



GRADUATION 2009 MEDIA DESIGN PIET ZWART INSTITUTE WDKA

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H u h ?

O o p s . . .

F * c k !

O h . . .

O h , n o !

W a i t . . .

A g a i n . . .

a s o c i a l c o m p u t a t i o n e x p e r i m e n t

GRADUATION 2009 MEDIA DESIGN
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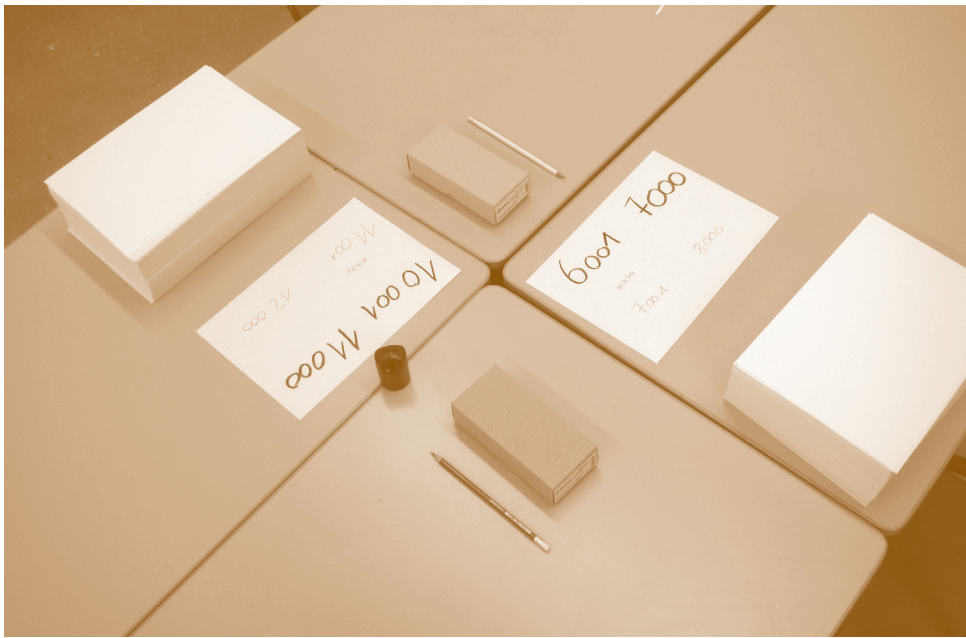


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GRADUATION 2009 MEDIA DESIGN

With contributions by Dennis de Bel,
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INTRODUCTION

The Master programme in Media Design, and the Piet Zwart Institute as a whole, is known for its critical study and socially reflected practice of design, art and media. That said, we hope that our students realize something even more important: that it is them who shape and define what media design, and hence this course, is. This shaping and defining is ongoing (unless one gets comfortably stuck in once-new media paradigms). Marshall McLuhan famously said that the content of every new medium is an old medium. Accordingly, “digital media” were first emulating and incorporating preexisting communication technologies such as typewriters, print design, audio and video. Only later did computing and networks come to be understood as media and cultures in their own right. This understanding was the very foundation of this study programme.

In this group of graduates, I see an even more recent development. A whole generation of designers, artists and activists has now grown up with the ease of sharing and manipulating media as digital files via computers and the Internet. Filtering this data through existing and self-written software, spreading it rapidly, reusing and collaboratively working on it in networks is now the default mode of media work. For these practitioners, the media they often have been trained to work with prior, such as print design and audiovisual production, feel clumsy and stuck in the McLuhan logic of a medium being artificially restrained to work and behave like an older, analog tool: a typesetter or an editing table instead of a Wiki, for example.

Logically, a number of this year’s graduation projects are about reinventing ‘classical’ media through an aesthetics and politics of programming, sharing and reuse. It is no longer avant-garde, but an everyday banality when text in the World Wide Web is not static, but dynamically generated from databases and by algorithms. This is quickly becoming the model for other, more traditionally defined media, too. Media design thus no longer remains a specialized domain of a narrow “new media” field. And while my examples and explanations may have sounded rather technical, their concrete implications for the culture and politics of media and communication are profound. For the details, just flip this page and study this year’s graduation projects.

Or take this catalogue itself. Its design is based on the most simple form of computation: numbering. Yet, in a reversal of standard technology, every single one of the 48,000 total pages of this catalogue was hand-numbered by students, staffers and designers in

a couple of day-long sessions over the course of a full year. But this catalogue is not just the product of social computation and processual design, but continues to process while you are reading it. The charcoal pigments of the page numbers crumble, gradually contaminating the pages. On first glance, the processual, organic composition and decomposition of these pages takes up where earlier avant-garde concepts and works such as Gustav Metzger's auto-destructive art, Dieter Roth's chocolate sculptures and Joseph Beuys' fat corners, left off. Metzger had defined auto-destructive art in 1959 as "public art for industrial societies". This catalogue, and the Media Design graduation projects documented in it, however question rigid oppositions of the public and the personal, between individual and mass communication, industrial and non-industrial production.

It's no false politeness that we teachers are constantly learning from our students. The involvement of Roel Wouters, Luna Maurer and Jonathan Puckey not only as the designers of this catalogue, but also as course tutors, our focus on networked and programmed media and emphasis on language (in programming, study of theory, and electronic publishing media) are results of the process and – social, never programmed – interactions in our course. Graduation marks a break, but means no end to our communal exchange. Alexandre, Dennis, Leonie, Marc, Sauli, Serena, Stéphanie, Timo: please keep teaching us with your work.

Florian Cramer
Course Director & Research Professor
Piet Zwart Institute
Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam University



INFORMING MATTER, RE-ARRANGING MEDIA

ARIE ALTENA

In December 2008 the Masters in Media Design at the Piet Zwart Institute of the Willem de Kooning Academy made news. As part of a trimester project two students – one of them from Piet Zwart – had programmed a Firefox add-on, *Pirates of the Amazon*. Once installed it would automatically redirect a visitor of Amazon.com to one of the largest bittorrent sites in order to download, rather than buy, the desired goods. It was meant as a parody, as a critique on how we deal with cultural goods on the internet, as well as a take on the sometimes stifling grip of copyright legislation. It also tied into the discussion about the attempts of both Amazon and Google Books to define and control the distribution of culture for the future. Amazon was not amused of course, and threatened with legal action. The students weren't willing to go into such a battle, and took the work offline. *Pirates of the Amazon* 'disappeared' into the deep trenches of the semi-illegal internet underground, and officially only survived as documentation.

Pirates of the Amazon shows how 'easy' it is to make something (a piece of software) that puts into practice a different way of dealing with the elements of reality. Internet culture is highly 'makeable'. But this makeability is – as opposed to what some technicians might believe – is not only dependent on technology, but just as much on law, rules, culture, and behaviour. A different culture does not come into existence because of new technologies – but only through the

interplay of human social behaviors, customs, politics, law and technology.

Obviously the computer – with its programmability – and the internet have transformed our culture, thanks to how we adapted to them, and how they have been adapted to fit us. It's less obvious to many people that 'the internet', 'the computer', or 'Facebook' are what we could call 'arrangements'. They are put together, made, configured. There are many layers upon layers of technical and media arrangements. Using the term arrangement in this context signifies that many different interests have joined in a formation, a settlement. But such a settlement may become unsettled, or be settled differently.

We could also use the Foucauldian term 'dispositif' here, which is most often translated as 'apparatus'. This is a somewhat wider term, recently defined by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben as "anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourse of living beings."¹ Everything – from language via agriculture to a mobile phone is a 'dispositif'. Such a 'dispositif' produces subjectifications; according to Agamben, in our capitalist times it rather produces desubjectifications.

Agamben makes a much larger philosophical argument, and in a metaphysical move – that I might understand, but am unable to follow up – argues how we could recuperate for common use what the 'apparatuses' have taken from us. Yet Agamben underplays the enabling capacity of apparatuses. Whenever the possibility of changing things comes up in his texts, they typically turn towards a Messianic perspective. >>

Among large communities as apartment blocks, the extent of social interaction is often limited to asking for a cup of sugar.



DENNIS DE BEL

It is a common assumption that there is a limited amount of social control and relative anonymity in big cities. It is not very common to have a good relationship or regular contact with your neighbours. One doesn't get any more involved than borrowing of a cup of sugar.

Opposed to committing to high maintenance real-life social relationships, you're easily persuaded to commit to the swift and shallow qualities of online interaction. Online friends are easily made, but can lack in quality.

There's a dutch proverb stating that it's better to have one good neighbour than a distant friend. Network Neighbourhood expresses this proverb to create a high quality 'ouvert à tous' social network.

The installation consists of cups of sugar which can be borrowed. By borrowing one of the cups of sugar and the actions that follow, you become a neighbour in my off-line real life network.

danos.nl/networkneighbourhood
danos.nl

Network Neighbourhood

**BUILDING
RELATIONSHIPS
IS LIKE
FERMENTING WINE.
NOT ONLY DOES IT
TAKE TIME, IT NEEDS
PLENTY OF SUGAR TOO,
NOT KUDOS, TWITS OR
POKES.**

*The Time Has Come
And The Time Is Now,
To Take Back What
They Stole*

One Man Nation

Sound. The omni-present element existing in all my work. Since 2004, I have been presenting work

into dark textures epitomizing the climate of our times. This disenchantment is exorcised by the use of every part of my body as a whole, the physical presence together with the sounds produced by intended or accidental gestures and physical actions – everything is potentially an instrument, a source of sound, a critique.

Throughout my post thirteen pre-twenty one years, punk culture & Fluxus played a large role in defining my perspective on many things. Formulating ideas against

M A R C C H I A

as both a musician and a sound/media artist under the moniker One Man Nation as well as collaborating frequently with various artists/institutions in settings that range from improvised music concerts to collaborative composition pieces to conceptual exhibitions.

My work was best described by Portuguese avant-garde collective Soopa after a concert in Porto as a performance that transmitted a deep narrative feeling of geopolitical disenchantment, ingrained

virtuosity, embracing the freedom realized in the refusal to pursue perfection, commercial viability and the avoidance of formalization/professionalism/industrialization of a process/form/style. What struck a chord in me was the immediacy of a performance art piece, how it existed only in its duration, not to be rehashed, reproduced or re-experienced. This inescapable influence of DIY culture stretches itself to the technological in deciding to use a open-source softwares in bringing some of the works to life.

The post-digital era has made the concert going experience of sitting through hours of seeing someone sitting at the laptop computer supposedly conceiving a composition before your very eyes in their zen like stillness, a normality. Taking post-digital as a departure point, I have been less concerned about what comes next in terms of trends and movements, instead more interested in relishing the here and now of post-digital's slow demise. Step-

statement. There is no discrimination in the field of sounds, categorizing what sounds are 'musical' and which ones are not, we enter into the open territory of considering the artistic qualities of every sound, thus bringing us back to Cage and Fluxus.

Avoiding a priori drawn ways, through intuition and constant sensitivity to the surroundings during a performance, I explore all the potential in the here, in the

B u f f e r r b r e a k k d o w n n n

A r k e s t r a

B u f f e r r b r e a k i n g g d o w n n n

ping beyond the reliance on digital technology seems a far-fetched ideal of dreamers exposing primitivism tendencies, though that said, with the recent global economic meltdown still in its initial slide on the downward spiral, a serious critique of the false promises instilled by modernity's ideas of endless economic progress is much needed now more than ever. The systems/instruments I use for most performances are definitely simple, that in itself as a

now as much as ontologically re-inventing the possibilities of life. Through performance I attempt to bring to the foreground what was pre-existing but unrecognized, breaking the psychological barrier that separates audience and performer. Performance in this sense, is an explicit expression against the prefabrication of culture.

onemannation.com



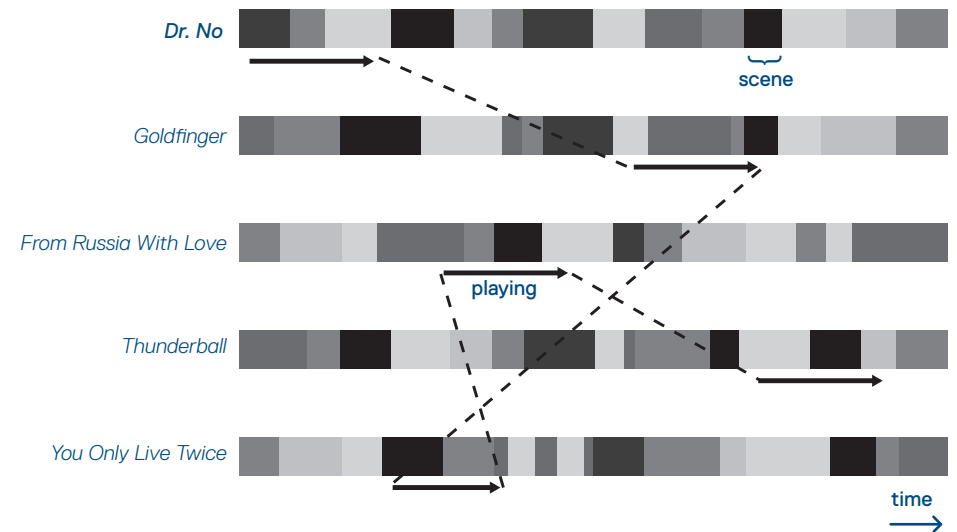
What is the future of cinema in relation to networked media? How might cinema develop in a culture whose primary model is that of the database? The term Database Cinema is seen by many as the Holy Grail of new media. It promises a form of cinematic narration that uses the possibilities of current computer techniques beyond the use of special effects. The main characteristic of Database Cinema is that it incorporates a collection of segments that are ordered, but not fixed in a linear structure. It is in this spatial approach that Database Cinema

differs from traditional cinema. But so far, no single Database Cinema project has been able to reach the success of a Hollywood film. Can this approach be combined with our traditional way of storytelling?

The main problem with combining film and databases models lies in the material of film itself. Film is made for a linear (and finished) view, which makes it almost impossible to visualize the database structure and keep an immersive experience at the same time. Cinema has inherited this narrative

form from the ancient Greeks and it is paradigm which we can not just throw away as, for instance, Lev Manovich proposes. Resorting to interactivity or other new media 'ideals' like multiple screen technology is not a viable option either, because it undermines the first principle of fictional cinema: the distance between the fictional world of the characters and the world of the viewer. There are examples however (like the films by Todd Solondz, Pat O'Neil's *The Decay of Fiction* or books like

Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino) that show a successful implementation of a database structure in their narrative, but they are still fixed, linear experiences. These examples try to construct non-standard stories, but the way the actual product is designed remains classical. However they do show a potentially unexplored avenue for Database Cinema. They adopt different types of narratives which are more modular, built from different sub-narratives. What they have in common is that they construct argument that validates a database approach. It is not the



A schematic representation of how the software runs through the films.

TIMOKLOK

You Only Live Forever

connected events, but the act of connecting itself that becomes the main element of the story.

In this project I try to implement and explore these theories. I use a database that has as its entries all the shots from a selection of James Bond films. Besides the original linear connections the shots are ordered by scene-type (action, romantic etc.). The software plays the shots in their original order but selects at certain intervals a shot from a different film that is comparable to the first.

The software will then continue playing from that point on. As this new shot does not have to be in the same position as the previous, the new constructed film can in theory run indefinitely. My argument is mainly to demonstrate the similarities between the different films and reveal the interchangeability between the different shots and scenes. The film shows the myth of James Bond as an never-ending sequence of archetypical clips.

you-only-live-forever.com
timoklok.com



The similarities between the films help to construct the general identity of James Bond.

Each James Bond film is a recombination of the same archetypical scenes, locations, actions and characters.

(BOND COOKS THE GUN)
 Alright, alright! But you must protect me!

CUT TO:

THE MAIN TITLES

JAMES BOND, dressed impeccably as ever, is being FRISKED by three THUGS in Armani suits. They remove A GUN from inside his jacket, a well-concealed knife, a metal case, laying them on the desk that separates Bond and...

The CIGAR GIRL offers Bond a RECEIPT...

CIGAR GIRL
 Would you like to check my figures?

BOND
 Perhaps later.

CLOSE-UP - BLOFELD'S CAT

He continues to pet it.

INT. MONEYPENNY'S OFFICE, MI-6 - DAY

Bond appears, hiding something behind his back. Moneypenny brightens.

- BOND fires a revolver.

Geneva.

He produces the cigar, now in a large phallic TUBE. Stands it end up on the desk.

BOND
 Thought you might want one of these.

BOND
 I'm sorry. I ran into an old friend who was just dying to see me.

words, the project does what it says, and becomes auto-generative of future work methods of graphic designers.

“[...] the computer is the most successful simulation machine ever created. It is crucially important, however, to recognize that the computer can simulate so successfully only because it differs profoundly from print in its physical properties and dynamic processes.”

Katherine Hayles

ALEXANDRE LERAY

Visual design and programming traditionally are two separate worlds. This project is about breaking down the walls between the two, inviting graphic designers to think about computing as more than a transparent tool or a solution for repetitive tasks, and to explore algorithms as an aesthetic playground.

These ideas are put down in a manifesto. This manifesto is embedded into a piece of software that is itself both an algorithmic and visual design tool. In other

Nowadays, posters, flyers or books, aiming to be physical objects are no longer analog, at least until the printing house turns the bytes of the PDF to the light-sensitive layer of the metallic printing plates. And actually the term ‘PDF’, an acronym for Portable Document Format, emphasizes that print is just one of the many outputs a document can have.

Desktop Publishing software deliberately hides a documents’ underlying code as it is deemed too frightening for its typical

users. Therefore, it is impossible for the latter to get under the surface. The designer is stuck with what the software allows him to see. The paradigm of ‘What You See Is What You Get’ (WYSIWYG) restrains the possibilities of manipulating the design to analog work methods and the user interface of the program. Often, I found that print graphic designers were not interested in these issues. They keep a distanced attitude to the computer although they work with it, sometimes up to eight hours a day. Most of them consider it just a new tool for a

therefore, makes its visual appearance more difficult to control.

Graphic designers nowadays have to choose between either coding or the visual method, although there is no reason why both couldn’t be embraced and combined in one and the same tool. The manifesto calls upon for a redesign of design in the age of many-to-many communication. Today, print graphic design mostly stands for mass media communication and classical visual design methods, and web design in comparison stands for

O r o b o r u s

traditional practice, a means for realizing ideas faster, and sometimes a technology for automating tedious tasks.

Being both a visual designer and a programmer, I became interested in using code for manipulating the structure and logic of visual and typographic design. This also means to turn programming into a creative and ludic activity. For visual designers, programming provides both excitement and frustration. It adds a layer of abstraction between the design and the document, and

programmed dynamic page design and communication among peers. The challenge for future design is to integrate the best of both approaches, on screen and on paper. The manifesto is a call to visual designers, a statement against the disembodiment of information, and a self-explaining piece of writing and typography. It merges visual design, formatting code, software and textual content into one comprehensive statement.

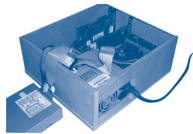
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C2 vs. 2cv



Nespresso capsules vs. coffee beans



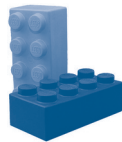
imac vs. assemblage



Torx security vs. Phillips head screw



Segway vs. bike



Playmobil vs. Lego



Polaroid vs. Hasselblad



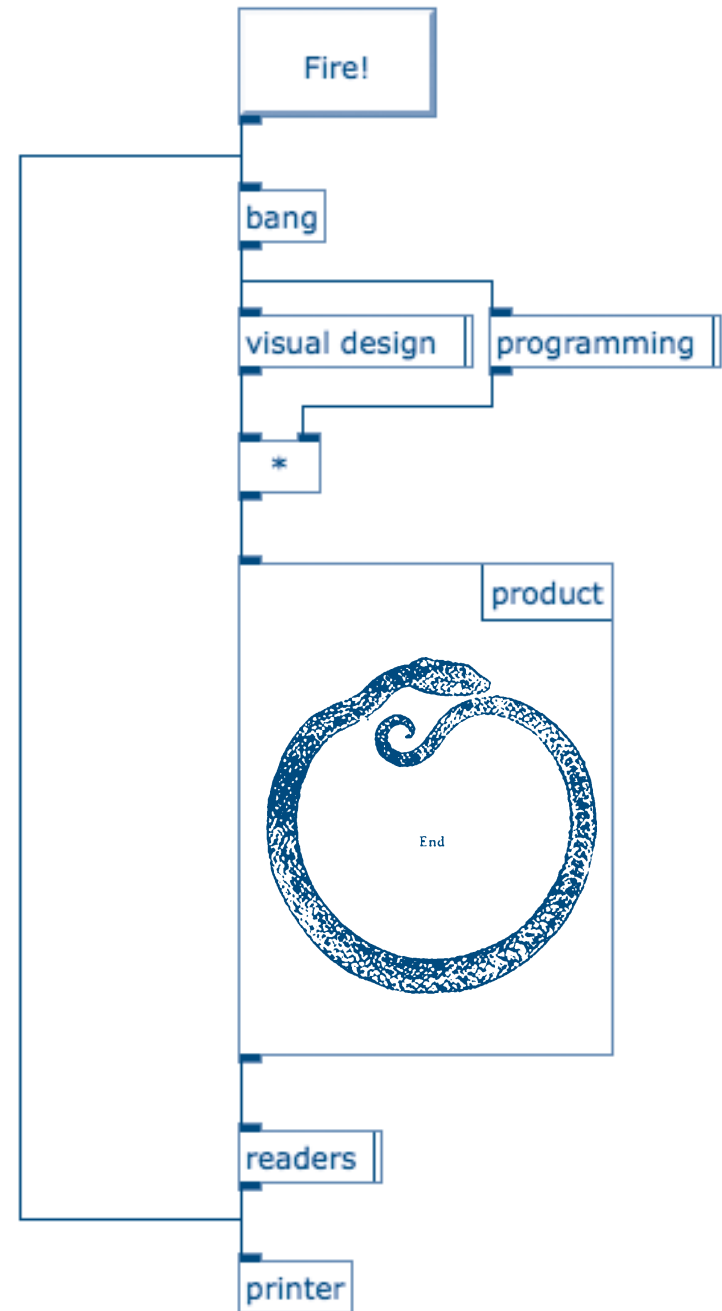
Sony PSP vs. Nintendo DS



Safari vs. Firefox



Velcro vs. laces



Ouroborus as pseudo code

Tenori-on by Toshio Iwai

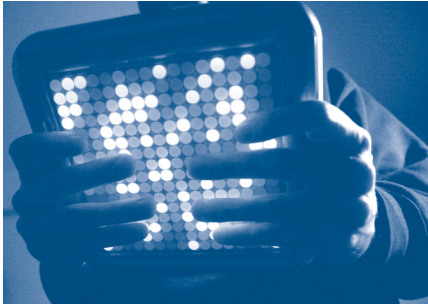


photo: Alejandro Juárez

A well-known Device Art project is the Tenori-On. The artist created the framework, the user creates the content.

The Knockman family by Maywa Denki

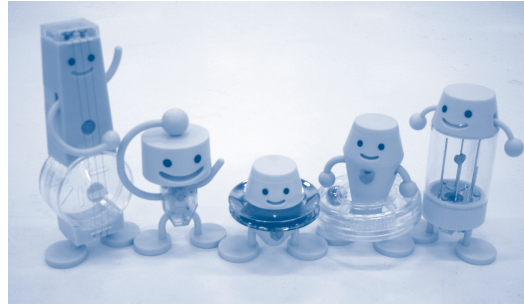


photo: Ray Chang

'Tea serving dolls were more often used to show the social aspects surrounding the tea ceremony than as a device to serve tea'.

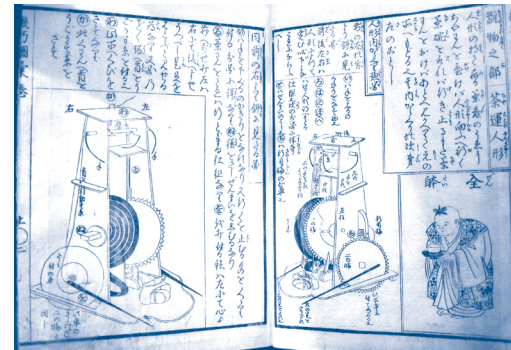


photo: Paul Osborne



photo: Paul Osborne

LEONIE URFF

Device Art

An exclusively Japanese movement or a model for Western artists?

Some time ago I accidentally stumbled over 'Device Art', a term used for a Japanese movement at the threshold of art, technology, science and entertainment. Its works are very characteristic because they are playful, have a clear interface and very often have users contributing to their content. Western media art works

often seem to be the opposite: pompous, wanting to make a statement and showing off technologies and skills of the artist.

In Western culture, one can also note that art is only shown in specific locations or during special events while in Japan it is more embedded into social life. It stems from traditions where tools were important to perform ceremonies with.

I am juxtaposing these opposites in my thesis, and, by comparing

Japanese and Western works, investigate whether this perspective is correct or perhaps too black and white. I also want to see how my own project is fitting these two opposites since my way of working is related to some aspects of Device Art.

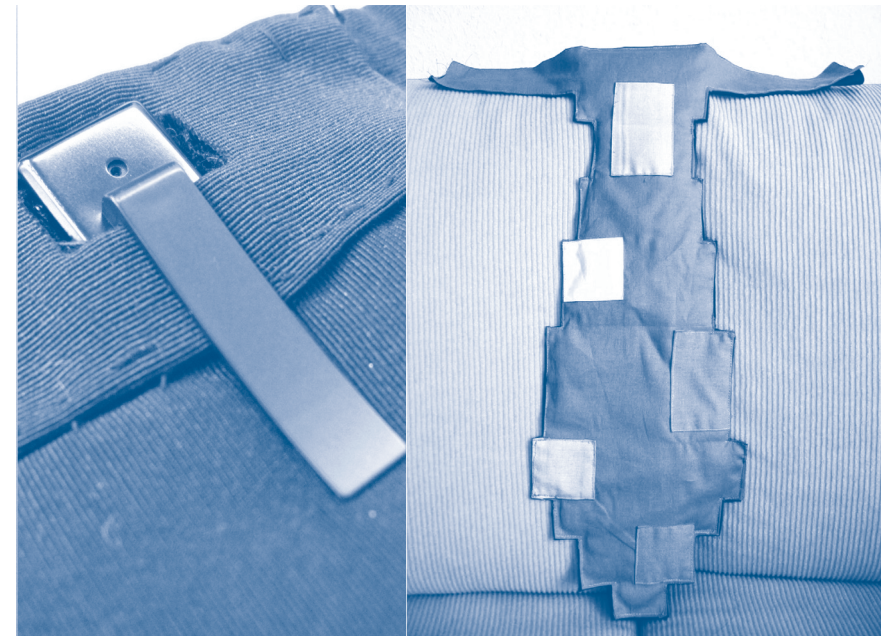
Expo[re]view follows a whole set of ideas in Device Art. It is a tool for capturing people's exhibition visits. By placing a small video camera in a wearable accessory given to the visitor, it enables him or her to pay full attention to the exhibition instead of the process of filming. The resulting video will be used to create an online video catalogue of the exhibition. Visitors do not have to be actively involved in the recording and can pay their full attention to the exhibition.

The video catalogue will show and tell in what different ways visitors experience the exhibition, and provide an interesting alternative to the kind of catalogue that is normally produced from the perspective of the museum and/or the artist. Since it's published online, the catalogue also becomes more accessible for a broader audience. It introduces the exhibition to visitors and helps them decide whether to visit it as well...

This project was inspired by existing interacta visiive objects used in museums to inform visitors about the works in the show. Such objects can be useful, but often leave little room for the

imagination of the visitor. I am curious what actual position visitors take towards the exhibition and the art presented. I therefore designed a framework to capture their own experience rather than one that informs them. For me, the challenge in this project lies in this very aspect.

exporeview.nl
onilee.nl



Expo[re]view

Expo[re]view is a wearable device that gives you the opportunity to see an exhibition through other peoples eye's. The picture shows the prototype of the object.

This project consists of experimental design hacks to reflect and circumvent intellectual property restrictions. *Fahrenheit 451*, a novel by Ray Bradbury, is presented via a web interface and also in print form (print on demand). Several filters offered to users are in place in order to reflect intellectual property restrictions or allowed practices, such as Fair Use. These filters offer a means to circumvent these restrictions by transforming the content. The reader can choose the filter through which s/he

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*

I chose to work with *Fahrenheit 451* because it has several connections to my thesis topic, social accessibility.

Bradbury's novel is best-known for its criticism of state-sponsored censorship, somewhat contrary to the author's claim that this was not his main purpose, it stands in short for a critique of mass media's effects on literature and literacy. Censorship is a practice of making content inaccessible in

and reproduction). It is another example, though fictitious, of how a common practice, or non practice, influences the Law.

Books being ignored, and then forbidden, affects education. Beatty recalls: "School is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, languages dropped, English and spelling gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored. Life is immediate, the job counts, pleasure lies all about after work. Why learn anything save pressing buttons,

the same way the term 'Big Brother', adapted from Orwell's *1984*, operates outside its original context. Intellectual property law, as I discuss in my thesis, is there to protect the right-owners wealth, which now means the record labels and publishers and not necessarily the authors, besides these powerful companies have a major influence on the same laws which govern how property is conceived and the rights (or lack thereof) that are assigned to the general public. One particular example of this is

STÉPHANIE VILAYPHIOU

wants to 'view' the text, each filter being more or less legal.

Mix of accessibility and inaccessibility

Push uselessness to its maximum

Make content inaccessible

order to control potential readers social and cultural development, whether it be parents filtering porn or violent images for their kids or governments filtering critical content for their society.

In the novel, Captain Beatty teaches the main character why books are forbidden. According to him, books were not used anymore because mass media took over them, then books were forbidden by the government probably to have a better control on people (although in Soviet Union, the government also controlled book production

Blind Carbon Copy

pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts?" There is a real danger for education and personal development in restricting access to content with laws. Although we are discussing a fictional text, the French DADVSI law is real – one that is hopefully never applied, however this doesn't reduce its potential danger. Bradbury's Beatty frames the connection with mass media as potentially dumbing, "[a]nd because they had mass, they became simpler." Perhaps the censorship modeled by *Fahrenheit 451* has become a reference in social dialogue, much

the recent case against the founders of the Pirate Bay, where the judge who sentenced them was a member of the same copyright protection organizations as several of the main entertainment industry represented in the case. What is perhaps different in current Western societies compared to the hypothetical *Fahrenheit 451*, is that state-sponsored inaccessibility is generally governed by economics on top of censorious ideology.

blindcarboncopy.cc
latsami.free.fr

Beatty took a full minute to settle himself in and think back for what he wanted to say.
«When did it all start, you ask, this job of ours, how did it come about, where, when? Well, I'd say it really got started around about a thing called the Civil War. Even though our rule-book claims it was founded earlier. The fact is we didn't get along well until photography came into its own. Then—motion pictures in the early twentieth century. Radio. Television. Things began to have mass.»
Montag sat in bed, not moving.

«And because they had mass, they became simpler,» said Beatty.
«Once, books appealed to a few people, here, there, everywhere. They could afford to be different. The world was roomy. But then the world got full of eyes and elbows and mouths. Double, triple, quadruple population. Films and radios, magazines, books levelled down to a sort of paste pudding norm, do you follow me?»
«I think so.»

Extract from Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*
Tiny filter

B34tt¥ t00k 4 fµ££ m1npt3 t0
\$3tt£3 h1m\$3£f 1n 4nÐ th1nk b4(k
f0r wh4t h3 w4nt3Ð t0 \$4¥.
«Wh3n Ð1Ð 1t 4££ \$t4rt, ¥0µ 4\$k,
th1\$ j0b 0f 0µr\$, h0w Ð1Ð 1t (0m3
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M0nt4g \$4t 1n b3Ð, n0t m0v1ng.

Extract from Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*
L33T alphabet filter

Beatty used up a total moment to decide himself in and retrieve what he desired to state.
«When did it all begin, you inquire, this business of ours, how did it happen, where, when? Yet, I'd state it truly got began about approximately a matter named the Polite Warfare. Yet though our regulation volume arrogates it was established before. The fact is we didn't make out yet until picture taking arrived into its ain. So—gesture images in the former twentieth hundred. Radiocommunication. Television. Matters got down to have got batch.»
Montag sat down in bottom, non travelling.

Extract from Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*
Thesaurus filter

Beatty took a full minute to settle himself in and think back for what he wanted to say.
«When did it all start, you ask, this job of ours, how did it come about, where, when? Well, I'd say it really got started around about a thing called the Civil War. Even though our rule-book claims it was founded earlier. The fact is we didn't get along well until photography came into its own. Then—motion pictures in the early twentieth century. Radio. Television. Things began to have mass.»
Montag sat in bed, not moving.

Extract from Pierre Ménard's *Fahrenheit 451*
Pierre Ménard filter

«And because they had got batch, they went more elementary,» stated Beatty. «One time, volumes invoked a few citizenry, hither, thither, everyplace. They could yield to exist unlike. The universe was spacious. Merely so the universe got full of oculus and cubitus and oral cavities. Dual, ternary, quadruplicate population. Movies and radiocommunications, mags, volumes razed downwards to a form of spread pud average, do you pursue me?»
«I believe indeed.»

«And because they had mass, they became simpler,» said Beatty.
«Once, books appealed to a few people, here, there, everywhere. They could afford to be different. The world was roomy. But then the world got full of eyes and elbows and mouths. Double, triple, quadruple population. Films and radios, magazines, books levelled down to a sort of paste pudding norm, do you follow me?»
«I think so.»

Each slice is taken from a single consecutive frame of the Disney logo animation.



SAULI WARMENHOVEN

This project comes from a fascination with the form of moving pictures, and is an exploration of the possibilities provided by using computer programs to create alternate ways of viewing them. It offers the hope that these new ways of viewing provide a better understanding of the structure and language of films. *Mimetrics* is a portmanteau of the words mimesis and metrics.

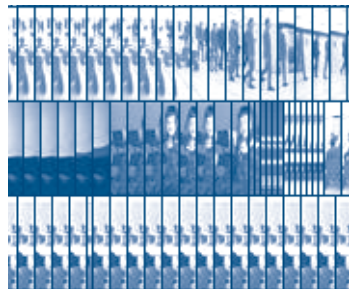
Mimetrics is a website that offers a variety of alternative ways of visually displaying and analyzing

a film. It is not an editing tool. It works by generating a stream of images from a digitized film, at the rate of 1 still frame per second of film. This will result in collection of images numbering around 6000 to 8000 images. Along with these images the subtitles of the film are analyzed, thereby giving a good indication of the dialogue of the film. Each image, representing a single second of film, is then associated with the dialogue that is spoken in that very second. This data is then applied in a variety of visualizations. For instance,

Mimetrics

a slice of each still frame is taken and placed next to another, resulting in a row of images, each of which is not recognizable as a single meaningful image, but taken altogether, revealing the rhythmic structure of the film, as it is determined by the montage, color palette, mise-en-scene and camera angles and movements.

mrsauli.nl/mimetrics
mrsauli.nl



detail



Space Odyssey

Each slice is taken from a single second of film, and displayed as a thick slice if there is dialogue in that second, and thinly if there is no dialogue. This reveals that *Star Wars: A New Hope* is much more relying on dialogue to propel its story than *2001: A Space Odyssey*. This is also the reason why the length of the display of *Star Wars* is greater than that of *Space Odyssey*.



Star Wars: A New Hope



detail

‘De term “Dutch Design”
zegt mij tegenwoordig
niet meer zo veel.
Maar ik ben hier wel
een beetje dubbel. De
Dutchness die Aaron
Betsky in zijn boek
“False Flat” beschrijft,
herken ik helemaal.’

RENNY RAMAKERS, INTERVIEW ITEMS 6, 2004

S E R E N A W I L L I A M S

*“Designers don’t read, so
design writers don’t write.
Let’s amend that: They write
captions. Sometimes they
write really long captions,
thousands of words that do
nothing but describe the
pictures.”*

Tibor Kalman, ‘Good History,
bad history’, Looking Closer

D i s c o u r s e i n D u t c h G r a p h i c D e s i g n

The aim of my final essay is to
prove that Dutch graphic design
is more about the words that
describe it than the object or
image itself. It’s about subjective
judgments and a certain discourse
but not the practice.

The Dutch graphic design jargon
is full of made-up terminology and
doublespeak. The texts usually
have the pretence of being very
important while often they just
describe an object or image in
words.

Once an image or object is labeled
with words like ‘binnenstadsran-
zigheid’ (city centre rancidness)
it cannot be viewed without that
label. It becomes part of the
design language and after a while
has little to do with the object or
image itself.

www.serenawilliams.nl

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Stellingen

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ontwerpers

critica

journalisten



‘Eigenlijk is dit affiche een “Fremdkörper” onder de genomineerden. Het is niet echt mooi of esthetisch. Het heeft zelfs een soort “binnenstadsranzigheid” door de boulevard-achtige opbouw, de vouwen en loslatende randen als gevolg van wildplakkerij en de botte beledigende graffiti.’

Juryrapport TheaterAffichePrijs08, 'De Arabier van Amsterdam',
ontwerp: Studio Ron van Roon

The Lexicon on Graphic Design Jargon is an online platform for Dutch graphic design jargon. It maps the unstable variations of the language and reveals the social structure of the Dutch graphic design community. continuation of my BA graduation project in graphic design at the Willem de Kooning Academy.

>> Yet, in a more Latourian vein, one could equally accentuate a pragmatic perspective: things are made, can be unmade, remade, built and combined differently. And certainly they can be used in different ways. The world is full of alternative proposals or small set-ups which at least point to a different way of doing even if they do not embody and propagate it in actuality. This is one of the roles of art: showing how things can be done differently.

The students of the Master Media Design work with and reflect on this 'dispositif' of internet culture with all its different apparatuses, from the IP protocol to social network sites. They are a generation of designers and artists who grew up with the internet. Even those who do not feel rooted in it at least feel the need to position themselves towards its dispositif, taking the computer as a medium, or rather, to use a term of Alan Kay, a metamedium: a machine which allows one to create one's own medium.² There are many levels to this, from working on the interface to programming code, but at each level one deals with more than just technology. Issues of particular interest to the students are, for instance, the way in which media arrangements, like social network sites, call for a certain behavior; the issue of free circulation of ideas; and the relation between programming and design.

With Vilém Flusser we could say that design is informing matter. In such a view design always works at a content level as well as on that of visual surface. Yet the current web paradigm enforces a strict division between structuring content and (visual) representation of content. Structuring is done at the level of

databases and by XML whereas the designer often comes in only to define how to represent the various dynamic parts in an interface. This division is not necessarily a bad thing – it is quasi-necessary with regard to how we prefer to access data. But it does raise a question: shouldn't designers – to be true designers – be able to work on the level of structure? Programming works on a structural level. Should designers be able to program, or at least understand programming? Though there is no clear-cut answer here (as there are different levels

of programming), it makes sense to ask that same question again for every single project, revealing which layers of the media and technological arrangements need to be peeled off in order to get to an understanding of what it means to truly 'design', to inform content.

It is no surprise then that contemporary designers and artists, like these students, explore databases, meta tagging, social networks, archiving, copyright, editorial design, programmable filtering, user profiling, analysis of large amounts of data, programmable designs, even open application programming interfaces (APIs), as well as coming up with beautiful interfaces and clear typographic designs.

Sauli Warmenhoven made a tool that visualizes complete movies on the basis of the use of language in dialogues and voice-over. A filmstrip is, for instance, compressed into a single image, yet scenes are not shown relative to their length in time, but according to how much language they contain. Warmenhoven's interest lies in showing the compressed visual impact of a complete movie, as another way of thinking about how movies have impact. One condensed image,

manipulated on the basis on an analysis of certain aspects of the movie, might reveal something that had been unintelligible otherwise, a much quicker sense perception of the macro-structure perhaps.

Timo Klok works with a similar way of analyzing and breaking down complete movies. Inspired by semiotics and narratology, he is more interested in narrative structure and the possibilities of database cinema. As source material he uses the six James Bond movies with Sean Connery: a nod to Umberto Eco who uses James Bond stories as a stock example. Eco showed how every Bond story is similarly structured, combining the same characteristic elements. In Timo Klok's project, the six movies are analyzed and compared using image comparison software (developed by Carlo Preitz for Geert Mul), but also manually with the intention of showing an endless loop of similar scenes from different movies.

Leonie Urff made a tool that enables the visitor of an exhibition to record, store and share the experience of seeing (and hearing) an exhibition. It is basically a spy-camera worn around the neck. What is recorded can be taken as a highly personalized audiovisual exhibition catalogue. This tool is just one step further for exhibition design – with its mp3-audio-tours, touch-screen-information panels, PDAs and RFID-readers. Seemingly innocuous, it brings up issues of surveillance, spying and privacy. What if one's recordings are streamed live on the website? What if it's used to enact little theatre plays? Would it reveal that visitors actually are looking at other things than they think they do?

Dennis de Bel made beautiful sculptures from household equipment, musical instruments and turntables – like the *S e w - o - p h o n e* (sewing machine + LP-record) and the *V a c u m o n i u m* (Harmonium + vacuum cleaner). He is very critical of the Web 2.0 hype, and the energy which people invest in social network sites. Why all the profiling? Why always make a 'profile'? One of his artistic strategies is a benign guerrilla inside social network sites (he for instance proposed to design a platform for trading user profiles), another one is the translation of ideas from the virtual domain back into things. He is making the immaterial tangible, and making it strange: one of the most important characteristics of art. It enables us to see reality in a new light.

Marc Chia is concerned with breaking down barriers: his music builds an energizing stream of noise from glitches. When performing he plays with the laptop closed – in order not to hide behind a screen –, and walks into the audience to further break down the division between audience and performer. For his final project he built a piece that infinitely sends sounds to a networked computer (using the Icecast streaming software), plays it back, and sends it again to the Icecast server until the system crashes – another way of tearing down a division.

Serena Williams uses a more classical form of design criticism. In the course of her research she collected about 250 quotes from Dutch designers mostly taken from their own articles in design magazines. Archived in a database and tagged in various ways, these quotes can be accessed through a well designed website. As a mapping tool for the Dutch design community the website shows how much self-made jargon,

neologisms and doublespeak is used. The self-congratulatory aspect of the 'Dutch Design' hype becomes apparent, as well as a lack of international perspective. Williams states: "The texts usually have the pretense of being very important while often they are long captions that describe an object or image in words."

Stéphanie Vilayphiou directly deals with filtering, censorship and the limits to the free circulation of culture created by current copyright enforcement. Archivez enables a user to view a text according to different filters: conforming to copyright; according to the GoogleBooks contract; completely blacked-out; showing only texts written by Pierre Menard (after Jorge Luis Borges). Her choice of texts reflects on these issues too: in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* books are forbidden, but literature lives on since everyone in a community of outcasts has memorized one of the masterworks. Presented in this way, her website – which could be a platform for sharing texts – becomes a way of reflecting on the consequences of our copyright laws, and is an experiment in imagining new systems of accessing and distributing texts.

Alexandre Leray fully takes on the question of the split between programming and visual (surface) design. He set out to program an automatic manifesto machine on the use of algorithm in the design process, and applying its technology at the same time to provide a design tool for users. For his practice, design is programming, and vice versa. He states that he works with programmable "deep objects", designing at the level of document structure rather than only on the level of flat visual rendering. At the same time his manifesto machine also challenges the myth of software as a neutral tool.

These designers and artists work as much with tangible objects, as with digital information. They make books as well as websites, sculptures as well as software. Their projects take very different forms – a sign of the manifoldness of internet culture, or our culture. What connects most of them is a critical attitude towards the existing media arrangements. There is no sign of taking things as they are, but a willingness to construct something new aiming at a heightened awareness of the implications of our media arrangements. Their work shows that there is no whatsoever need to take the existing forms as the only possible ones. It is a reminder that there is an open field of possibilities – even when we see the computer and the internet with their layers of protocols, as a given.

Notes

¹ Agamben, Giorgio. *What is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, Stanford University Press 2009, p. 14.

² "The computer is the first metamedium, and as such it has degrees of freedom for representation and expression never before encountered and as yet barely investigated." Kay, Alan. "Computer Software." *Scientific American* 251.3 (September 1984): 52-59.



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```
\ small code symbolising our manual numbering.  
\ the program itself does not output anything, it just mimic our  
\ work in a computational form.  
\ written in FORTH by Aymeric Mansoux.
```

```
variable page 0 cells allot  
0 constant pencil  
1000 constant charcoal
```

```
: write      1 + + dup 1 + swap 2 drop ;  
: turnpage  2 page +! ;
```

```
: draw  
  for  
    page @ dup  
    charcoal write  
    pencil write  
    turnpage  
  next ;
```

```
: catalogue 24000 draw ;
```

```
catalogue
```

