

commands of Photoshop had themselves been Photoshopped, cosmetically changed to reveal an ideological basis for image production and manipulation. *National Heritage* consisted of a gallery installation of faces of varied ethnicities, sewn masks and appendages called *Colour Separation*, street posters and a newspaper. In an interview with Matthew Fuller, London-based Mongrel member Richard Pierre-Davis (b. 1965) explained his view of the confrontational mask images: 'I believe the mask to be one of the most defining aspect[s] of the whole project in more ways than one; the masks represent the mask that I always have to wear at the point of entry into Britain, it represents the mask that I wear repeatedly as I go about my everyday activities in this lovely multicultural state.... And then it also represent[s] the mask that a mongrel has to wear in sourcing resources for this project. So you see the whole *National Heritage* project is a constitution of the mask.' Mongrel's Matsuko Yokokoji (b. 1960) and Graham Harwood noted that the presentation of distinct and more racially ambiguous visages in *Colour Separation* shows how easily *Heritage Gold*'s mixing capabilities could suspend distinct racial categories into malleable data. Predicting – in tongue-in-cheek tone – a 'huge demand in the West for this software', they described *Heritage Gold* as part of a '[struggle] to find images that deal with the complexities of the kind of lives we are living now. There is no longer black or white....'

Harwood did more than extend the lineage of identity art politics into the net art sphere. He also described the philosophical stakes of technoart festivals and discourse: Now, dominant racial and cultural groups in society act as audience to their own techno-cultural-media product. Bleached images of self-congratulatory ritualised distancing symbolically install these groups as the right people to control, restrict, and censor Cyberland. Digital cloning has helped call into question accepted notions of originality and genius, allowing a re-evaluation of the codes of cultural production – just so long as this does not include the filth of uncomfortable social relations. Given the racialisation and elitism of most electronic art events, attendees might still think that underneath they're all still loveable. The multicultural lets-get-on-with-each-other-and-get-happy number has for a long time been one of the main tactics for hiding hard, difficult debate under a sixties-style love-in. Mongrel cultures have come too long a way in intellectual rigour to be fobbed off with a flower pushed up the barrel of their gun. This is as the 'Infowar' leaflet says 'a battle in which the power of knowledge is managed as a profitable monopoly'. Societies seem to have learnt nothing from the tragedies of this century

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled 'Container Document' with the URL 'http://www.container-project.net/'. At the top, there are standard browser controls: Back, Forward, Stop, Refresh, Home, AutoFill, Print, and Mail. To the right of the address bar is a small logo for 'Container SC reporting technology'.

Funded by: THE ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND

Description of advertising/sponsorship layout and cost:

Theme Sponsor: On Unit Front and Back + In Unit Banner Board + Web Page + Product + Print + Broadcast etc £20,000

Major Sponsors: On Unit Front + In Unit Back Board + Web Page + Product + Print £5000

Associate and Theme Sponsors: On Unit Back + In Unit Back Board + Web Page + Print £3000

Back Board + Web Banner + 1 Page (screen size) £1500

Web Banner: £1000

Web Page: £500

Things to Sponsor/Donate:

- Work stations (computers and accessories)
- Furniture's (desk, chars and filing cabinet)
- Flooring/Carpet
- Windows and Doors (double glazed)
- Security system
- Work Shops (a particular type of workshop)
- Communication Systems

<http://www.container-project.net/contact.html>

Hervin Jarman, Container, 1999. The Container – literally a shipping container on wheels as a mobile media centre travelled across Jamaica, carrying fourteen workstations and a networked server. The Container, orchestrated by Mongrel member Hervin Jarman, was designed to bring creative computer technology and interactive digital media in (similar to) the Caribbean's privileged, primarily students, and to equip them with creative skills and tools.

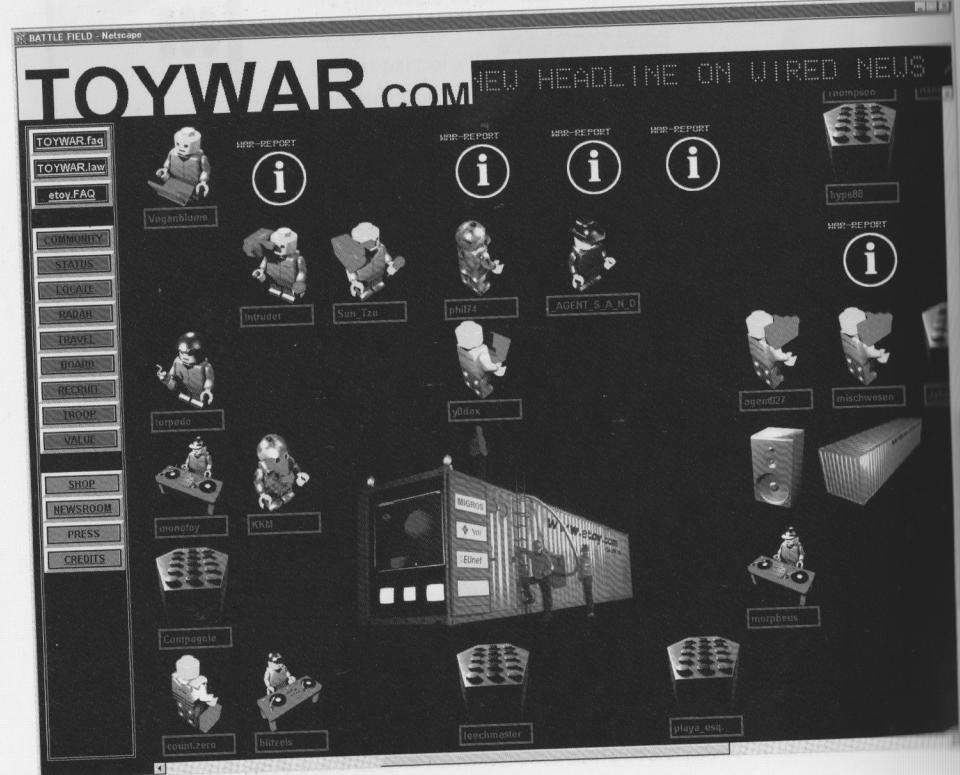
[the twentieth century] that have been co-founded by the military technologies from which new media rises. Are we about to remake the cultural spaces for the arms dealer class that profited before from war, slavery, migrant-labour, poverty, death, and disease? Or are we to dirty up their future and complicate their desires with filth?

In conjunction with the storm of events around the Electronic Disturbance Theater, the impact of Mongrel's installation and the declarations of its members heightened the sense that new technologies provided strategies for realizing agitational goals.

Over the next fifteen months, the face-to-face encounter at Ars Electronica 1998 between ®TMark and etoy, the largely Swiss

102 etoy, Toywar, 1999–2000.
TOYWAR.battlefield on the internet:
showing some of the 2,500
TOYWAR.agents in January 2000,
two weeks before eToys signed a
settlement and dropped
its lawsuit against etoy.

troupe that parodied dotcom brands, would prove central to the high-profile tactical media event known as *Toywar* [102]. *Toywar* was the web site headquarters for a defensive campaign resulting from a legal dispute between etoy, which had been online since 1995, and eToys, a relatively new dotcom business, which aimed to dominate the online children's toy market. The latter used its substantial financial resources to sue etoy for its domain name, alleging that etoy's site contained 'pornographic and anarchic' content that threatened its business. The lawyers of eToys were successful in this regard, and at one point a court injunction shut down the etoy web site. Etoy solicited the support of ®TMark, THE THING, Rhizome.org and other lists: ®TMark assumed a leadership role and, following the call issued by etoy's Reinhold Grether for a 'new toy' to fight eToys, designed a game-esque campaign called *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Gameplay included Electronic Disturbance Theater's *FloodNet* [99] applet, as well as emails, postings on the financial message boards about the debacle, all seeking to interrupt the toy-seller's web site and reputation during the busiest sales period of the year. The results,



though it would be specious to ascribe them solely to the blitz of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, were dramatic: following the involvement of thousands of outraged participants, the inflated price of eToys' stock fell by more than forty per cent, its web site was slowed for a time, and *Toywar* received enormous publicity from around the world. The bubble of the internet market was collapsing, and eToys declared bankruptcy after the lawsuit against etoy was resolved.

Of course, by posturing as corporations, sending out press releases and courting media attention, etoy and ®TMark were using some of the very material they wished to critique, and *Toywar* highlighted some of the paradoxes of politically progressive, parodic work. Acknowledging these paradoxes, focusing on the often hilarious transgressions and interchanges made possible by such positions, is part of their works' appeal. It seemed that while eToys exercised the legal rights granted to corporations in the United States, artists and like-minded people were also capable of media manipulation or the tactical use of media to create self-conscious, grass-roots, multi-faceted analogues of corporate power. That *Toywar*, despite its very real legal stakes and the substantial monies involved, was called a 'game' by its producers suggests a new dimension to art practices brought on by internet technologies. Using the premise of fighting against an enemy and defending space, as well as the *FloodNet* applet, and an element of performance, tactical media asserted itself as a method for seizing or reclaiming public space.

Toywar was an exhilarating and empowering struggle, but net art communities had been devastated by a more serious conflict in the spring of 1999: the NATO bombing of Kosovo. The notable absence of Yugoslavia-based participants on lists such as Nettyme and especially Syndicate (its focus was on Eastern Europe) was accompanied by emails from those who still had internet access, full of desperation, fear and anger, as well as by documentation of the damage to infrastructure and civilian targets. While concern for friends and colleagues was paramount, the negative effect of the NATO campaigns on internet capabilities and independent media also became a topic for discussion. As Geert Lovink wrote about the silenced voices from Southeast Europe: 'Small media may be "tactical", but they are also easy to shut down.' Though the initial response among most communities was to share information and create possibilities for independent reporting, like the hosting of the B92 Radio Station (based in the former Yugoslavia) on Real Audio servers, artists also began to make



103 Trebor Scholz, *79 Days*,
2003

works in response. Net projects about the 1999 bombing varied from theatrical works like Teo Spiller's *I Was a Soldier on Kosovo* to historically based works such as Miklos Legradý's *Krematorium*. German artist Trebor Scholz's *79 Days* (started in 2001, although the web site was not launched until 2003) [103] consists of photos and videos of Yugoslavians presented without descriptive context, with hyperlinks conducting live image searches relating to various aspects of war. The artwork compares media debris about the war, likely culled from news sites, with Scholz's beautifully shot, high-resolution documentation of post-1999 Kosovo.

The reactions to the bombing of Kosovo and to *Toywar* were not the only efforts to make use of the mechanisms of new media forms. Many protestors, including those who participated in the 1999 Battle of Seattle (part of a protest against the World Trade Organization), mobilized via the internet to oppose International Monetary Fund and World Bank policies towards the debts of struggling countries. This widespread mobilization online for offline protests, of which *Toywar* was one example, set leftist advocates against stalwarts of the established marketplace and world order. These conflicts were elaborated in several instances as infowars.

Turn of the Millennium, War and the Dotcom Crash
In previous chapters we saw the emergence of discursive models, such as mailing lists, bulletin board systems and conferences that helped internet artists to build and sustain vital networks outside the art world and to generate fruitful relationships with both audiences and each other. A sense of autonomy or 'productive marginality', as Rhizome.org founder Mark Tribe called it, and the

practice of 'dialogue through work, as well as through communication', were central to the classical net.art scene, evident in *Net Criticism Juke Box* [51] or the *Mr. Net.Art* competition [52]. The net.art community had maintained a general sense of intimacy and trust for several years. Vuk Cosic knew critic Josephine Bosma; Bosma knew Olia Lialina; Lialina knew and had collaborated with Heath Bunting. Colleagues, regardless of their opinions or behaviour, were just an email away, and likely to be seen at a festival in the near future. But as the internet expanded exponentially, and as participants found themselves in different places in their lives, perhaps with children, consumed by other events, as many were by the war in Yugoslavia, or by more demanding personal responsibilities offline, this sense of community began to give way. In an essay 'net.art Year in Review: State of net.art 99' for the net culture journal *Switch*, artist and programmer Alexander Galloway noted formal shifts, writing that 'net.art', the genre best known by the work of Vuk Cosic, Heath Bunting and Olia Lialina, was dead. Endorsing this view was a quotation from German net art historian Tilman Baumgärtel, who had written as early as 1998 that 'the first formative period of net culture seems to be over'.

As the millennium came to a close, many levels of change were afoot. For a start, there was evidence of growing institutional interest in net art. In 1999 the ZKM mounted its substantial 'net_condition' show, and Tate Britain and Tate Modern began commissioning net art. New York's Whitney Museum of American Art hired digital culture magazine *Intelligent Agent* founder Christiane Paul as an adjunct new media art curator, and announced that net art would be in the 2000 Biennial. '010101: Art in Technological Times' was scheduled by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to open in 2001. The Guggenheim Museum also commissioned online art and began its valuable 'variable media initiative', in which curator Jon Ippolito considered how to preserve and conserve ephemeral and contingent new media and conceptual artworks. Vuk Cosic, practically a folk hero in Slovenia, was selected as the country's representative at the Venice Biennale. Meanwhile, several years of optimistic internet culture had produced another kind of aura for net-based art. Dotcom design shops seeking to create more sophisticated or innovative sites for clients, began to support 'research and development' projects that were also considered art. As demand for web sites on the part of most businesses increased, so did the status of interactive design. At the same time, production tools