. Anyway, I finally found Cyberfeminism to be a good joke, and started to develop a vision—the idea that it might be possible to let something arise and evolve into new perspectives

read, you cannot understand, but that you just do yourself brought back agency to many women who had felt they had arrived at a dead end. Furthermore, my new comrades-in-arms – other artists, scientists, and activists – were ready to develop their individual Cyberfeminist visions, to open up a new discussion, and to form a context which would make all this happen. If Cyberfeminism was not there before, certainly from now on nobody would be able to prevent it from happening.

**his-her-my(s)tory**

Although the following text may partly sound like an objective history, that is not what it intends to be. It is my personal perspective on some aspects of OBN. The motivation for writing this is to get a better understanding for myself of what has happened over the last five years, but also to communicate my thoughts to the network, and everyone who is interested. Hopefully others will add their own pieces in order to create a more true and complete image.

Since OBN was founded it has gone through various phases of euphoria and depression, new departures and stagnation,

success and failure, hope and disappointment, love and hate. After a very playful first international conference in 1997 at Kassel, which was a promising starting point, a long period of consolidation followed. 37 women from 12 different countries gathered for the first time under the umbrella of the at that time in Europe almost unknown term, Cyberfeminism. It was exciting

to feel the opportunity for creating a new 'feminism'. At the same time, due to the cultural, political and personal differences of the participants, it was impossible to find a common ground. Our open stage had resulted in the clash between at least two generations and between eastern and western feminist traditions. The conflict extended to sophisticated theory versus expressive art, and the the need for political action versus the desire for fun. The various strategies presented ranged from education to providing alternative role models, and from irony to refusal and everything in-between. What we had in common – beside our language problems – was that we were all (biologically seen) women. (OBN would later distinguish between sex and gender, and open the network to biological men.) Furthermore, each of us had an explicit matter of concern: feminism was our common either negative or positive reference point and our motivation for searching for a new potential in Cyberfeminism. From that day on, one of the basic disagreements was what role feminism should play in Cyberfeminism... The little prefix 'cyber' however never caused such controversies, although it involved it's own problematic. Still, we were sure we would start a new era, and that our lack of a common reference would not just allow but even require a new approach to politics.

The outcome of the first conference was the multi-lingual

Cornelia Sollfrank

# The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism

just by proclaiming a new feminism. I consider it to be a legitimate artistic strategy to claim the existence of something which does not exist, and to promote it through all possible channels in order to create real life effects about the asserted phenomenon<sup>2</sup>. The promise of a new feminism under 'net.condition' would raise attention, create interest, and hopefully mobilize energy and activity. It was in question whether it would work at all, but it was worth the try even if it put me to some trouble.

One important requirement for the relaunch of Cyberfeminism was to create a special context explicitly dedicated to Cyberfeminism. Only a group, a large number of people, that is to say, a network would be able to create a relevant discourse. Thereafter the Old Boys Network almost evolved by itself. Our mission statement was: "OBN is dedicated to appropriating, creating, and disseminating Cyberfeminism. Our concern is to build real and virtual spaces in which Cyberfeminists can research, experiment, and act. These activities aim to provide a contextualized presence for different, interdisciplinary and even contradictory approaches to Cyberfeminism."<sup>3</sup> The idea of taking the term Cyberfeminism and filling it with one's own vision instead of complaining about what predecessors had done wrong, was central. Cyberfeminism as something you cannot learn, you cannot

'100 anti-theses', a manifesto that defined what Cyberfeminism is not. Although playing with the attitude of refusal, with language, and the mixing of everyday life, art and politics in an ironic way is not a common way of expressing political goals, the gesture of anti-definition to which all participants had agreed goes back to a strong artistic tradition: "... the parody of standard self-declaration rhetoric characteristic for manifestos"<sup>4</sup>, i.e. in Dadaism, thus smoothing OBN's way into art history.<sup>5</sup> Thanks to the manifesto, OBN has officially been defined as part of the artistic avantgarde.

I would consider this as success, not just because it was our first successful hack in(to) the art system, but also because one motivation to participate in the Hybrid Workspace of documenta x as unpaid content providers had been to use the popularity of the exhibition and conference to introduce the term Cyberfeminism to a huge audience and to promote OBN as a context which enables a wide range of Cyberfeminisms. Furthermore, I realized the impact that the Kassel conference had had through the numerous invitations<sup>6</sup> that I and OBN received for lectures and presentations afterwards. Personal invitations gave me the opportunity to develop my approach to Cyberfeminism further<sup>7</sup> and to invite more people to join the network. But invitations addressed to OBN caused a problem: Who should present/represent OBN? Although it had not been that clearly defined at that time – 1998, the idea was already there for keeping the network open for highly diverse approaches, and developing innovative ideas through difference, a principle we later called OBN's 'politics of dissent'. So, it was necessary to develop a structure for presentations which would reflect exactly this idea. But who would develop it? Who was 'we' at that time?

As I mentioned before, after the Kassel conference there was a long period of consolidation. New personal relations had been established, and as in almost all other contexts sympathy and antipathy were important factors in deciding upon further cooperative efforts. As OBN did not have its own infrastructure yet, most communication in the following one and a half years was either private, or via postings on the 'faces'-list<sup>8</sup>. However, the discussion about further proceedings required an intensive exchange that was hard to achieve just through e-mail. So, something like a 'core-group' formed itself, a number of people who were interested in developing OBN further and who took responsibility for its structure and content. It consisted of a number of people who had the chance to meet regularly and talk to each other, in addition to writing e-mails. The core-group members were Susanne Ackers, Helene von Oldenburg, Claudia Reiche, Verena Kuni, Yvonne Volkart, Faith Wilding and myself. This was the first time that OBN attached names to the abstract label. We thought that this would make it easier for interested people to access the network, and also to intensify the commitment and responsibility for OBN. This was partly the case, but it also had the strong side effect that it demystified OBN. The aura of the abstract label collapsed into a particular group of people.

The predominance of Germans in the core-group cannot be

overlooked, since respectively all members were German speakers. This was certainly not a programmatic choice but the result of the dynamics of work. Physical closeness<sup>9</sup> as well as speaking the same language simply made it easier to continue working together. The fact that the first conference had taken place in Germany certainly also contributed to the high concentration of Germans. Within the net.culture where English is the pre-dominant language per se and 'internationality' tends to be equated with being at least 50% anglo-us-american, this definitely was something noticeable.

It certainly was also the reason why OBN's claim for 'internationality'<sup>10</sup> was questioned, and why we were labeled as a 'German group'. But in fact, the very existence of the core-group and its character seems to have had other counter-productive aspects. It conveyed the idea of OBN being a closed group rather than an open network, and unfortunately made many people not feel welcome to participate. Due to a missing communication infrastructure and a lack of communication techniques this critique never reached us directly, but was spread as a kind of rumour: OBN, 'the international cyberfeminist network', was revealed to be a German artists' group in fact.

During that phase OBN started to experiment with possible settings for presentations. The basic idea was not to have one or several representatives of the network, who would explain what Cyberfeminism is and speak for the network, but instead to find a way which would allow various, even contradictory approaches to be presented next to each other. This structure would help to produce and disseminate different perceptions of Cyberfeminism and OBN through the possibilities for rotating speakers within the same presentation. One prerequisite for this format was defined as the minimum use of at least three speakers with different perspectives. The 'principle of disagreement' one of OBN's declared nine rules<sup>11</sup> functioned as a foundation for these formal choices. The experiment did not merely meet with approval, it also caused a lot of frustration, protest and disappointment. The presentations seemed unable to answer the most pressing questions, such as 'What is Cyberfeminism?', 'What are the political goals of OBN?', 'What does a new Feminism look like?'. Instead, a range of possible, individual answers was offered which seemed to confuse most of the audience. The actual message transported through this format was also probably one of our most important communications – that we rejected the desire for clear and simple answers. That implicit message was obviously difficult to decipher.

However, our presentations did not just cause trouble for the audience but also for OBN itself, because in our euphoria for disagreement and dissent, we had overseen one crucial point: the concept required 100% agreement on the format. Every speaker had to play strictly by the rules. In situations where this was not the case the whole concept failed. That result clearly shows that the format had been too inflexible and did not offer enough space for spontaneous expression.

Another problem was that just juxtaposing contradictory content does not necessarily result in a productive discussion. The need to develop discursive tools and to implement a place and time for public discussions among each other was realized very late, probably because we had thought that the intensity of our internal debates automatically transported itself to the public through whatever mysterious channels. Today I would say that the discrepancy between our lively internal discussion and what OBN offered to the public was the main reason for the many misinterpretations and insinuations OBN had to face later.

One exception, however, to the poor public relations activities of OBN was the publication of the printed reader 'First Cyberfeminist International' which happened one and a half years after the conference. It offered a collection of all material presented at the first conference and transported the idea of Cyberfeminist networking to a broader public. Putting the material together and making it available in print was an important next step toward creating a sense of community after the conference, and so helped to raise the desire for the subsequent meeting of larger group in the flesh. On the basis of an invitation from Corrine Petrus, the founder of the Dutch webgrrls, Rotterdam (NL) was chosen as the place for this undertaking. Unlike the first conference, the 'next Cyberfeminist International' in 1999 was no longer an open stage where anybody could present her cyberfeminist visions. Rather, three different theme-days were conceived and created by three respective teams: "Hacking as method and metaphor", "Split bodies and fluid gender: the cutting edge of information technology – (between scientific and artistic visions)", and "Feminist Activism/Resistance/Intervention/Globalism"<sup>12</sup>. The procedure of putting the program together and selecting speakers was a mix of sending out an open call and of own search for contributors. The selection process aimed to circumscribe the field of cyberfeminism and to intensify a discussion around the chosen themes. The date for the second conference had been set with regard to the next5minutes conference for tactical media in Amsterdam<sup>13</sup> that directly followed, and where OBN had been asked to organize a panel and to report on the preceding conference.

I would like to describe this panel in a bit more detail, because it is a good example of the way OBN has worked. It was obvious that two or three people could not represent what happened in Rotterdam. Therefore, the first question was, who would sit on the stage? We offered the stage to anyone interested who had participated in our conference, and ended up with 13 women. Additionally, there was a strong desire to include the audience as much as possible and not just do one-way communication. The format we had chose to organize the situation was that every five minutes a mechanical voice would announce 'next five minutes' via loudspeaker. At the moment when the announcement was made, the person who currently had the microphone and was speaking had to stop talking and hand the mike over to another person. At a very early stage the audience became active, made comments and asked questions, but they were

interrupted in the same way. In the context of 'next5minutes', which consisted primarily of politically motivated and activist people, our 'performance' caused some irritation, and one accusation which was expressed several times was that we obviously suffered from a lack of 'content', and that we were completely unpolitical. Similar to the '100-Anti-Theses' our presentational setting could simply be read as a gesture of refusal, but the idea behind it was to play with the situation as such, and to reflect (hierarchical) structures within which 'content' is usually produced, processed, mediated, and presented at conferences. The perception of our 'performance' in the given case generally raises the question of the problematic crossover between art and politics that has always been an important issue for OBN.

The second reader was published after the conference, and, despite the problems of world-wide distribution, was sold out after a few months. But without our own mailinglist, and considering the unsufficiently maintained website, we were still suffering from a deficit in communication infrastructure. That certainly was one reason for our high motivation and incentive for organizing meetings in the flesh.

In the meantime, OBN had produced a video<sup>14</sup>. The idea was to have a product which would disseminate OBN's Cyberfeminisms without necessitating the presence of at least three old boys as it was the case with the presentations. The concept of the video reflected the presentational setting and offered 90 seconds for each individual contribution. These were put next to each other, and framed by general information about OBN. The medium of video added a new dimension to the preceding printed documentations which had mainly been based on text.

Finally, we had set up our own (archived) mailing list in the year 2000, the <oldboys-list><sup>15</sup> and started to develop a new concept for the website that included all content created thus far in our context and what would easily allow and foster contributions from the user. I considered these two steps as fundamentally important for the realization of the idea of networking.

After the core-group had abolished itself in early 2001, and the structure of OBN had been shifted to project groups<sup>16</sup> it was four old boys who had committed themselves to realizing the next conference: Verena Kuni, Claudia Reiche, Helene von Oldenburg and myself formed the 'conference group'. Three of us were based in Hamburg, Germany, so we had obvious reasons for choosing Hamburg as site for the 'very Cyberfeminist International'. The conference took place in December 2002, and with its more than 60 active participants was the biggest Cyberfeminist conference so far. It consisted of three parts, and included many new and controversial Cyberfeminist visions.<sup>17</sup> The main section was titled 'new border concepts' and contained twelve presentations, ranging from feminist indy media work and cyberfeminist hardware tactics, theories about feminist/cyberfeminist collaborations and bio-media ethics to 'the female seat

in the mexican underground network'. An extra session which had been added after September 11 was titled 'New border of terror', and was dedicated to discussing the relation between current world politics (the war in Afghanistan) and the role of women.

An additional smaller section was titled 'networking-knot working-not working?', and was dedicated to the discussion about OBN – mainly it's current status and possible future. For me this section was an important motivation for organizing the conference. I wanted to communicate that OBN could no longer exist through the work of a small group that provides organisational service. Rather, further involvement and commitment was necessary not just in regard to content, but also for shaping and maintaining infrastructure. Otherwise, there would be no future for OBN.

It has always been an unanswered question who exactly is part of the Old Boys Network and who is not. During all the differently structured phases of OBN – i.e. with the clearly defined core-group or later with the project groups – we always imagined a bigger, vaguely shaped network that we were part of. The numbers about the size of OBN vary according to different models of 'membership'. One agreement had been to count everyone who had actively contributed to one of our conferences or readers as a node in the network. Another, but similar one, was to simply to count all the subscribers to the mailing list. As always, the result depends on the standpoint and the membership criteria of the one who is counting. However, OBN certainly never saw itself as a 'German group'. To the contrary, openness and internationality always have been major concerns, although we were not always successful in communicating that.

The discussion in Hamburg brought about surprising results: Women who regularly had contributed to OBN declared themselves not to be part of OBN, while others who hardly had appeared before declared a strong relationship to OBN. Even among the usual suspects there seemed to be confusion about their status, at least in regard to future perspectives. What the discussion also revealed was that OBN clearly is perceived as a group, not as a network, and the group that formed OBN at that moment was more or less congruent with the organizers of the conference. For me this was the most surprising finding. All active OBN members had worked over almost five years to build a context, an infrastructure, and various platforms on which all Cyberfeminists could present themselves, their work and their visions. The intention behind these efforts was not to function as free service providers, but to create a discourse, a network, a common future, and also to share responsibilities. I think we have expressed several times that our 'activity principle' means that everybody who is interested in shaping the organisation is welcome to join in and contribute. The only way to do so is to become active, frankly express critique, make suggestions for improvement, and do the necessary work. But hardly anybody expressed any desire to do so. For a certain period I think it as an absolutely legitimate prac-

tice and strategy to incorporate people one considers valuable contributors to the topic, be they well-known or newbe Cyberfeminists, experienced networkers or activists, by getting in touch and making an offer to participate. Incorporation can function as a kind of invitation at an early stage of an organisation. But why incorporate people who stay passive after an invitation or who even express their disinterest? I am pretty sure that many would miss OBN if it would die, so I am thinking of reasons why there is so much restraint in coming to its defense. There are certainly many pragmatic reasons like communication problems over long distances and across language barriers; there might be ideological reasons why people think that too much openness and the politics of dissent do not really allow effective political practice. However, I think the most weighty reason is that OBN has been attached for too long to certain names. It has become these names, and it is in the nature of things that within the economy of networking, energetic and active people prefer to work under their own label. That also explains the separatist atmosphere I have experienced at the 'very Cyberfeminist International'. To be quite frank, it took me a while before I understood what was going on. It doesn't make me enthusiastic, but I can accept this as a logical development, especially because I know that OBN has contributed a lot to the current spread of Cyberfeminism. It provided the initial impulses for many smaller groups which today work under the label Cyberfeminism. Still, the lack of openness to the discussion of urgent political and structural matters at the conference left me feeling helpless. Where, if not at our own events, and how, if not face-to-face? To make controversial ideas productive, they first have to be expressed. Why not make use of the opportunity?

At this point I would like to summarize some of the most important points. I have a lot of critique for OBN – that also means self-critique – but not only that. Looking at our presentation and general communication formats, I would say that stringent formalism suppressed a lot of spontaneous activity. Although it was a good departure point earlier in our development, I think there has been a desperate need for developing our formats further and for finding ways to select and relate different contents to each other. This would have allowed smaller sections/alliances to form within the network that were involved with particular concerns or that followed particular strategies. Due to a lack of such tools – and of courage and commitment – the wide range of contents from various disciplines created by and in the context of OBN could hardly be made productive.

Furthermore, I have the impression that beyond all theoretical benefits of the 'politics of dissent', this concept was also perfect for avoiding open confrontations and it has been abused as such. To live and to let live, to stay in safety and to prevent starting an argument are approaches that can't, of course, create new insights that tend to evolve exactly at points of friction. Although I still consider the discussion about structure to be highly relevant, there has to be something else. To analyze and compare personal motivations,





<sup>1</sup>To read more about its history see 'The Truth about Cyberfeminism', Cornelia Sollfrank

<sup>2</sup>Sadie Plant and VNS Matrix: thank you for the term, but I am afraid I have to neglect your content at this point. I am sure you understand and agree

<sup>3</sup>Mission statement of Old Boys Network

<sup>4</sup>Verena Kuni, Some Thoughts On The New Economy of Networking'

<sup>5</sup>Das XX. Jahrhundert - Ein Jahrhundert Kunst in Deutschland, Die Lesbarkeit der Kunst', Bernd Evers, Andrea Domesle, Ruth Langenberg, Dieter Scholz; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kunstbibliothek; Verlag Nicolai

<sup>6</sup>[http://www.obn.org/calendar/fs\\_calender.html](http://www.obn.org/calendar/fs_calender.html)

<sup>7</sup>The Truth about Cyberfeminism', 'How to become a Cyberfeminist - Basic Instructions', both texts to find at: [http://www.obn.org/reading\\_room/fs\\_read.html](http://www.obn.org/reading_room/fs_read.html)

<sup>8</sup>faces'-mailing list for women in new media, established 1997 by Kathy Rae Huffman and Diana McCarthy; <http://faces.vis-med.ac.at>

<sup>9</sup>In this phase Faith Wilding was the only one living in the US, and speaking German as a second language which certainly took her more effort to contribute than the others.

<sup>10</sup>I never was sure how many 'nationalities' have to be involved in order to call something international, and what that really means...

<sup>11</sup>The Mode is the Message - The Code is the Collective! What is the regulating structure of OBN? What are the special operational conditions which make this transitory group work the way it does? We shall try to answer these questions through a critical reflection on our rules, discussion-habits, decision-making processes and work in general: <http://www.obn.org/history>

<sup>12</sup>for documentation please have a look at [www.obn.org](http://www.obn.org) (obn projects)

<sup>13</sup><http://www.n5m.org>

<sup>14</sup>Processing Cyberfeminism', OBN & Janine Sack, 1999, 15min (see also [http://www.obn.org/obn\\_pro/fs\\_obn\\_pro.html](http://www.obn.org/obn_pro/fs_obn_pro.html))

<sup>15</sup>further information on

<oldboys mailing list>: [http://www.obn.org/list/fs\\_list.html](http://www.obn.org/list/fs_list.html)

<sup>16</sup>A project group has to consist of at least three particularly named OBN members

<sup>17</sup>[http://www.obn.org/obn\\_pro/vCI/index.html](http://www.obn.org/obn_pro/vCI/index.html)

I know, it is a pity that I will not say a single word about Cornelia Sollfrank's merits as part of the initiating process of OBN, her motivating women to believe in this idea of inventing new perspectives in feminism. For this at least, I am indebted to her. Still, my prevailing feeling is to say 'No' to her appropriative claiming of OBN – or even of Cyberfeminism – as its privileged proprietor. This is exactly what she did in her text 'The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism'. Everybody 'owns' every word in the world and you can't do other than just use them. Words have no owners and this is true even when a new one is invented or the meaning of an old one changed – and it has been a primary strategy of the Old Boys Network to work on a shift of meaning of the word 'Cyberfeminism'. However, the 'Final Truth about Cyberfeminism' aims at something else. I think this text wants to install an exclusive link between its author and the OBN-project, at the expense of the collective and complex structures of OBN and of OBN's vision of challenging the institutionalized forms of academia, art-world, and political action. In Sollfrank's text, there is a sense of a final speech, one that might be held at a formal occasion celebrating an event that has finally come to an end – a kind of obituary – but for me,

associated for a shorter or longer period with the Old Boys Network brought in experiences pertaining to her manifold existences as an 'artist,' 'activist,' and/or 'theorist.' I hope that with my critique, the situation of OBN can be understood as one example of what can happen if the main tactics and power of a politicized group consist in proclaiming that 'utopia is here'. OBN is a technique for occupying the physical and psychological spaces that allow something new to enter, for experimenting with the hitherto 'possible', in a mode as if 'possible' in a flash had become reality by a group's decision. How can we deal with the results of this type of collective experiment – of 'realizing' 'Cyberfeminism', within whatever you and you and you and you wish it to be? Without extreme precaution – be it a shared strong sense of humor and anarchy, established mutual respect, or just the same career interests – this tends to become an awful mess, scattering victims and exploited dreams of liberation along its way. I have to take responsibility as well – by trying to show what went wrong, but also by giving credit what was and is simply very good and strong about OBN.

What is an editor to do, if she gets the impression that sto-

Claudia Reiche

## Disagreement with

### cornelia sollfrank's 'The Final Truth about cyberfeminism'

OBN's concept is not dead. It has, as yet, not even reached its final stage of development. (Please keep in mind that I am not trying to reduce Sollfrank's work to the desolate gesture of her 'final' text.) And I think, even if one declares something defunct, the words should be more faithful and courageous, and that means 'true'.

The gesture of 'The Final Truth' is an appropriation not only of meanings or institutional power, but of the work of a collective, and the time may be ripe to answer this with a structural analysis of OBN's problems. Some aspects of these problems can be deciphered between the lines of her text, but should become more evident within my reading. The problems are more specific than standard conflicts described in studies on 'group psychology', and differ as well from conflicts within classical artists' groups concerning representation and the market value of the single members. OBN's problems are situated at the intersection of the art-market and political utopia, of recognized political techniques of representation and alternative practices of thinking and acting as a collective. Advanced feminist, media- and political theory with different models of intervention meets traditional artists' claims of authorship and creation. And (with this) I refer to the easily resulting crash beyond personal identifications, for I believe that each and every one of the women

ries are told in ways that do not meet the facts, and that a contribution contains contradictions which are not understood by the author? You can decide not to publish the item. Or you can try to discuss possible alterations with the author, all the more so if the story relates to events in which you were involved personally.

The text of Cornelia Sollfrank is such a contribution – and has been printed without any discussion between the author and her editors. Why? 'The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism' is in itself a result of almost five years of discussion and 'cooperation' since the start of OBN, but in a both merciless and helpless way rewrites the history of OBN as if it were one person's piece of work, told as the artist's fight against the stubborn matter (or collaborators), in favor of an initial artistic inspiration:

"... Much as the situation in which an artist [is,] who starts a new work doesn't exactly know what he/she is doing, this was the case with me. I knew I had to get involved [...] to get closer to my initial idea."<sup>1</sup>

This demonstrates quite a fine logocentric, patriarchal view of the role of an artist. Mind over matter – that's the concept, melting riskily with Sollfrank's standard artist statement: "an artist whose central concerns are the changing role of the artist in the information age, [...] and communication and networking as art".<sup>2</sup> Such a 'new art of networking' thus

inscribes itself eagerly to concepts, in which art and artist tend towards affirmation and decorations of the power structures. The 'Final Truth about Cyberfeminism' calls itself a "personal perspective on some aspects of OBN",<sup>3</sup> and this, I think, is true in more than one sense: it comments on events related to the Old Boys Network, thereby giving readers the chance to analyze how the text itself proceeds, its modes of reasoning and arguing. If one follows idea that 'the mode is the message' (as OBN once decided to do) this second meaning of reading is to be trusted even more.

The question arises: why does the text corrupt its own initial joke of revealing a 'final truth', by declaring it as a 'personal perspective' not much further on? A lame joke and a strange insistence not to take words for objective reality. As if it were not understood that 'truth' is only a word and that every author always gives her or his personal perspective in writing... A contradiction produces itself with this double gesture of again explaining the 'irony' of the title. The reader is called upon to trust the emphasis on a 'personal perspective' more than the assertion of the title. But can she or he trust in this proclaimed attitude of subjectivity in the text? A first irritation will occur with the discovery that the text consists mainly and prominently of a listing and description of common facts – the kind of unquestionable 'information' – on OBN, what took place when and where, who was listed as participator etc. This information is trustworthy, no falsification is to be found, except small involuntary mistakes of no importance – like putting the year 2002 as the year of the last OBN conference or declaring the year 2001 (and not 2000) as the end of the 'core group' of OBN. What counts here, is that there seems to be no intentional desire to fake a history of OBN with respect to the plain facts. Such a mode may be called 'true' in every sense and without provocation. If at all, the provocation here lies in the announcement of a personal perspective, which consists in nothing more than the retelling of the official 'story' – again and again, with some updates, as compared to previous versions of "The Truth about Cyberfeminism".<sup>4</sup> At least, one can already say that neither is the irony of the title developed as a method, nor is a surprising re-interpretation of these quite well known events proffered (apart from the appropriate gesture).

The tension between passages starting with "I think..." and the revelation of a "final truth" has already been shown to be diluted by the simple addition, in the title, of the word 'my' – 'my truth about Cyberfeminism.' The markers of somewhat doubly declared subjectivity may be seen as reflexes of the feminist gesture of the 70's, of telling 'my story', of honoring most what I have experienced, in contrast and opposition to the patriarchal ways of interpreting and focusing on a so-called universal 'reality'. Interestingly, a problem arises when the word 'we' appears within this textual performance of inconsequence and triviality. It can be read as another warranty for the trustworthy subject, who has been part of collective decisions – 'and then we decided to organize this conference, and then to do this and then that' – but it can function as well in the sense of speaking 'our' truth – referring to

the impact this feminist practice has made historically. Although Sollfrank does refer to the problem of "who was and is 'we'"<sup>5</sup> (OBN) in her text, this discussion stands in no relation to the basic setting between 'truth' and 'personal perspective'. A gesture like: "[...] we had overseen one crucial point [...]", can be understood as: 'I think, we had overseen something', but within the imprecision of the textual setting will more likely be read as: 'we think, we had overseen something.' This second reading is not acceptable, because in this case 'we' becomes a simple extension of the 'I' and tends to transform into a property of the representing author, who speaks as this 'we'. Again the problem arises, where does subversion of power structures end and the abuse of collective forms through hierarchical representation begin?

On a very basic level, this 'we' works as well: Concerning this attitude of attaching 'we' to a 'personal perspective', a reader could easily imagine an underlying gesture of modesty: that the author does not want to say 'I initiated this and that in a collective process', but instead steps back and gives the credits to the 'we', the collective. This is not the case, for most of the 'wes' within the 'Final Truth' refer to the initiatives of other persons, that are in no case identified.

I think the story of OBN could be told as a struggle with typical double bind situations, similar to the one that is established with this final contribution of Cornelia Sollfrank's 'Truth'. A double bind situation is a paradoxical situation, a conflict that cannot be resolved by the persons involved unless they reflect and change the rules, made by decision or habitude, that have brought about the situation itself. Example: If OBN's 'official' aim was to build up a widespread network, why render every contribution (except Cornelia Sollfrank's own real or claimed achievements) almost invisible and anonymous by referring their authorship to the alleged 'worldwide network'? The idea of keeping personal representation low, and instead experimenting with shared goals and ideas, is good. This is/was an OBN agreement – coined especially as the 'missing chief principle'.<sup>6</sup> But this idea of an open, 'virtual' position instead of a central representation of power can't work if one person does not count herself as just another member, but instead counts herself twice: thus following a plan to instrumentalize the group as fundraisers, ghostwriters and ironically enough as assistants for conceptual work.

Normally this is called cheating, and a group can put a stop to it or ask the person to leave the collaboration. This is not yet a genuine double bind-situation, but it may already produce the undesirable effect that one's own contributions are not only not mentioned, but moreover used for the augmentation of the false chief's representation. The full double bind starts when there is officially no longer even a group with members, with voices that can be counted for decision-making, but something that OBN called a 'network', resulting in a bundle of visible but denied differences between the proclaimed goals and the practices (not) to meet these goals.<sup>7</sup> OBN's decision in 2000 to put an end to its practice of tem-

porary core groups has involuntarily lead to tendencies of a centralized representation under the accelerating condition of electronic networks, but was made after exhausting debates on how to obtain less hierarchy and even more openness for OBN enabling more women to participate. I think the illusionary 'pros' were all delivered by Cornelia Sollfrank, as the hesitating Verena Kuni and Helene von Oldenburg may remember as well, and she succeeded in convincing the three present members of the core group that 'all' should leave the privileged status<sup>8</sup>. The lack of political reflection in this situation in favor of irrational denials (or self-interested calculations) of representation and responsibility took revenge on OBN's project soon, as well as on all members – including the one person, who from then on occupied the paradoxical position of the 'missing chief' even more aggressively – e.g. as the "founder" of OBN.

The standard conflict is: How can you foil a person's foul play without recurring to foul play yourself? How can one carry on with an experiment of 'non-hierarchic structures of work and representation' against personal mastermind attitudes without entering in a hierarchic play? How can you expose the wannabe 'leadership' of one person, whose capabilities repose mostly in claiming leadership and whose 'visibility' from the outside and in the media is without proportion? Personally, I was not able find a solution. Discussions with Cornelia Sollfrank resulted in denials of her tactics to proclaim herself as the leader or even to try to get herself identified with OBN. The most exaggerated expression of these so-called ironic tactics has been coined with her introduction at the 'very cyberfeminist international conference': "OBN is Cornelia Sollfrank". 'Irony' is a lame excuse for the pernicious mixing of OBN's history with one's personal CV, and its increasingly hard to believe that the identification of Cornelia Sollfrank with OBN was, once again, nothing more than the misunderstanding of some journalist.

It's simple: Cornelia Sollfrank unofficially but actively claims the Old Boys Network as her personal piece of art-work (that is: intellectual property), simultaneously proclaiming not to do so and thus rendering every critical discussion on this topic moot. How could she envision the other old boys as equal partners, if the whole thing is seen as one person's creation and property, including the right to destroy 'it' again? Obviously this is impossible: nobody can discuss on equal terms with his or her personal 'property'. The right to destroy the masterpiece was symptomatically claimed by Sollfrank in the final discussion of the 'very cyberfeminist international', with her suggestion: "I think we should put an end to OBN here and now." As if it were all up to her, and with this gesture insulting every woman present that is interested and active in cyberfeminism. Its even possible to turn the story around: Sollfrank has decided that OBN no longer fits her way of working, since co-workers have started to plan their escape out of their paradoxical role as a responsible ('working slave') property.

#116

One pattern during our collaboration was Sollfrank's suffer-

ing from the lack of initiative of other persons to further the OBN project. Typically, this suffering worsened when strong commitments and initiatives were introduced, placing things out of her control. This pattern can be found in her positioning 'The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism' in this publication. More appropriately, this text should at least have been placed on the <oldboys.list>, facilitating answers and different points of view on the topics, but Sollfrank preferred to submit this paper weeks after the deadline, ignoring the concept and structure of this publication (which she accepted months before) and tactically tried to make sure that no other opinion could technically be included within the timeline of publishing. And then she finds the chuzpe to hope that: "Hopefully others will add their own pieces in order to create a more true and complete image".<sup>9</sup> That these thoughts are added is ridiculously the last chance for one of those answers – if one tries to answer on equal terms.

I don't agree with: "I finally found Cyberfeminism to be a good joke",<sup>10</sup> in contrast I'd insist that: The criticized structures of the "First International Cyberfeminist Alliance OBN" are a bad joke, just as bad as the 'final joke' that "OBN is Cornelia Sollfrank". The question of how women with different experiences and approaches can experiment on cyberfeminism is too precious as to be handed over to the final appropriation as one artist's work. And what could be meant by this 'cyberfeminism', which Cornelia Sollfrank finally found a "good joke?" A joke, offering a bait for the appetites of the art-world for fresh and narrow-minded parodies of the political, but aiming at least at something which exceeds these expectations? Or is Sollfrank's "joke" on Cyberfeminism, has she always had the intention to work at the expense of feminism or even at the expense of the women involved? The assertion that "perhaps the best quality of the term [Cyberfeminism] was that [...] lit up a glimmer of hope for feminism(s) to find a way out of the doldrums – with the help of technology"<sup>11</sup> shows quite a pitiful view of a passive feminism, having lost its orientation like a woman in a changing world, expecting rescue and salvation from the author and an absurd "technology". Such a 'funny' macho-view on feminism seems to fit perfectly into a more general attitude amongst female artists, who, other than in media-, or cultural studies, do not want to call themselves feminists, sometimes not even women. That OBN was nominally working on such a 'joke' was until now not common knowledge within the group, at least not for the feminists among its members.

And, last but not least, what should we think of the suggestion for OBN's future tactics, what of the acclaimed importance: "to make the effort to go back to anonymity. I know, it may sound ridiculous when I'm saying that, as I am certainly one of the persons whose name is closely associated with OBN and Cyberfeminism"<sup>12</sup>? Yes, it does sound ridiculous, for of course this would have been an option for OBN years ago, if Cornelia Sollfrank herself had not concentrated in her personal statements on claiming the alpha position within OBN. How to "go back" then to an anonymity, which has never been a tactics of OBN? At this point, after this farewell gesture to OBN, and after having managed to make herself



When I joined obn – at the same time as Claudia Reiche, after long hesitations since first experiences within the founding process of obn – *the first cyberfeminist international* lay half a year back and the founding group had come to a dead end, asking for Claudia Reiche's and my initiative. Still there was a potential to be processed.

For me to join obn was to start an experiment: how to shape a structure which invites work on the topic of feminism – as artistic and scientific theory and practice – while at the same time staying open to changes? I like to readjust to new positions brought in – like my brain does. The brain is a limited location but the in- and output changes its content.

The combination of "cyber" and "feminism" as an up to then "empty", scarcely undefined term I thought of as a joint venture to create more than simple "techno-fetish-feminism". Beside being intrigued by the challenge to partake in defining and promoting a new term to bring it into creative power, shape its content, make it known and therefore a useful tool for others as well – this was something to work on.

As an artist, scientist and feminist I focus in my work on how to bring something into existence that has no material or physical nature. So the collaborative work on an open space was very promising. The understood concept was to form a platform for discussing and defining the term Cyberfeminism by connecting different, controversial and interdisciplinary approaches and positions. Gaps, alliances and misunderstandings would provide an opening for others to

Communication is at a minimum.<sup>1</sup> What did happen? Is there a misunderstanding? Is this the reason for most the persons involved being unable to understand each other any more? Yes, I think so: there is almost no energy left to discuss problems, mutual respect seems at its lowest level and the persons still working suffer from burn-out symptoms. Obn has become traumatic, mentions of the mere name may cause shouting curses or tears. Funny enough: one of the agreements of obn has been: Misunderstanding is a necessity, not a failure. 'We' agreed on some level on a misunderstanding as possible tactics for obn. Misunderstanding was then thought of in a context of open minded encounters and the courage to find out that someone else was thinking and acting on quite a different planet. There must have been times, when this was ok – when this attitude within the small group of obn's 'we' as long as this open and accepting mode of communication was in function.

This accepting of misunderstandings enabled 'us' to overcome contradictory strategies and positions and join our efforts to spread cyberfeminism and work together. Contradictory views and interests as well as different degrees of reliability towards group's demands lead to misunderstandings. That is not so bad – as long as you stay conscious of it. In the moment when you start to ask for total understanding or commitment, as Cornelia Sollfrank did, you go for merging or subordination under the hierarchies of a classical group. Merging or subordination is contradictory to working

Helene von Oldenburg

## OBN – a fiction and/or the real thing?

### The fake network at a dead end ...

add their mark. A highly idealized idea but for some time it worked fine. As long as we (obn in various states) held onto the ropes there was a lot of interesting input into Cyberfeminism. Cyberfeminism became a space for new theories, structures and networks, while simultaneously inventing itself.

At the moment the work of obn reached another stop, I would say: arrived at its limits. To me the (up to now) saddest but most explicit expression of what went wrong with obn is involuntarily presented with the text by Cornelia Sollfrank in this volume: 'The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism' – (which gave the impulse to this answer, I present within this text).

I guess not only me, but every member of obn is pissed off.

in a non-hierarchic group: too much psychological problems or simple exploitation.

Analyzing the work done by obn and the internal processes over 5 years I see 3 points which bear the potential of today's crisis and should be considered in the future of any cyberfeminist group or network or alliance.

#### 1. network or group?

The 'we' I referred to was from the beginning through all obn's existence a group of 4 to 7 women. Never less, never more. We set out to work on cyberfeminism in three different strategies:

- work on one's individual tactics
- use the individual strategies (plural!) to form obn's cyberfeminism, based on the 'principle of dissent', and guarantee a multi-voiced contradictory approach

– organize meetings, platforms for open and controversial stage discussions to articulate and communicate this approach

And we added a tactics, which was not really discussed. As I worked for years on virtual spaces – which exist in the imagination of the viewer and on local geographic points, I agreed to the following obn practice: A part of our (obn) tactics was to pretend to be a network. This was aiming at a self-fulfilling prophecy. That seems to be a quite successful tactics – but you have to stay aware of the pretension. Falling in your own trap and believe in an actual network of a ‘mass’ of women you’ll loose the touch with reality AND you’ll give away your chance to use the power of the tactics. You simply have to keep in mind the difference of words and meanings and the tactics of productive invention, fake and misunderstandings. The obn group should have kept in mind that plan of never taking our own words for granted or our fakes for facts. This became a problem in the working processes of the obn group. If you can’t communicate reality any more the misunderstanding that was a creative one is no longer productive but is hindering everybody. As a clear symptom of this loss of reality, see the contribution by Cornelia Sollfrank in this volume: "Only a group, a large number of people, that is to say, a network would be able to create a relevant discourse."<sup>2</sup>, "The real life events certainly have played an enormous role for knitting the network together, [...]"<sup>3</sup>

For me as an artist, scientist and member of the cyberfeminist movement, the interesting question here is how to bring something into existence that has no material or physical nature. There are different strategies. If you want to distribute certain assertions and positions and get them across to people, you have to masque them or use a Trojan Horse. If everybody (nearly everybody) take them as fiction, you can use them as possibilities. Think of them as "possibly true". "Network" was never defined, because we thought of obn as a tactical name not an real network. I thought that everybody (without exception) should be able to keep in mind that a real network is not equivalent to e.g. one's expanding address book. The ‘network’ aspect in the name of the old boys ‘network’ was meant as an understatement! The fiction of a network got more and more mixed up with reality.

The goal of obn was from the beginning – in my view – about defining obn's concept of an open group's techniques of communication and creative invention of cyberfeminism and NOT about the collection of names that could be presented in the address-books of browsers as international ‘network’. Faking this network of – in most cases not even loosely – associated women, or extremely exaggerated numbers of participants and contacts was part of a tactics for better promotion. And it had to be simulated.

The core group – we should call the group that runs obn exclusively is small and therefore it's quite easy to keep track of the input of its members. Though it is difficult to measure the input it is easy to see that every member provided a lot of content and time and organizational work.

## 2. individual career versus obn strategy

Ignoring that the group consists of different members abuses the concept of obn's cyberfeminism, which is, if one likes it or not a democratic model. That means it is a structure that asks for individual positions, for discussions, and dissent.

From the beginning the group was conscious of the problem of representing itself. After discussing this at length we came up with the solution of not representing obn ever by one person alone. The minimum of 3 was set. 3 were thought of as the beginning of "many". A network, a cyberfeminist network like obn should have different views. This can not be represented by one person.

I belong to that part of obn that fought for the "principle of dissent"<sup>4</sup> as a definition for cyberfeminism. There should be different voices, working together in discussing their approaches to cyberfeminism. It is necessary to name the different voices. Otherwise the positions wouldn't be strong enough. Anonymity, as Cornelia Sollfrank proposes in her "Final Truth about Cyberfeminism" is not really an option after obn started out attached to certain names. Disagreement has to be attached to individual names – not a singular name, not one ‘globalizing’ opinion. The trick Cornelia Sollfrank tries to play is based highly on claiming ‘networking as art’ that is in reality based on the work of the group of obn.

## 3. what does ‘network’ mean - really?

So what we have, is: we have fortunately finally reached a dead end in this concept of a fake network. This so called network which has not been much more than a simple idea of world wide influence and power. A naive dream of Cornelia Sollfrank, I would say, who thought to be a specialist in building up fakes, but unfortunately remained hypnotized by this enlarged (self)image, blind and deaf for the lively forces near to her, for the articulations of countermodels to such a centralized perspective. When Sollfrank writes, "Only a group, a large number of people, that is to say, a network would be able to create a relevant discourse."<sup>5</sup>, then she does not at all reflect a ‘network’ as a structure, but suggests it typically as a sort of ‘augmentation’ – ‘a mass’ – functioning ideally as a loud-speaker for an (identity-)discourse. But coming from natural sciences I know ‘network’ as a structure, which is different from others, exactly because it has no center.

So, what comes out of a dead end? The search for new ways...

<sup>1</sup> ...with exception of the editors of this reader, working together comfortably...

<sup>2</sup> Sollfrank, Cornelia, *The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism*, in this volume, p 108.

<sup>3</sup> Sollfrank, Cornelia, *The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism*, in this volume p 112.

<sup>4</sup> *Old Boys Network's selfrepresentation in this volume*, see: "6. What is the regulating structure of OBN?" etc., p 17.

<sup>5</sup> Sollfrank, Cornelia, *The Final Truth about Cyberfeminism*, in this volume, p 108.

The following reflections refer to an ongoing research project dedicated to the conditions of cultural production in times of the so called new economy. In the given context of Very Cyberfeminist International, this may also be understood as some kind of sequel to my contributions to the two readers documenting the First Cyberfeminist International (1997) and the Next Cyberfeminist International (1999). In "Future is Female. Some thoughts on the aesthetics and politics of Cyberfeminism(s)" I had been watching out for what one might call "cyberfeminist visibility" on the world wide web. Analysing the visual strategies performed by websites related to what in the mid-nineties used to be considered as activities in the orbit of cyberfeminism, I was especially interested in what on the one hand side when - departing from cyberfeminist theory - one might wish to expect from cyberfeminist image politics, and on the other hand in what especially professionals in the art & media sector might contribute to it<sup>1</sup>. Two years later, in "Performing Cyberfeminism(s)", my aim was to take a closer look on basic conditions of cyberfeminist networking, and to ask for possible strategies to be developed for what in the framework of the world wide web as an arena of representation might be called "cyberfeminist agency". Again, myself coming from a background as art historian and critic, my focus was on artistic strategies, and on professionals in the art & media sector here. On a theoretical layer, my arguments clearly led me to an optimistic conclusion: Especially when taking in account that the politics dominant in a medium which rather than being a network is to be considered as the representation of a network, it seemed to be at hand that cyberfeminist critique could gain a lot when adapting strategies developed in artistic activism<sup>2</sup>. However, what about my own practice as a cyberfeminist working in and with a cyberfeminist network - The Old Boys Network?

art context remained completely ignorant against the consequences resulting from the decision to work within a network structure and on a structural level. Obviously, for the art world it was and still is quite frustrating, if not impossible to deal with the "invisible" and "immaterial" work of networking - what it needs is at least either "an object" referring to and/or performers willing to embody the label and to take part in the name game: Here's the stage, please represent yourself. Of course one might say: No wonder, nothing else is to be expected from this context - so why do you still rely on it? My answer to this question is very simple, but I do mean it: Because this is the field of my own profession, hence the area in which I am able to operate on a professional level. Therefore, I am still not only interested in asking: "What can cyberfeminism gain from art?", but also in the question: "(What) can cyberfeminism contribute to gain agency within the cultural sector (art being part of it) and beyond?" And I am still considering both as legitimate aims to concentrate on as a cyberfeminist<sup>3</sup>.

Yet I am well aware that a position like this all too easily provides fertile ground for a critique often raised against cyberfeminism in general and especially against cyberfeminism(s) as practiced by the Old Boys Network. Related arguments were brought up i.e., when in summer 2001 Maria Fernandez - herself not only affiliated with cyberfeminist theory and practice, but also a subscriber to Old Boys Mailinglist - was invited by mute magazine to give a statement on whatever might have happened to Donna Haraway's famous Cyborg Manifesto (indeed often claimed to be a major source of inspiration for cyberfeminism and cyberfeminists)<sup>4</sup>; and it is not only for their characteristic attitude that I consider them worth to be briefly discussed, but also as they will allow me to sharpen the very position they aim to criticize before proceeding on the issues with a text piece that as a whole may

Verena Kuni

## Some Thoughts On The New Economy of Networking

**cyberfeminist perspectives on "immaterial labour", "invisible work" and other means to make career as cultural part time worker under net\_conditions**

#120

Indeed, while The Old Boys Network - in its active parts indeed consisting of professionals coming from the art/media sector - in several of its activities definitely made use of the strategies I had listed in "Performing Cyberfeminism(s)" (like i.e. copy and re-enactment, parody and masquerade), the mere fact that as a label it was perceived to be part of the art scene seemed to hinder the efforts seriously. Whereas the label itself gained great acknowledgement, the

fuel it with extended contents.

First of all, Fernandez claims that "in contrast to Haraway's feminist, socialist and anti-racist politics cyberfeminism eschewed definitions, political affiliations (including feminism) and even goals", hereby referring to the "100 anti-theses" as published in occasion of the First Cyberfeminist International and documented on the OBN homepage<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, the participants of First Cyberfeminist International



agreed on not to define the term to publish the "100 anti-theses" as a substitute for a definition – as it would have been supposed to be published in the framework of a formative meeting. However, even when leaving aside the mere fact that a sum of 100 negative definitions ("cyberfeminism is not") is definitely not the same as no definition at all – indeed, in more but one case a closer look on what's being refused would reveal telling details<sup>6</sup>: The question is not only if and how the "anti theses" are to be read as a programmatic text in the very sense of a "Manifesto of Cyberfeminism", once taken in account they clearly come up as a parody of standard self-declaration rhetoric characteristic for (political as well as artistic) manifestos. The more, reading a text literally that in itself is born from rhetoric necessarily means to misunderstand it profoundly, and to ignore the political context it addresses as well as the very precise politics consciously chosen<sup>7</sup>.

Secondly, Fernandez claims that so far most of cyberfeminist associations were rather career-oriented than political. Even when leaving aside the mere fact that in most contexts any engagement marked as "feminist" (be it cyber – or not) is to be considered as definitely "anti-career" rather than supportive: The question remains, if it is useful or rather dangerous to separate political aims from the question of "career". I. e., one of the most obvious failures of second wave feminisms was most of them avoided to bring this issue up in regular terms or even blamed "career" as a symptom characteristic for a male dominated society, and hence failed to help women install structures for mutual support also in contexts that are by definition competitive<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, it could be stated that in times when "networking" itself has become a term abused to fuel the labour politics of a globalized economy that at least in certain parts can be characterized by the appropriation of structures that were initially build to develop alternatives to dominant hierarchies, this question is once more to be set on the issues for any cyberfeminist politics. And, as I hope to show with the following chapters drawn from a more extended research on "cultural part time workers under 'net\_conditions'"<sup>9</sup>, this is even more the case when entering a scene ostensibly so privileged in the era of global(ized) art & media capitalism.

### The Personal is the Political, revisited

Currently, we are facing not only a globalisation of capital markets, economical structures and power relationships, but also a globalisation of labour markets that is at the same time accompanied by a personalisation and privatization of labour itself. Signs and symptoms of this process can be traced in different sectors and they evolve in different layers in very different ways. So there is not only the growing sector of technological enhanced and controlled homework, like i.e. call center- and office work one is supposed not to do in an office, but at home<sup>10</sup>. Parallel to this process, which already means that you are yourself paying the rent for your office, you have to organize yourself as well as your office work and so on, and all this happens in your very private environment, also a lot of duties and responsibilities that in former times

were duties and responsibilities of the employer, the company or even the government are now redirected to the individual worker. While s/he remains with all former duties of an employee, s/he is now also made fully responsible for any loss of working hours in cases of illness, for his/her insurances, for his/her old-age pension and so on. In other words: What used to be on the issues of common("wealth") labour politics, is suggested to become something "personal". However, obviously the contrary is the case – almost cynically giving new impact to what the second wave of feminist movement claimed to be set on the political agenda. Indeed, a formula like "the personal is the political" gains new importance when facing the new economy of "work after the end of work as we knew it", as characterized by the blurring of private and public, of office work and homework, the increasing amount of "immaterial" and "invisible" work, the negative relations between official work (= recognized, acknowledged and paid work), office work (low paid work) and household work (= not paid work).

To a certain degree, when focussing the sector of cultural work, things work a little different, of course. But not only because working in this sector still means "privileged work"<sup>11</sup>. Beyond that, especially non institutional cultural work has always been under the sign of being considered something "personal": First of all idealistically in the sense of the romantic tradition defining artistic autonomy ("doing your own thing"); however, also from the socio-economical point of view: working at home or in the studio, having yourself to take care for your insurances and so on. Therefore, cultural work is not so much to be considered as some kind of 'hortus conclusus', where globalisation would be only some kind of post-colonial, all-over painting like structure that would make the post-2nd-world war dream of a 'global cultural exchange', a "Weltsprache der Kunst"<sup>12</sup> come true – now of course not in the naive and western-eurocentrist perspective of the 1950ies, but based on "real" cultural exchange, common politics of cultural criticism, intellectual responsibility and so forth. Rather, it seems that the traditional structures cultural work is defined within are not only providing a fecund ground for embedding the structures of the new economy into the cultural field<sup>13</sup>, but also contributing to qualify cultural work itself as an "avant-garde of the new economy of labour"<sup>14</sup>.

As we will see, "the personal is the political" is not the only link that connects it back to the classical status of "homeworker" (here according to the traditional image of the "housewife") on the one hand and the classical status of the "cultural worker" (here according to the traditional image of "the artist/author") on the other hand – that, when merging in the new profile of the "cultural part time worker under 'net\_conditions'", once more turn out as the highly afflicted estates they surely always have been. And – as I might add especially in response to the above cited critique against cyberfeminism – we will also see that different notions of "networking" (including networking as a means for "career") definitely play an important role in this relationship.

### immaterial work & invisible work

"Immaterial work" is a term introduced by Maurizio Lazzarato and prominently taken up by Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt and, in the following, many others to describe the "intellectual, affective-emotional and techno-scientific work" that in the era of Post-fordism has gained increasing importance for the economy of production processes as well as for the economy of labour itself<sup>15</sup>. Not only together with the service industries (the so called "third sector"), flexible working structures, deregulated employer-employee-relationships and contracts, irregular income, collaborative (net)working structures ("bridging" distances in time, geography, status and income), (pseudo-)autonomous substructures and – units of workers (often only installed to shift the risks from employers to employees) developed as characteristic features of the latter. Also the "products" produced by these industries differ significantly from what industrial culture used to consider as consumer's commodities – that, of course, are still being produced en masse, but in their sheer over-accessibility continuously produce the need for new marketing strategies. On all these layers, "immaterial work" becomes a major feature: for the organisation of internal and external structures and relationships as well as for the internal and external organisation of work itself, for the marketing of "products" as well as for the self-marketing of the producers. However, while not only the quota of "intellectual, affective-emotional and techno-scientific work", but also of features formerly known as characteristic for work done by people in leading positions (like i.e. management, marketing, motivation, organisation, decision-making – all of them combined with high amounts of responsibility and personal risk) might suggest "immaterial work" would be rewarded higher wages than the dirty wage and salary work of old industrial age, nothing but the contrary is the case – at least for the majority concerned. Rather, "what you get for what you do" (in terms of recognition as well as in terms of money) makes "immaterial work" appear quite comparable to another segment of labour where high investments in "intellectual, affective-emotional and techno-scientific work" by tradition do neither get the economical nor the social credits they'd deserve: Homework. Yet, with one important difference, of course: While homework traditionally was – and still is – considered to be "invisible work" (except for profitable marketing reasons maybe neither fashionable nor even "worth to talk about"), there's a lot of buzz about "immaterial work" (being fashionable and obviously "worth to talk about", especially for marketing reasons).

Now, what about cultural work in times of the new labour economy, and what about its most characteristic agent, the "cultural part time worker under net\_conditions"?

### The cultural sub-sector

For sure, as already stated above, to a certain degree cultural workers ever since have been forced to cover with unstable and insecure working conditions, and to be entrepreneurs in their own behalf. Not only they have to create their own market, but they have also to create their own position

within this economy, that is: basically, they literally do create their own working place. Hence, as a basic necessity this "meta-labour" – consisting of self-management and self-marketing as well as of other "work to make work work" – traditionally used to be considered not only as self-evident, but also as something obviously not to talk about, except for cheek in tongue – and, for sure an issue deserving a more detailed discussion than the framework of this text allows, except for what one might call "work on work" now in the literal sense of the word<sup>16</sup>. For quite a long time in history the system addressed by this "immaterial" and "invisible" work guaranteed a certain set of stable framework conditions, i.e. allowing the cultural worker to concentrate on a more or less consistent working biography leading to a profile more or less matching to the institutions addressed<sup>17</sup>. Viewed within a broader perspective of (art) history, these institutions multiplied of cause, and for sure they were undergoing certain changes. Nevertheless, even if closely related to and entangled with each other, they still remained clearly distinguished and distinguishable in form and function. However, in times of boundaries not only between different cultural sectors, but also between culture and economy becoming more porous than ever, this situation changed tremendously, and so did the conditions for the cultural worker. For sure, a segregation of the two spheres never existed. Yet - for reasons to be explored in more detail later – it seems that the impact of economical structures on the cultural field has reached a new dimension: In creating a new economy of cultural work, and accordingly, a new profile for those striving for success or at least survive within what was formerly known as the cultural sector, but recently developed to become a sub-sector oscillating between the so called "Third Sector"<sup>18</sup> and just another compartment of service industries. I call this profile "the cultural part time worker under net\_conditions".

Like his/her companions working in other sub-sectors of the new economy, the cultural part time worker needs to invest a lot in his/her self-management to organize her/himself according to a variety of changing and flexible formats. Instead of being able to concentrate on one area of work, s/he has to juggle with different jobs in different areas, and s/he can call herself/himself a lucky one in case the majority of them is more or less related to what s/he is really interested in for professional reasons. Artistic skills are needed to cope with condensations in time and distances in space, while s/he has poor or no influence on the basic conditions. "Immaterial work" gains importance, which means in the end that the amount and the importance of invisible, poor or no paid work increases significantly – as, btw., the importance of networking and networks does. Besides, as the cultural part time worker has to be able to relate to flexible formats, accordingly, his/her working biography can be characterized as a variable parallel patchwork pattern profile. But this profile does not only mean that cultural part time workers are available for a multitude of different jobs, but also that for any of these jobs a multitude of cultural part time workers are available.

Before, distinct formats and distinct tasks would have called for special abilities being mirrored by or matching professional

distinct profiles. In times of flexible formats and flexible patchwork pattern profile, distinctions are gone.

Hence, concurrence is increased, and the highly competitive situation is clearly fostering situations in which the cultural part time worker feels forced to flag one significant difference qualifying her/him to get the job, that is that s/he would do the job for lower payment. Which is – as most of you will know - not only an everyday life and workaday experience in the (sub)sector of cultural work anyway, but is also becoming to be one of the characteristics of the new economy of labour in general. In this sense, the cultural part time worker can be rightly called the "avant-garde" of the flexible worker of the new economy.<sup>19</sup>

### net\_conditions

So far the "cultural worker" was introduced as an isolated entity: Sharing the fate of a multitude, yet confronted with it as an individual not only due to the fact that under the sign of the new economy of labour work itself in many ways is undergoing processes of personalization and privatisation, but also as obviously being struck in a fight "each against all" according to a highly competitive market situation. However, this is only one half of the story, as the appendix "under net\_conditions" already might suggest. Leaving aside that cultural work hardly ever was done in complete isolation (the image of the "lonesome genius" being just another beloved stereotype rather grounded in the myth of the artist than in any cultural reality): What does "networking" mean in the framework of the new economy of labour, and what does it mean for those working in the "cultural sub-sector" of this new economy? Is it to be considered as a means to raise solidarity, to gain support and to develop agency as well as new perspectives? Or is it just a buzzword all too often blown in the wind together with other soap-bubbles that sooner or later necessarily burst into ordinary slops, a lubricant among others to keep the business going? Or even worse, is it nothing but the name to veil a flattery strategy for those striving for career - and doing so on the backs of others naive enough to share investments, but too weak to assert a claim on the efforts?

Not only due to my cyberfeminist background fuelling my personal utopias, but also to build a bridge from the association drawn between "immaterial work" and "invisible work" on the one hand side to what later might indeed open up a perspective on possible strategies to gain agency within (and against) the new economy of cultural labour, at this point I would indeed like to recall what Donna Haraway contributed on the issues in the framework of her famous (and notoriously cited) "Manifesto for Cyborgs".<sup>20</sup>

While her analyses here point to very similar characteristics of the "new economy of work" that later also reappear in best-sellers like Jeremy Rifkin's "The End of Work"<sup>21</sup> or Richard Sennett's "The corrosion of character"<sup>22</sup> (i.e. the flexibilisation of capital, production processes and production means that do not only result in a flexibilisation of work, but also in a flexibilisation of the worker), it is probably her feminist, socialist background obviously that leads Haraway to

significantly different conclusions and perspectives, the last namely in terms of agency. However, as already stated, it is not only personal and political affinity that motivate me to follow her arguments.

Indeed, when exploring the way the new economy of labour weakens the position of the traditional "white male first world worker" of the machine age to favour features like "flexibility, 'precision mobility', receptivity and social intelligence"<sup>23</sup> (remember Negri's definition of "immaterial work"), Haraway uses a term that – as I would like to suggest – is not by chance kindred, if not congruent with what I so far used to call "invisible work" to describe and to analyse the far reaching transformation of labour conditions the "new industrial revolution" and its economy are producing: "The 'Homework economy' outside 'The Home'".<sup>24</sup>

For those not familiar with the related chapter of the "Manifesto" (indeed all too often only cited to revivify the charismatic figure of the Cyborg herself), let me give a brief resume by quoting some of the conclusions I consider as central for what's on the issue here. Basically, in her definition of the term "homework economy" Haraway follows Richard Gordon, who, as she points out, "although he includes the phenomenon of literal homework emerging in connection with electronics assembly, [...] intends 'homework economy' to name a restructuring of work that broadly has the characteristics formerly ascribed to female jobs, jobs literally done only by women. Work is being redefined as both literally female and feminized, whether performed by men or women. To be feminized means to be made extremely vulnerable; able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited as a reserve labour force; seen less as workers than as servers; subjected to time arrangements on and off the paid job that make a mockery of a limited work day; leading an existence that always borders on being obscene, out of place, and reducible to sex. Deskilling is an old strategy newly applicable to formerly privileged workers. However, the homework economy does not refer only to large-scale deskilling, nor does it deny that new areas of high skill are emerging, even for women and men previously excluded from skilled employment. Rather, the concept indicates that factory, home, and market are integrated on a new scale and that the places of women are crucial – and need to be analysed for differences among women and for meanings for relations between men and women in various situations."<sup>25</sup>

Hence, she concludes that: "These developments must have major consequences in the psychodynamics and politics of gender and race"<sup>26</sup>: "Many more women and men will contend with similar situations, which will make cross-gender and race alliances on issues of basic life support (with or without jobs) necessary, not just nice."<sup>27</sup> And, finally, she also does not hesitate to propose a way to realize these strategies of kinship and affinities, and this it finally what Haraway connects with the idea of "networking", but probably for good reasons calls "weaving alliances", as she concludes: "I prefer a network ideological image, suggesting the profusion of spaces and identities and the permeability of boundaries in the personal body and in the body politic. 'Networking' is both a feminist practice and a multinational corporate strategy

– weaving is for oppositional cyborgs."<sup>28</sup>

### The new economy of networking

Indeed, when looking almost twenty years later at what developed as dominating workaday reality - the new economy of work we all are facing today, one might feel inclined to read Haraways quote in the light of a far more pessimistic perspective: Where are the networks woven by oppositional cyborgs? Where are the oppositional cyborgs themselves? Most of them seem to gather in (cyber)feminist writings and academic fiction, in web- and other media based art, waiting. While we hear a lot about the promise that networking should work as a feminist and oppositional practice, what clearly dominates is networking as a multinational corporate strategy. One reason is probably that the idea of networking indeed matches much too perfect with the needs of the new economies of labour.

It was Richard Sennett, who – in his already mentioned book "The corrosion of character" – characterized "flexibility" as a palliative term for a power system consisting of three elements: the "discontinuous reorganisation and transformation of institutions", the "flexible specialisation of production" and the "concentration of power without centralisation"<sup>29</sup>. In fact, suggestive parallels might be drawn from this image to what I previously sketched out concerning the impact of the new economy on cultural institutions, cultural production and the cultural labour market, and for sure it would be fruitful to further explore the contours of this power system in more detail.

However, due to the necessary constrictions of the given framework on what I would like to focus here is the distinct, yet sweepingly significant part networks and networking do play in this context. Indeed, referring to modern management theories also Sennett himself points in this very direction, when stating that networks are a fertile ground and basic strategy for flexibilisation processes: "Networks are definitely more open for basic transformations than pyramidal hierarchies of the Fordian era would be. The connection between the knots is loose, it is possible to remove one part without damaging others or the whole system (at least in theory). The system itself is fragmented, and this gives the opportunity for interventions. The incoherence invites to determined action."<sup>30</sup>

I do cite this rather general knowledge here for two reasons: First, to point out the evident parallel with arguments that normally come up whenever networks and networking are praised and hyped as powerful, promising strategies for the cultural sector – especially in alternative contexts, apart from the mainstreams of cultural industry. And secondly, to come from this comparison between the argumentations of management theory and net.culture theory to an analysis of the related practices.

Sennett leaves no doubt about whom networks and networking structures in the new economy do invite to determined action and which parts of the network may easily be removed without damaging the system, without disturbing its effectiveness and its very functions. For the majority of those

involved "determined action" means nothing else but a new piece rate at changing places and contexts – spurred by the consciousness that it is indeed due to new flexibility of everybody that s/he is herself/himself at any time the part that can be removed without damaging the system, be it to be replaced in exchange with another, be it finally to be deleted as such. The so-called new "autonomy" (i.e. from distinct working places & locations) the worker gains by way of the new technologies, including network technology that leads to and supports the meta-social networks within and between working places and areas of work, is being paid with comprehensive possibilities and practices of surveillance and control. Hence, for many reasons the flat hierarchies of networks are at least in point not very decentralizing at all. To say it again with Sennett: "Behind the archipelago of flexible, seemingly autonomous structures, there's always a mainland continent of power"<sup>31</sup> – which is, in times of the new economy of networks, efficient as well as formless, and most efficient due to its formlessness, as resistance and agency against its power structures will have a hard time to watch out for a point of attack.

### Societies of soloists

However, of course one might feel inclined to assume that the new economy of networks had barely nothing to do with what we understand as net.culture, and that it should be taken for some kind of counter-image against alternative forms of net.culture as such, and especially against what is called cultural or artistic networking. But is this really true? Does the idea of networks, when applied to the system of culture necessarily lead to other net\_conditions than its applications to the current system of economy?

Taken that – to speak with Pierre Bourdieu<sup>32</sup> – the market of symbolic goods and symbolic capital, even taking its relative autonomy in account, not only has always been depending from the economy of markets, but is functioning itself as an economic microcosm; taken that under the sign of the new economy the boundaries between the cultural, the political and the economic field are being eroded in many ways (and not only in the prospering sector of "cultural industry"); taken that the institutions of culture are being transformed in this process in a very similar way to the transformations taking place within the sector of economy; and, last but not least, taken that – as argued above – in nowadays the new economy of the cultural labour market is even handled as some kind of "avant-garde" of the new economy of the Post-fordist labour market, hence, serious doubts are well advisable here. However, first of all we should ask: What are the benefits cultural workers could get from the idea of networks. Wouldn't networks be not only the perfect medium for collaborative practices, but also a promising strategic tool? Bridging necessary differences in favour of building alliance against all odds, connecting cultural workers, following the motto "together, in combined efforts, towards a common goal"?

Unfortunately, things are not working that way. One reason is clearly that whenever the idea of success is coming up in the cultural field, and namely in the system of art, competition

comes into play.

Indeed, this not only can be learned from looking at an art history that would always have favoured the idea of the "primus inter pares", if not the "lonely, isolated genius" as such. In example, in his recent study on "Art and Labour: artists between autonomy and social insecurity", Thomas Rübke states that "networking in cultural and artistic is first of all applied in order to develop and to realize one's own concepts and goals"<sup>33</sup>, herein being confirmed by previous research done by the social art historian Hans-Peter Thurn, who, in an essay on "artists groups in modern art history" comes to similar conclusions.<sup>34</sup> Thurn uses the term "society of soloists" ("Sozietät der Solitären"), to explain that artists are only temporarily capable to work with collaborative strategies, "be it to get through with a new aesthetic concept, a new way of life, a new style and so on..."<sup>35</sup>

Of course we may take in account as well that at least Thurns study is focussing on the times of "traditional avant-gardes", hence on an epoch that - while rhetorically fighting against the religion of genius - apart from the political avant-gardes of the twenties would still have favoured an idea of the artist clearly matching with the 'mytho-logically' founded singular of the unworldly, ivory-towered crank. In other words: Whoever was striving for public success as professional artist would have be forced to adapt his/her habitus and to make it match with this model.<sup>36</sup>

However, we should not only be sure about that also the "lonely geniuses" of the 19th and 20th centuries definitely had their career-networks.<sup>37</sup> We should also take in account that not only within the traditional art market as such, but also within the markets of symbolic capital and attention economy - in the end being the basic markets to buy in to provide one's economic existence - "primus (only sometimes: prima) inter pares" is still the ruling principle. And, as we all know, in this context difference - especially in race, gender and class - still matters a lot.<sup>38</sup>

### weaving(s) for affirmative cyborgs

In how far is cultural work suited to adopt the characteristic structures of new working economies and to form what I already called "the avant-garde of the new economy of work"?

Indeed, rather than being a counterpart/image to the structures of new economy, the principle of the "networking individual competitor" appears to be its "avant-garde". According to this, in their already cited study Caroll Haak and Günther Schmid come to the conclusion that: "the production processes and the structures of the cultural labour market make the traditional company disappear only to let it return in a virtual way [that is: matching with new transformations taking place in the sector of economy]. Production processes are being fragmented, fractalized and networked in a modular manner. Within these networks, flat hierarchies are dominating. Teams of professional individual competitors are organising themselves in flexible, temporary coalitions, changing in their composition according to the tasks to do - hence, close personal relationships become to be the minority. On the contrary, the strength of weak bindings (bonds) becomes

to be part of successful strategies."<sup>39</sup>

Of course it would not only be fatal, but also fatalistic to conclude from an analyses directed to the future of the economic markets back to the current conditions within the cultural system in some kind of normative way. For sure, looking at the latter, we would be able to find examples of long lasting relationships and successful collaborations, as well as for alternative practices of networking against all odds of the economy of the new cultural markets.

However, facing the processes of an increasing de-solidarisation that takes place in many segments of our society, it would be naive to assume that of all sectors the cultural sector - that obviously is undergoing processes of deregulation and flexibilisation in many ways - would come out of these processes as the rose garden of Post-fordian economy. Just ask for what is leading to the strange diplomacy artists would show against gallery-owners and curators whenever the deal is about leaving their work for free to be shown in exhibitions; what is the reason for the willingness to compromise whenever the so called free, autonomous artists and cultural workers have to negotiate their royalties and fees - if not the firm consciousness that at any time they can be easily replaced by another member of the chain, by another link in the network? And even regarding the sad fact that - in contrast to other markets - in the cultural economy "success" does not necessarily mean high wages, also within the market of attention economy - that is the basis of economic survival - "The Winner takes it all" is the ruling principle as well.

### beyond eden

Nevertheless, one might state that regarding possible strategies to reach this goal, the importance of networks and networking significantly increased - not only in terms of being just a variant of the traditional, necessarily mute and invisible rope-team strategy as such.

When in former times making these rope-team and network structures visible would have been considered as contra-productive, while only representative relations to well-known, themselves successful gallery-owners, collectors, curators, critics and colleagues might have given reason to show them in public, now we are in a situation in which networks and networking has become very fashionable if not radical chic, hence, to be something that must be shown off and talked about.<sup>40</sup> Of course this is not very special for the cultural system (as similar observations can be made in other economies as well) - however, as part of the dominating power structures ruling within an arena of capital representation, its influence on and its consequences for an alternative idea of net.culture can hardly be ignored.<sup>41</sup>

At a first glance one might feel inclined to assume that this development should favour also those who are regarding network as an alternative to traditional working structures and to the even under the sign of the so called flat hierarchies of the new economy still vital traditional hierarchies in the cultural field. Their way to work has become fashionable, hence they can make more use of it - so what?



Suhail Malik discuss the fate of a movement. In: *mute*, Nr. 20: Born in the USA, July/August 2001. For an online documentation of the article and a following discussion see the archive of Old Boys mailinglist, [http://amsterdam.nettime.org/ListsArchives/old\\_boys-0108/msg00017.html](http://amsterdam.nettime.org/ListsArchives/old_boys-0108/msg00017.html) [last accessed 01. 03. 2002].

<sup>5</sup>See: First Cyberfeminist International Kassel 1997. A Reader, Ed. Old Boys Network/Cornelia Solfrank, Hamburg: OBN, 1998; as well as the online documentation on the OBN Homepage <http://www.obn.org>, OBN projects/First Cyberfeminist international [last accessed 01. 03. 2002].

61.e. already the first "non-definition", "cyberfeminism is no fragrance", was not at all chosen by chance or for pure satire, but goes back to a r.l. performance that took place in a german drug store supermarket, where - probably as a consumer's commodity for those staying unplugged - a new fragrance called "cyber" was being advertised.

<sup>7</sup>In this case, writing a (cyberfeminist) manifesto that point by point refuses to be one, has to be read not least as a way to deal with an art world not only waiting for manifestos to refresh the myth of avantgarde art, but also greedy for any political statement adoptable without leaving the frame. One should be well aware about the fact the First Cyberfeminist International took place in the framework of "Hybrid Workspace" at documenta X, an international art exhibition by tradition propagating the belief in "(avantgarde) art bridging differences worldwide" - and doing so by the way of "outstanding singular artistic positions" (besides, still strongly connected to the biennale-idea of national representation). Of course, in the Nineties, the credo for a "Wellsprache der Kunst" (a formula used by one of the founders of documenta, the art historian Werner Haftmann, see also fn. 12) had been outdated for a long time past: However, while Catherine David's version held a lot on the socio-political context of contemporary art and indeed provided several formats to embed it in the exhibition itself (i.e. with the "Hybrid Workspace"), the focus on "singular outstanding positions" nevertheless remained; and considered the curator's strong emphasis on the importance of "socio-political movements", it was as astonishing as obvious feminism(s) were not on her agenda. The "Cyberfeminist Fortnight" had been invited by the organizers of "Hybrid Workspace".

<sup>8</sup>An unsolved problem especially in the art world. See my essay: *Ganz automatisch ein Genie? Cyberfeministische Vernetzung und die schöne Kunst, Karriere zu machen*. In: *Musen Mythen Markt. Jahrbuch VIII der Frauenbeauftragten der Hochschule der Künste Berlin*, Hrsg. Sigrid Haase, Berlin: HdK, 2000, pp. 41-49.

<sup>9</sup>To introduce a term originally created for and further developed in a text I wrote in 2001 to be presented in the framework of the symposium "Welcome to the Revolution" (HGKZ Zurich, November 9th to 11th, 2001): "J'est un job.creator bot. On cultural part time worker self-management under net\_conditions" (publication in preparation). The formula "net\_condition" refers to the title of an exhibition organized by the ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie in 1999 to which - as one of the networks invited to participate - OBN contributed a special interpretation of Old Boys Networking under "institutionalised" net\_conditions; see: <http://www.zkm.de/netcondition> for the exhibition and <http://www.obn.org/zkm/> for the contribution [last accessed 01. 03. 2002].

<sup>10</sup>A situation nicely described i.e. in René Pollesch's plays from the "Heidi Hoh"-series (1999ff), informed by critical theories and practices as developed in the surrounding of groups like "minimal club" or the Berlin based b\_books store & publishers. See <http://www.bbooks.de> and <http://www.anbaueuermite.de> [last accessed 01. 03. 2002].

<sup>11</sup>If not in terms of payment, for sure in terms of social status, in terms of what you are doing, and also in terms of how much the way you are working is under control.

<sup>12</sup>As already noted above (cf. fn. 7), the term was created by the German art historian Werner Haftmann in the fifties - in order to propagate "informal" and "expressionist" abstraction ("Informel") as the international language of post-war modern art (and, at the same time, disqualifying (socialist) realism as the language of anti-modernist political suppression of "the freedom of art"). See: Walter Grasskamp: *Die unbewältigte Moderne. Kunst und Öffentlichkeit*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2nd ed. 1994.

<sup>13</sup>To a certain degree, a similar process was to be observed already under the signs of the "old economy" wherever cultural production is loosing terrain to "cultural industry" (Kulturindustrie).

<sup>14</sup>See: Caroll Haak/Günther Schmidt: *Arbeitsmärkte für Künstler und Publizisten - Modelle einer zukünftigen Arbeitswelt?*, Berlin: WZB Wissenschaftszentrum für Sozialforschung, 1999.

<sup>15</sup>To be precise, while in discussions the terms "work" and "labour" are used alternatively (however without notable difference), Lazzarato's translators used the latter - while I do prefer the first. See: Maurizio Lazzarato: *Lavoro immateriale. Forme di vita e produzione di soggettività*, Verona: Ombre corte, 1997; german: Maurizio Lazzarato: *Immaterielle Arbeit. Gesellschaftliche Tätigkeit unter den Bedingungen des Postfordismus*. In: (An)Ton(i) Negri/Maurizio Lazzarato/Paolo Virno: *Umherschweifende Produzenten. Immaterielle Arbeit und Subversion*, Berlin: ID Verlag, 1998; english: Maurizio Lazzarato: *Immaterial Labor. In Radical Thought in Italy*, Ed. Paolo Virno/Michael Hardt, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 133-147; online version [http://www.emery.archive.mcmill.com/public\\_html/immateriale/lazzarato.html](http://www.emery.archive.mcmill.com/public_html/immateriale/lazzarato.html) [last accessed 01. 03. 2002]. Recommended further reading: Antonio Negri/Michael Hardt: *Die Arbeit des Dionysos*, Berlin: ID-Verlag, 1997; Antonio Negri/Michael Hardt: *Empire*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

<sup>16</sup>An issue not only with a long tradition in art history, but for sure not by chance emerging especially in times when the socio-cultural system, and the art system as a part of it, are undergoing significant structural changes. A "classical" example for what I have in mind here is Gustave Courbets "L'atelier du peintre" (1855); and without doubt what concerns the contemporary situation, one could not only easily list a whole row of individual artistic projects bringing up this issue, but also refer to numerous non-institutional and recently also a growing number of institutional projects ("half way between symptom and critic", this text of cause would be part of this list as well). Last but not least, very similar observations could be also made focussing one special part within this "economy of meta-labour", that is work on and in "working relations", nowadays also known as networking.

<sup>17</sup>I am referring here to Pierre Bourdieu's terms, see: Pierre Bourdieu: *Zur Soziologie der symbolischen Formen*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1970 and *Les Règles de l'art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Paris: Seuil, 1992.

<sup>18</sup>"Der Dritte Sektor" ("The Third Sector") is a term used to describe the sector of (poor or non paid, self-organized) work in non-profit oriented organisations. While usually associated with a whole range of NGOs (amongst which cultural organisations appear to be a minority), the term "The Third Sector" in a way seems indeed already applicable to traditional segments of cultural work being done neither in organisations run by the government (i.e. state museums, universities) nor belonging to the sector of economy (private collections, galleries, art consulting). However, what's new is that with the increasing amount of part-time and free-lance jobs offered also by institutions belonging to the other sectors, borders begin to blur.

For further information on current notions of the "Third Sector" see i.e. *Der Dritte Sektor in Deutschland*, Ed. Helmut K. Anheier, et al., Berlin: WZB Wissenschaftszentrum für Sozialforschung Berlin, 1997; *Dritter Sektor - Dritte Kraft, Versuch einer Standortbestimmung*, Ed. Rupert von Strachwitz, Düsseldorf, 1998 and the Homepage of the German "Maecenata Institute", <http://www.maecenata.de/> (information in English available). It should be added in this context that while in times of high unemployment the "Third Sector" is often described in positive terms as a future perspective for co-ex-

istence under the signs of co-operative activities, the very activities discussed are those by tradition done by women. For a feminist perspective on the "Third Sector" I'd highly recommend the portal "Feministische Arbeits Forschung", <http://home.globalseerve.de/~fr3842/index.html> [last accessed 01. 03. 2002].

<sup>19</sup>See Haak/Schmidt 1999 (cf. fn. 14) and my discussion below.

<sup>20</sup>Donna Haraway: *A Manifesto for Cyborgs. Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's*, in: *Socialist Review*, No. 80, pp. 65-108. Reprinted as "A Cyborg Manifesto. Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" in: Donna Haraway: *Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, 1991, pp.149-181; as well as in: *The Gendered Cyborg. A Reader*, Ed. Gill Kirkup/Linda Janes/Fiona Hovenden/Kathryn Woodward, London/New York: Routledge 1999, pp. 50-57. Available online under: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html> and <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~alc8/cyborg.html> [both last accessed 01. 03. 2002]

<sup>21</sup>Jeremy Rifkin: *The End of Work. The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era*, New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1995.

<sup>22</sup>Richard Sennett: *The Corrosion of Character*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1998.

<sup>23</sup>Terms that traditionally were "coded" as markers of femininity (if not even subsumed under the quasi genetic features of "the woman"), and nowadays reappear as characteristic parts of the profile afforded in the new economy of work: be it simply included in job offers or on the checklists of trainees "dressed for success", be it in the framework of descriptive/analytical/critical publications on the issue (a.o. Rifkin, Sennett). For sure not by chance Haraway introduces these terms already in the framework of what she calls the "Informatics of Domination", as this allows her later also to link the profile of the (now probably white male) "home worker" back to what according to the old terminology/economy would have been a "housewife" or "servant": What counts is no longer "sex", but "genetics" - and semiotics.

<sup>24</sup>Haraway 1991 (cf. fn. 20), p. 166.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>29</sup>See: Sennett

1995 (cf. fn. 22). [My translation of the German translation, *Der flexible Mensch. Die Kultur des neuen Kapitalismus*, 3d Ed., Munich: Siedler, 2000, p. 59]

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. [Again, my translation of the German translation, Munich 2000, p. 60]

<sup>31</sup>Ibid. [Again, my translation of the German translation, Munich 2000, p. 70]

<sup>32</sup>See fn. 17.

<sup>33</sup>See: Thomas Rübke: *Kunst und Arbeit. Künstler zwischen Autonomie und sozialer Unsicherheit*, Ed. Kulturforum der Sozialdemokratie, Essen: Klartext, 2000, p. 188 [my translation]. The study was ordered by the Kulturforum der Sozialdemokratie and supported by Philip Morris Kunstförderung (an initiative belonging to the tobacco company of the same name as umbrella organisation for its sponsoring activities especially in the contemporary art).

<sup>34</sup>See: Hans Peter Thurn: *Die Sozietät der Solitären. Gruppen und Netzwerke in der Bildenden Kunst*. In: *Künstlergruppen. Von der Utopie einer kollektiven Kunst*, Kunstforum International, Vol. 116, november/december 1991, pp. 100-127. For a further exploration of more recent versions of the utopia of collaborative production in the context of media and webbased art see also my essay: "Wie köstlich ist ein digitaler Kadaver?" *Kunst-Netz-Werke und die neue, alte Utopie von einer kollektiven Kunst*. In: *log.buch. Materialien zu log.in - netz/kunst/werke*, Nuremberg: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2001, pp. 152-169.

<sup>35</sup>Rübke 2000, p. 189 in resuming Thurn [my translation]. For a more detailed insight, see Thurn's own resumé, Thurn 1991, pp. 123 ff.

<sup>36</sup>See Wolfgang Ruppert: *Der moderne Künstler. Zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte der kreativen Individualität in der kulturellen Moderne im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1998, esp. pp. 225 ff.

<sup>37</sup>As i.e. Pierre Bourdieu showed in detail in "Les règles d'art" for Flaubert's circle and the literary field in 19th century France, see: Bourdieu 1992 (cf. fn. 17).

<sup>38</sup>During the last thirty years, a lot of fruitful research on this issue has been done in the framework of feminist art history; as one of the earliest contributions to a meanwhile impressing amount of publications Linda Nochlin's famous essay "Why Have There Been No Great Artists?" (1971). Repr. in: Linda Nochlin: *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*, New York: Harper and Row, 1988, pp. 145-178 is still highly recommendable. However, especially with regard to a feminist socialist perspective as developed by Donna Haraway, as well as the key issue of "homework economy" as discussed here, I would also like to refer to Lu Märten's early essay on "Die Künstlerin" (1914/1919) as an outstanding analysis that allows to draw more but one parallel to the problems here discussed with focus on the Post-fordian economy of "immaterial work" and "invisible work". See: Lu Märten: *Die Künstlerin*, Repr. ed. Chryssoula Kambas, Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2001, and my review written in occasion of the recent reprint in: *Querelles-Net. Rezensionsschrift für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung*, Ed. Ulla Bock/Constance Jaiser/Angelika Runge, FU Berlin, no. 6, march 2002, <http://www.querelles-net.de/2002-6/text10.htm> [last accessed 01. 03. 2002].

<sup>39</sup>Haak/Schmidt 1999 (cf. fn. 14), p. 31 [my translation; comment in square brackets mine].

<sup>40</sup>For further discussion of this issue see also my essay: "What is A Net.Artist?" On the uses and disadvantages of the legend of the artist in the era of its techno-logical reproducibility. In: *From Work To Words*, Ed. Doris Frohnapef (to appear in print spring 2002).

<sup>41</sup>An issue further explored in my lecture "Masche oder mehr? Netzwerke(n) als schöne Kunst betrachtet. Überlegungen zur Ökonomie eines Transfers", held in the framework of ncc net community congress/Steirischer Herbst, Graz, october 2001 (publication in preparation).

<sup>42</sup>An online project conceived by the Paris based artist and run in collaboration with the Kunsthochschule Braunschweig to build up a mutual dialogue between art and theory on "the vision of art in art and its relationship to theoretical discourse". As a first step, Gerz invited six artists to choose one of their own images, and six theorists to write a short text, by asking both to answer the question "In the context of contemporary art, what is your vision of a yet unknown art?". At the same time, introducing a "snowball-like" principle to continue, all contributors were asked to name an artist (theorist) to prepare the next contribution. See: <http://www.anthology-of-art.net> [last accessed 01. 03. 2002]. Leaving aside the problem of difference between the tasks, the project in itself is also a good example for the sharp edge (or, if you want so: the oscillating borders) between "networking" and "tie-ropes"-structures in the operating system of art.

<sup>43</sup>See: Sara Arrhenius: *The Art Of Making A Scene In A Room Which Is No Longer There*. In: *Lettre International*, no. 54, 2001, p. 51 (contributions to the anthology appear online for a fortnight only, however, a few are also reprinted in *Lettre International*; in parallel a documentation of the project as a whole is planned to appear in print after the online project closes).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. [Comment in square brackets mine].

<sup>45</sup>To use the formula for one of the "most traditional utopias of art" as significantly mirrored by the title of an exhibition organized in 1974 by the Institute of Contemporary Art, London (see also the exh. cat. *Art Into Society/Society Into Art*, London: ICA, 1974).

<sup>46</sup>Haraway 1991 (cf. fn. 20), p. 163.

**"the very video"  
documenting "The very  
cyberfeminist  
international - Hamburg  
13.12.-16.12.2001"**

a film by janine sack in cooperation  
with Britta von Heintze,  
interviews: ANIA CORCILIUS

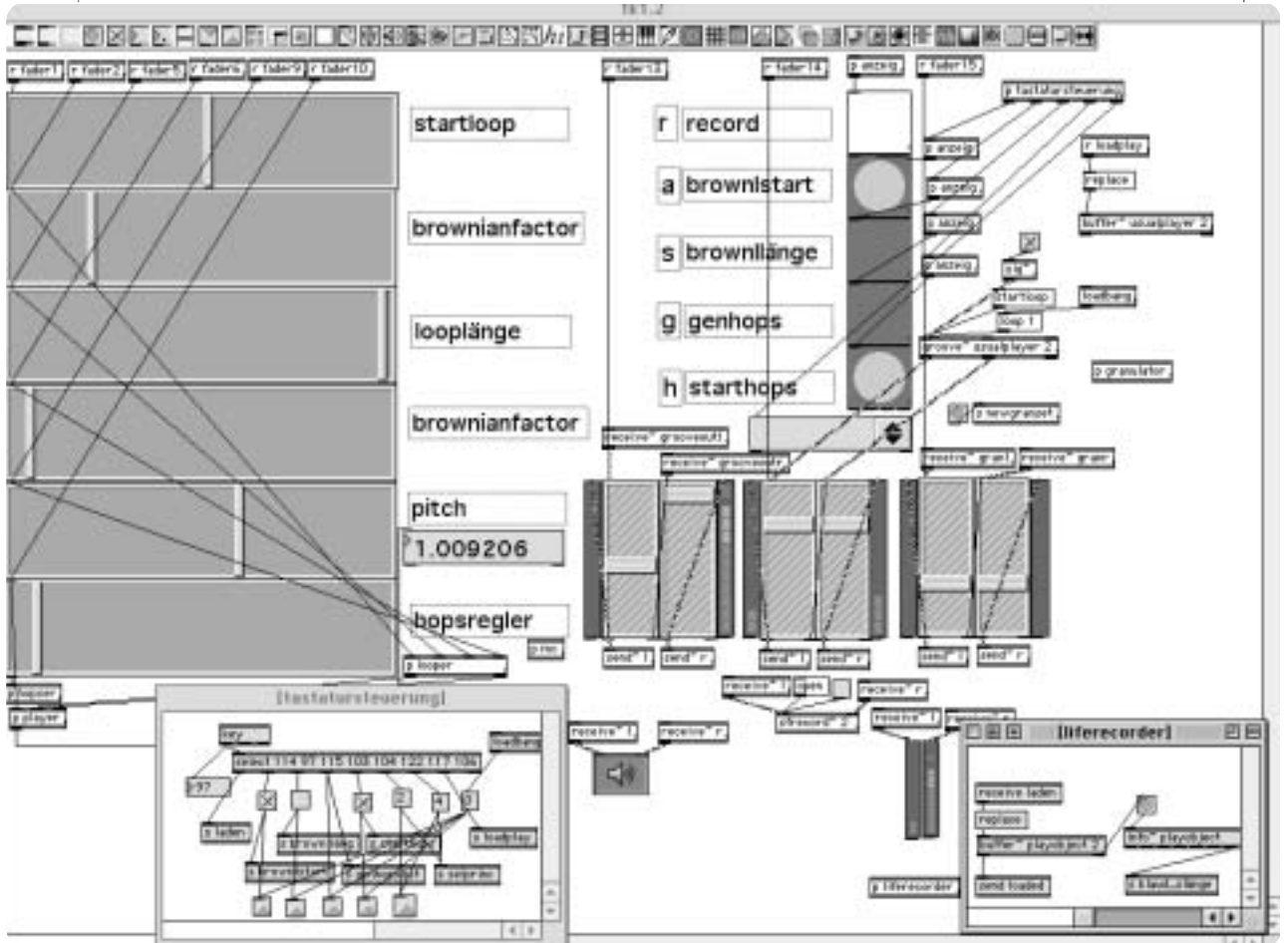


available from summer  
2002 via [veryvideo@gmx.net](mailto:veryvideo@gmx.net)  
for further information please  
check [www.obn.org](http://www.obn.org)



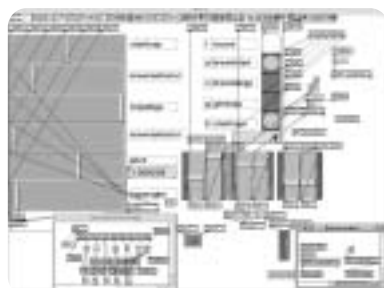
For this CD I designed a software with 'MAX', which is a grafically based surface with open, changeable structures for programming. Amongst other functions it can be used for programming individual audio tools.

My programming functions like a musical instrument.



This way it was possible for me, to work with sounds, recorded at the conference. Handling them easily and intuitively, working out the different sound aspects of the recordings.

thanks to Michael Rieken



**claudia kapp**

**on/from  
the conference  
'very cyberfeminist  
international'  
(composition, audio cd)**

**Names**

Susanna Paasonen, Nana Petzet, Laurence Rassel, Andrea Sick, Galerie Helga Broll, Andrea Hapke, Barbara Thoens, Britta Bonifacius, Jutta Weber, Corinna Bath, Annette Schindler, Christina Goestl, Cindy Gabriela Flores, Claudia Kapp, Claudia Reiche, Cornelia Sollfrank, Elisabeth Strowick, Faith Wilding, Helene von Oldenburg, Irina Aristarkova, Janine Sack, Jill Scott, Linda Putzenhardt, Ariane Brenssell, Maria Fernandez, Britta von Heintze, Natalie Bookchin, Neda Ploskov, RAWA – Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, Rena Tangens, Sara Platon, subRosa, Uli Peter, Ulrike Bergermann, Ursula Biemann, Virtuella, VNS Matrix, Waltraud Schwab, Nina Stuhldreher, Andrea Jana Korb, Margaret Tan, Feminist Indymedia Austria, Claude Draude, Isabelle Massu, Nathalie Magnan

**Nationalities**

CH, AU, MEX, USA, RU, SG, F, S, AUS, B, AF, NL, SF, D, INT, GB, CH...

**BORN**

México City, Kenzingen, Cologne, Melbourne, Stade, Munich, Kabul, Stockholm, Magdeburg, Hamburg, Nürnberg, Singapore, in 1955 in the sign of Virgo, ascendant Pisces, astrological analysis of his constellation at birth reveals a peculiar mixture of male and female elements, 1975, 1972, 1969, 1952, 1970, 1955, 1962, 1977, 29 years ago, came to life in the spring of 1996, 1964, 1970, emerged from the cyberswamp during a Southern Australian Summer circa 1991...

**LIVE AND WORK IN**

Berlin, Berlin, the EU, Hamburg, Hamburg, Berlin and Celle, Pittsburgh, Hamburg, Rastede and Hamburg, Moskau, Singapore, Marseille and Paris, Hamburg and Stockholm, Brussels, Lasalle-Sia, New York, Hamburg, Bielefeld, Amsterdam, Turku, Helsinki, Zürich...

**educations and professions**

German literature and cultural science studies in Heidelberg, Bremen and Hamburg, culturologist, russist, studied art history and sociology at the university of Zurich and Madrid, psychologist, feminist-activist, netizen, journalist working day time in Modemmuier, part time student at the International Women's University, project area information, since 1998 student at the School of Fine Arts, HfK Bremen/Germany, since 2000 Class of Time Based Media, HfK Bremen/Germany, works in the fields of documentation and fiction, improvisations with video and sound, 1990 – 98 Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg, Visual Communication, 1992 – 93 frauen•und•technik, female artist group, 1993 – 97 -Innen, female artist group, since 1992 different forms of work with mainly film and video, since 2001 Kungliga Konsthögskolan, Stockholm, gueststudent, practicing artist who situates her practice within a feminist context, she works with a wide range of media from objects, performance and installation to new media, she was the recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award (RMIT) in her Bachelor of Fine Arts programme and became the first Artist-in-Residence with the Cyberarts Initiative, University Scholars Programme, National University of Singapore, she has been studying sculpture in Vienna and concept art in Hamburg, student at the Academies of Fine Arts in Munich and Vienna, gaining a master's degree in communication science, writing a thesis: topic Open Publishing: a radical way of making, selecting and sharing news, educational scientist especially on inclusive education, independent living/people first movement, studied art and cultural theory in Mexico and at the School of Visual Arts (BFA) and the Whitney Program in New York, 1989 - 1991 Studium an der Med. Akademie Magdeburg, Medizin, 1993 - 1999 Studium an der FH Hamburg, FB Gestaltung, Diplom, 1999 - 2002 Studium an der HfBK Hamburg, Visuelle Kommunikation, studied drama, social sciences, languages and fine art in Berlin and London, teaching assignments in art theory and cultural science on pictorial theories and psychoanalysis at the University of Bremen, PhD with a grant from the Heinrich Böll Stiftung at the University of Hamburg on 'Kartenmuster. Bilder und Wissenschaft in der Kartographie' (Map patterns. Pictures and science in cartography), MA thesis about 'russian cyberfeministic strategies between reality, virtuality and fiction', wrote her thesis on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of taste applied to the perception of Jean Tinguely's work, her PhD thesis is inspired by the famous Turing test: How are constructions of gender linked to the boundary work that separates the technological from the human/social sphere?, net.artist and communication designer, holding a master of art degree, aiming at her M.A. in Cultural Studies/Sociology at the University of Bremen (Germany), her master's thesis is on 'CYBERFEMINISM: the internet, new technologies and feminist agency', held a lecture on cyberfeminism at the Informatica Feminale 2000 in Bremen, media theorist, artist, curator, artist, Studium der Germanistik und Psychologie an der Universität Hamburg, 1998 Promotion im Fach 'Deutsche Sprache und Literatur' mit der Arbeit 'Passagen der Wiederholung. Kierkegaard - Lacan - Freud' (Stuttgart, Weimar 1999), artist, archivist, curator, holds a doctor's degree of Agricultural Science and a Diploma in Visual Arts, exhibited many video artworks, conceptual performances and interactive environments in USA, Australia, Europe and Japan, in 1973, she completed a Degree in Film, Art and Design from Prahran Institute of Technology, Melbourne, from 1975-1982 she lived in San Francisco, where she finished a Masters Degree

in Communications from San Francisco State University, and became the Director of Site, Cite, Sight, an alternative Gallery for Sculptural Installation, in 1982 she returned to Australia to lecture in Media at the University of New South Wales, College of Fine Arts, Sydney and started the Australian Video Festival, she has worked with computers leading to 3d Animation and Interactive Art, in 1992 she was invited to be a Guest Professor for Computer Animation, in the Hochschule für Kunst, Saarbrücken, Germany, and in 1993 won a Award of Destination at Ars Electronica for Interactive Art, from 1994-97 she was an Artist in Residence and project co-ordinator for the Medienmuseum at the Zentrum für Kunst und Medien Technology in Karlsruhe (ZKM) as well as a Research Fellow at The Center for Advanced Inquiry into the Interactive Arts, University of Wales, Great Britain, where she was awarded a Doctorate in Media Philosophy, philosopher and science studies scholar, researcher on 'The Concept of Life in Artificial Life and Robotics' at the Univ. of Braunschweig, Dept. of History, PhD Thesis on 'Contested Meanings: Nature in the Age of Technoscience' (forthcoming 2002, Campus), cyberfeminist, 1971-74 Fotografenlehre in Stade, 1974-77 Portraitfotografin in Hamburg, 1980-81 Studium Informations-Design an der Fachhochschule Kiel, 1981-87 Studium Visuelle Kommunikation an der Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg, since 1988 freelance photographer in Hamburg (Magazines, News Papers, Portraits, Theater and freie Arbeiten), holds a doctorate in Colonial/Post-Colonial art from Columbia University, since 1987, when she proclaimed 'rational scientific art' her artwork has focused on a critical appraisal of scientific thinking, she has dealt increasingly with environmental problems in the last few years, at the moment she does an inventarisation of her huge collection of trash and recycling objects by using a sophisticated museum-databank called Hida Midas, shameless feminist and cyberfem when necessary, artist, dj and musician, artist and journalist, experimental film, video and free radio, is a reproducible cyberfeminist cell of cultural researchers committed to combining art, activism, and politics to explore the intersections of the new information and biotechnologies on women's bodies, lives, and work, holds an MA in Cinema and television studies (1998) and works as researcher at the department of Media Studies, University of Turku, Finland, where she is finishing a PhD on cybernetic discourses, gender and the popular Internet, her doctoral dissertation is about sign language notation as image and/or writing, her art and curatorial practice focuses on the representation of minority identities and gender in the media and in posturban zones, such as the US-Mexico border or the periphery of Istanbul, writer, freelance journalist for major German newspaper and their internet editions, make works which ironically integrate theory with popular culture...

**Positions**

general and conceptual manager Frauen.Kultur.Labor Thealit, freelance-work at the east-west womens' network (OWEN) – and looking for new spaces of agency, working on the circus-theater summer-production of zt geschwindel, at VUESCH (association for overcoming gravity – verein zur ueberwindung der schwerkraft), at the design-collective pixelsterben, director of a new media art space [plugin] in Basel, Switzerland, developed the concept for the space redefining the structures of traditional art institutions to suit the specific needs of new media cultural production, lecturer for feminist psychology, research methods and epistemology at the Free University in Berlin, mathematician and assistant at the University of Bremen, Computer Science Department, works, teaches and does research in Applied Computer Science ('Angewandte Informatik/Informatik und Gesellschaft'), founder of SEX – a positive guide, creatrix of matrix.64 and, most recently, s.EXE, a loop-based visual sequencing tool for VJ's and other playful people, editor of Mujeres in the open directory project (ODP), she was member of the artist groups 'frauen-und-technik' and '-Innen', and initiated the cyberfeminist organisation 'old boys network', wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Postdoc-Kolleg 'Krankheit und Geschlecht' der Universität Greifswald und Lehrbeauftragte am Institut für Germanistik II der Universität Hamburg, member of the French feminist Association Les Pénélopes, since 1998, focusing in the training for women on image analysis, and visual media understanding, seit Mai 2001 HAW Hamburg, Fachbereich Gestaltung künstlerisch wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin, as a strategic tool for alternative practices of information and communication, part of an artist collective and contemporary art structure in Marseille: La Compagnie, she is currently working with Martine Derain on a net art project: a game exposing the gentrification strategies of the city politics, in collaboration since two years with constant vzw on cyberfeminists events and workshops, Professor for Installation design in the Media Faculty at The Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany, from April 1998 Director of the non profit-organization Constant vzw based in Brussels, the organization puts in relation theoretical thinking, critical use, artistic behavior and political questions on the web, organizing workshops, lectures, exhibitions in public places, main issues: open source, cyberfeminism, copyleft, sharing new media knowledge, from february 2001: coordinator for Sophia, Belgian network for women's studies, December 1999: launching of the Cyberfeminism webbased platform, tutoring (part-time) on 'New Media Arts' for the School of Computing, National University of Singapore and lecturing (part-time) with the Department of Art Theory and Art History in LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, offering courses such as History of Performance Art, Issues in Performance, History of Installation Art and Domesticating Space: Constructing the Home, member of the cyberfemi-

nist group subRosa, professor of new technologies at l'ecole nationale des beaux arts de dijon, webmistress of the site 'les chiennes de garde', president of the gay and lesbian film festival in Paris, independent political/social organization of Afghan women fighting for human rights and for social justice in Afghanistan, is cofounder of FoeBuD e.V. and the BIONIC bbs and curator of the monthly culture & technology event PUBLIC DOMAIN since 1987, director of the Edith Russ Site of Media Art Oldenburg, is working at the media science section of the University of Paderborn, Germany, is involved in the Frauen.Kultur.Labor Thealit in Bremen, she is with the Institute for Theory in Art and Design at HGKZ, Zurich...

## Interests

in the area of psychoanalysis, media and cultural theory and cartography, especially in the interface between scientific, artistic and curatorial work, research on gender, globalisation and everyday-life, transdisciplinarity, gender studies in computer science, feminist science and technology studies with a special interest in the research on and construction of embodied conversational agents, research and work in the field of (un)popular culture, arts administrative work and artist's support, hacking (sub)cultural, predominately 'male' occupied, meaning producing systems, that are part of pop/youth culture, such as: Cyberpunk, Manga/Anime, Role-playing/Games, Electronic Music, Graffiti and HipHop – with interests like these she feels like 'one of the boys', but..., focuses on (cyber)feminist approaches to the question of how man/machine relations are designed with words and images, central to her conceptual and performative works are the relation between art and politics, changing notions of art and the advent of a new image of the artist in the information age, gender-specific handling of technology, as well as the deconstruction of the all-pervading power of technology, Arbeit an der Habilitation zum Thema: 'Sprechende Körper. Konzepte des Performativen in Literatur und Rhetorik', Schwerpunkte in Forschung und Lehre: Literaturtheorie, Theorien des Performativen, Rhetorik, Psychoanalyse, feministische Literaturwissenschaft/ Gender Studies, her work – presented in lectures, performances and installations – centers on research of appearances and effects digital media forces on perception, society and future, writing and teaching on Feminist Theory & Aesthetics, Cyberart and Cyberculture, and Russian national identity, among other topics, is working on Cyberarts Database at the National University of Singapore and on the Russian translation of Luce Irigaray's 'L'Éthique de la différence sexuelle' to be published in Moscow, areas of research: science studies of cyber- and lifescience, epistemology, philosophy of science, feminist theory, cyberfeminist doing/organizing some workshops, lectures, meetings, administrative work, radio program, video, websites, translations, art, sound, looking for networks, her work bridges the gap between Western and non-Western fields and challenges disciplinary boundaries, she is researching and writing about the role of electronic media technologies in the neo-colonialism of the new world order, as an artist she works mainly on audio-visual spaces, combining sculptural elements with sound, Low Tech, cyborgs, cognitive sciences, Nature Watch, Hip Hop, research on androcentrism and life in the networks, lectures and consulting for companies and institutions as well as the Enquete-Kommission of the German Bundestag, free speech, copyleft, digitech and passionflowers, gendering, her current work is based on developing web-design-criteria and sites with - so called 'mentally handicapped' - women on feminist contents, her current focus of interest is on 'reproduction' in biological and media discourse, media & collective memory, space & life, artificial intelligence & robotics, everyday-life, Berlin, culture and women, to investigate and decipher the narratives of domination and control which surround high technological culture, and explore the construction of social space, identity and sexuality in cyberspace, his...hmm, let's say 'career' is a bit older, though, you may reject the astrological perspective and call him a crossdresser or transvestite, if you like, anyway, gender issues have occupied his/her thinking and feeling to a great extent...

## Projects

founded 1990 the Thealit together with Anna Postmeyer, directed from 1997 - 2000 the Swiss Institute in New York and from 1992 — 1997 the Kunsthau Glarus in Switzerland, her exhibitions, publications and projects, have contributed to contemporary discourses such as: feminist approaches Helen Chadwick, 1995, Zoe Leonard 1997, Körper-Identität-Irritation, 1996, Where is your rupture? 1998, Marlene McCarty: bad blood - critical art practice Klöntalsommer, 1997, We are somewhere else already, 1998, Knowbotic Research: eventmodul:anonymous:database:muttering 2001, LAN: tracenoizer.org 2001, copyleft - digital cultural production [in development] technoculture (overdub, 1997; overpromised, 1998 both in collaboration with Schumacher/Clavadetscher, the networking project cyberfeminista, there are veteran and new feminists (from the mexican government congress to students), ex-editorial coordinator in México, at El Sitio.com, the most important latin-american dot-com and ex-editorial coordinator in Sputnik, a digital culture mexican magazine (print and online), dolgi', 16mm ('European Media Art Festival', Osnabrück '02), 'aus teilnahme wird gram', video (Videofestival 'Synchron', Oldenburg '01), 'fortwährend', self initiated project involving different artists (Bremen'01), 'TV Control', films and videos in public space/ Bremen '01), groupexhibitions - 'ein klein bisschen tiefer', interactive audiowork/ soundinstalla-

tion (Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen'01, 'digitales', symposium in Bruxelles '01 - 'futur2', sitespecificity (Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen'00), member of the thealit Frauen.Kultur.Labor, Bremen, and of the cyberfeminist alliance Old Boys Network, curating with Helene von Oldenburg The Mars Patent, the first exhibition site on Mars, 'Female Extension' (1997) was the hack of the first net.art competition initiated by a museum, in which she flooded the museum's network with submissions by 300 virtual female net artists, her net.art generator automatically produces art on demand, currently producing work on the subject of female hackers, and starts first experiments as composer of conceptual electronic music, merges her biography with that of subRosa, subRosa is a reproducible (cyber)feminist cell of cultural researchers committed to combining art, activism, and politics to explore and critique the effects of the intersections of the new information and biotechnologies on women's bodies, part of the group who started an international archive and library for women artists 'künstlerinnenarchiv', since 1992 conception of the space, projects and archive at bidwechsel-umbrella organisation for women/media/culture in hamburg together with birgit durbahn, since 1998 project work on biography and representation of women artists with interviews, club events, exhibitions, seminars gallery plays appearance as gallery Helga Broll at the Liste, young art fair in Basel with Lena Eriksson and Alexandra Vöggtli, member of the Old Boys Network, curator of 'UFO-Strategies', 2000, and with Claudia Reiche founder of the first interplanetarien exhibition site on Mars THE MARS PATENT, curated with Rosanne Altstatt 'Cyberdem Spirit – Spirit of Data' 2001/2002 at the Edith Russ Site for Media Art Oldenburg, Copy.cult and the Original Si(g)n (symposium: constantvzw.com/copy.cult), Cyberfeminism Working Days (workshop: media situation Jonctions 5 - 'Code'(may 2001), 1987 Fotografie und Realität (Diplomarbeit), Werkhof, Hamburg, Sequenzen, Serien, usw., (group show), Museum of Photographie, Braunschweig, 1998 Rituale, Kölibri, Hamburg and Kulturhaus Eppendorf, Hamburg, 2000 Gesicht 2000, Fundbureau, Hamburg, 2002 Great Expectations, Galerie im Atrium, Hamburg, Groupexhibitions 2000: 'Models of resistance', Overgaden, Kopenhagen, 'Real work', Werkleitz Biennale, Werkleitz, 'Aller Anfang ist Merz', Sprengel Museum Hannover, 'Räumen', Hamburger Kunsthalle, Soloexhibitions: 1997 Wir machen wahr, was der Grüne Punkt verspricht', Bonner Kunstverein, 1998 'Endurvinnlustö'nei takki!', Nylenudagta 15, Reykjavík, 2000 'Ekka frænka', Galleri one o one, Reykjavík, 2001'Vom Erfassungstyp zur Untergruppe', multi.trudi, Frankfurt/Main, lectures: 1987 'Rational Scientific Art', Akademie der Bildenden Künste München 1992 'Reversion als Realisation negentropischer Prozesse im makroskopischen Bereich', Centre d'Art Contemporain FRI-ART, Fribourg 1993 'Das Zoschka'sche Glas', Gasteig, München 1993 'Modellversuch ROT', Nationalgalerie Berlin, 1994 'Kennen Sie Schrödingers Katze?', Symposium 'Übergangsbogen und Überhöhungsrampe', Hochschule für bildende Künste; 2000 'Technokratie und cultural lag - mein Beitrag zur Verringerung des Abstands', Künstlerwerkstatt Lothringer Straße, München 2001 'Das Sammeln Bewahren Forschen – Abfallwiederverwertungssystem', Malkasten, Düsseldorf, Nov. 2001 Trailer, Clips für Unilever Preisverleihung 'Kunst & Marken', 2002 Dokumentarfilm Stahl - ein Stoff mit Zukunft, 16mm, 2000 – 2001 Der Breite Weg 35mm Dolby SR, Buch / Regie / Schnitt, 07/2000 Video Mitarbeit an der Dokumentation der Werkleitz-Biennale (Kunst & Medienfestival), has done tv projects for paper tiger TV, DeepDish but also Canal+ (france), has edited a book on video and is currently editing a book on art on teck network, since 1997 she is one musician of 'The Godmothers Part II', an electronic duo, who released their first album 'Murder Beats Vol.1' in 1998, The Godmothers Part II also composed music using turntables as instruments, for this piece they invented a new turntable score system, in 1999 - 2000 they created the short film 'La Storia di Giradischi a Madame Hu', as the title implicates the film is about turntable affairs and family business of the Godmothers Part II, with ironical reference to 'The Godfather' trilogy of Francis Ford Coppola, has been involved with media arts as a telerobot in Mats Hjelm's Vox Humana, 1996 as well as networker and author of net.art projects, among them Ground, zine on visual culture (1997, selected in Isea'98 top 20 sites), Hygeia Revisited (exhibited at Isea'98, Liverpool), How to Map a Non-Space? (Omnizone/Plexus 1998), Universal Tourist (Communication Front 00, Plovdiv, BG), and Namesake (CF 01), 'Severities should be dealt out all at once that by their suddenness they give less offence, benefits should be handed out drop by drop, that they be relished the more. There are so many ways to screw up your life, at any time respect who deserves it, and never underestimate the power of a woman!', co-founder of the online magazine www.artechock.de (1995) and of 'Linsenfrei', a pinhole photography project (1996), member of the feminist art project 'a room of one's own', since 2001, organization of lectures and events since 1998, curating of the lecture programme 'Digital Happy Hour' for the Medienforum, München 2001, founded the gallery and art project 'Art d'Ameublement' together with padeluu, she brought the first modern to documenta (d8!) and women into the Chaos Computer Club, she was artist in residence in Canada, PUBLIC DOMAIN - topics, documentation and info on coming events, ZaMir network documentation, Big Brother Award Germany, information on /CL network, information on ZERBERUS and CHARON software, Pretty Good Privacy, Text on androcentrism in the networks, done a zillion things since then, joined an internet collective and free computer space called ASCII two years ago, formed the Gender Changer Academy together with other female geeks, participant of the worldwide radical newnetwork called Independent Media Center, member of the

cyberfeminist project group, international women's university (ifu), videos: Performing the Border, on gendered condition of the global digital industry, 1999, Writing Desire, on female sexuality and the bride market in cyberspace, 2000, and Remote Sensing, a topography of the global sex trade in the age of geographic information systems, 2001, curatorial projects at Shedhalle Zurich 1995-1998 and upcoming Gender & Geography exhibition at Generali Foundation Vienna in Jan 2003, currently involved in Experiments in Mediated Earth Art (EMEA) a collaborative project with Lisa Parks from the UCSB at Makrolab, did among other things research on usability of multimedia interfaces, lectured at the Goldsmith College in London and organised women's educational programs in Berlin, when she first performed before an audience with a program of computer animations, she soon switched over to presenting the Internet live instead of preserved animations on video, she developed a certain technique of story-telling using websites, pictures, texts, sounds and whatever she finds on the Internet as raw material, she performed in cinemas, clubs, and even educational contexts...

**Published**

ÜberSchriften. Aus Bildern und Büchern, (1994), Serialität: Reihen und Netze, (2000), Hand. MediumKörperTechnik, (2001), published an article on cf in 'nylon', a vienna based magazine on feminism and popculture, PIXEL: Experiences with the Elements. In: Medicine Meets Virtual Reality: 4, Suzanne J. Weghorst, et al., (Eds.), Amsterdam, Oxford, Tokyo, Washington DC 1996, Feminism is digital. In: First cyberfeminist international, documenta x, kassel, Cornelia Sollfrank /Old Boys Network, Ed., Hamburg 1998, Bio(r)Evolution™, On the Contemporary Military-Medical Complex. In: The Spectralization of Technology: From Elsewhere to Cyberfeminism and Back, Marina Grzinic, Ed., Maribor 1999, On/Off-scenity. Medical and Erotic Couplings in the Context of the Visible Human Project. In: Cyberfeminism. Next Protocols, Claudia Reiche /Verena Kuni, Eds., New York (forthcoming), 'First Cyberfeminist International' (1988) and 'Next Cyberfeminist International' (1999), published 'UFO – Strategien' (2000) and with Rosanne Altstatt 'Cyberfem Spirit – Spirit of Data' (2002), cyberfeminism crossover: talking about intercultural and interdisciplinary experience, in: christiane floyd et al. (eds.): feminist challenges in the information age, leske & budrich 2002, selbstorganisation als 'little invisible hands': artificial life und die wunderbare ordnung einer undurchschaubaren welt. in: ulrike bergermann et al. (hg.): hand. körper – medium – technik. thealit 2001, leviathan oder trickster? erzählstrategien in aktueller erkenntniskritik und wissenschafts-forschung, audio and paper publication on the Cyberfeminism Working Days archives with translation into French and Dutch of cyberfeminist texts (june 2001), published with FoeBuD the first manual on PGP encryption in German language, has authored and edited three books on media culture in Finnish and is currently co-editing Women and Everyday Uses of the Internet: Agency & Identity together with Mia Consalvo, she published largely on gender and media related topics, 'been there and back to nowhere - on gender in transnational spaces', b\_books Berlin 2000...

**URLS**

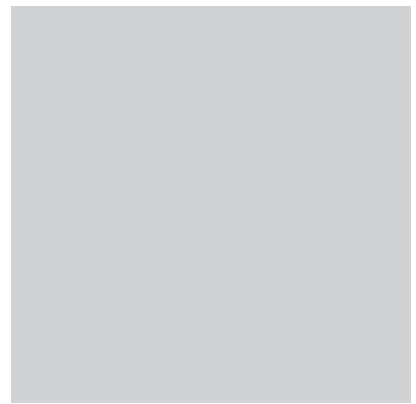
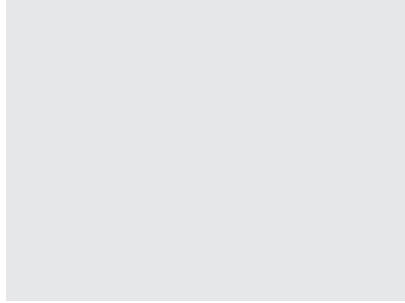
<http://www.thealit.de>  
<http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~brat/cyberfemin.html>  
<http://www.zt-geschwindel.org>  
<http://www.vuesch.org>  
<http://www.pixelsterben.de>  
<http://www.weallplugin.org>  
<http://www.kunsthauseglarus.ch>  
<http://sex.t0.or.at>  
<http://www.matrix64.net>  
<http://www.clitorea.net/sexe>  
<http://www.modemujer.org>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ciberfeminista>  
<http://www.sputnik.com.mx>  
<http://ciberfeminista.org>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ciberfeminista>  
<http://www.modemujer.org>  
<http://www.informatica-feminale.de>  
<http://me.in-berlin.de/~fish/claude/cf-for-dummies.html>  
<http://www.vifu.de>  
<http://www.ifuc.org>  
<http://www.thealit.dsn.de>  
<http://www.mars-patent.org>  
<http://www.rrz.uni-hamburg.de/koerperbilder>  
<http://www.obn.org>  
<http://www.obn.org/femext>  
<http://www.obn.org/generator>  
<http://www.obn.org/hackers>  
<http://www.art.cfa.cmu.edu/wilding>  
<http://www.galerie-broll.com>  
<http://www.edith-russ-haus.de>  
<http://www.mars-patent.org>  
<http://www.cyberartweb.org>

<http://www.penelopes.org>  
<http://www.aux2mondes.org>  
<http://www.digitales-online.org>  
<http://www.constantvzw.com>  
<http://www.jillscott.org>  
<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/iwt/gk/publikationen/bd-weber.pdf>  
<http://www.constantvzw.com/cyberf>  
<http://www.constantvzw.com/cyberf>  
<http://www.constantvzw.com/cyberf/work>  
<http://www.constantvzw.com/vj5>  
<http://chiennesdegarde.org/forum2.php3>  
<http://Action-tank.org>  
<http://calarts.edu/~bookchin>  
<http://chiennesdegarde.org>  
<http://www.godmothers.de>,  
<http://www.artechock.de>  
<http://www.linsenfrei.de>  
<http://www.aroomofonesown.at>  
<http://www.medienforum.org/projekt/2001/digitalhappyhour.html>  
<http://www.rawa.org>  
<http://www.tangens.de>  
<http://www.foebud.org>  
<http://www.foebud.org/texte/presse/artikel>  
<http://www.bigbrotherawards.de>  
<http://www.cl-netz.de>  
<http://www.zerberus.com>  
<http://www.foebud.org/texte/publish/pgp.html>  
<http://www.foebud.org/art/TEXTE/andororo.html>  
<http://www.foebud.org/art/wiwiwi.html>  
<http://www.edith-russ-haus.de>  
<http://genderchangers.org>  
<http://squat.net/ascii>  
<http://www.indymedia.org>  
<http://www.translocal.net/susanna/>  
<http://www.playmylittlepussy.com>  
<http://www.translocal.net/hygeia/>  
<http://www.translocal.net/ground/>  
<http://www.vifu.de/>  
<http://www.thealit.dsn.de>  
<http://www.uni-paderborn.de/~bergerma>  
<http://hrz.upb.de/reproduktion>  
<http://www.geobodies.org>  
<http://www.virtuella.net>  
 ...

**mail to**

[muxomop@gmx.net](mailto:muxomop@gmx.net)  
[ajak@vuesch.org](mailto:ajak@vuesch.org)  
[aschindler@iplugin.org](mailto:aschindler@iplugin.org)  
[clitorea@t0.or.at](mailto:clitorea@t0.or.at)  
[cindygabriela@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:cindygabriela@prodigy.net.mx)  
[draude@gmx.net](mailto:draude@gmx.net)  
[claudia.reiche@hamburg.de](mailto:claudia.reiche@hamburg.de)  
[cornelia@snaufu.de](mailto:cornelia@snaufu.de)  
[helgabroll@hotmail.com](mailto:helgabroll@hotmail.com)  
[fwild+@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:fwild+@andrew.cmu.edu)  
[helene\\_oldenburg@arachnomancy.org](mailto:helene_oldenburg@arachnomancy.org)  
[uspia@nus.edu.sg](mailto:uspia@nus.edu.sg)  
[isa@aux2mondes.org](mailto:isa@aux2mondes.org)  
[sackjanine@hotmail.com](mailto:sackjanine@hotmail.com)  
[jill.scott@medien.uni-weimar.de](mailto:jill.scott@medien.uni-weimar.de)  
[cyberf@constantvzw.com](mailto:cyberf@constantvzw.com)  
[marge\\_tan00@hotmail.com](mailto:marge_tan00@hotmail.com)  
[Xochipilli@compuserve.com](mailto:Xochipilli@compuserve.com)  
[nina\\_maschina@hotmail.com](mailto:nina_maschina@hotmail.com)  
[rena@bionic.zerberus.de](mailto:rena@bionic.zerberus.de)  
[sara@genderchangers.org](mailto:sara@genderchangers.org)  
[suspaa@utu.fi](mailto:suspaa@utu.fi)  
[upeter@uni-bremen.de](mailto:upeter@uni-bremen.de)  
[bergerma@uni-paderborn.de](mailto:bergerma@uni-paderborn.de)  
[geobodies@smile.ch](mailto:geobodies@smile.ch)  
[schwab@ipn.de](mailto:schwab@ipn.de)  
 ...

If you are interested more in specified information, i.e. noise reduction, please check the bios of the contributors at <http://www.obn.org> or ask your WWW search-engines to search for the authors names, email-adresses, project and publication titles...



**TO**

**cyberfeminism**

**in 1 easy step:**

**Just try!**