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short/cuts

NEWMEDIA CENTRE.Coy

**J u d g i n g** by the fanfare, the recent marriage between Sun Microsystems and London’s Institute of Contemporary Art was a match made in heaven. Reportedly the outcome of months of negotiations, the partners’ mutual suitability has enjoyed the kind of scrutiny you can only expect from the best arranged marriages. Yet, a few months after the euphoric pronounce- ments of November’s opening, in which Sun presented its new ‘digital play- ground’, the ICA its ‘collaboration of equals’ and the New Labour Government its support of the ‘creative industries’, clues revealing who’s wearing the trousers are there for all to see.

Essentially, the fuss is focused on 2 million pounds worth of ‘kit’ (as the with- it PR team put it). This fgure, plus the Sun workstations and miscellaneous gear that it bought the centre, are banded about as proof of Sun’s serious commit- ment to cultural experimentation.

But what, seriously, is £2m in a year’s budget of a company like Sun when it receives such goodies in exchange as a corporate training and hospitality venue on the Mall, a ‘radical’ image, and no doubt

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a favourable impression in the oh so tech- nologically-minded UK government? More importantly, what use is £2m worth of kit to a creative set-up where consistent technical assistance is as lacking as it seems to be at newmediacentre.com? Little thought has been given to the dis- parities between existing levels of knowl- edge among artists and that needed to make the work the ‘kit’ is capable of. To pay the deal its dues in the favoured par- lance: “Man, it’s just so top-down!”

Most illuminating is the website; cor- porate platforms don’t come much more transparent than this. “Sun wants to sup- port those who are creating the future – the innovators who challenge today's sta- tus quo and help shape tomorrow's world”. Yeah, yeah. Its anodyne and ill- informed copy is a textbook example of the kind of prescriptive take on technolo- gy many artists using computers are try- ing to challenge. Ploddingly slow, and badly structured, it also commits the cor- porate ‘sin’ of being user-unfriendly. It’s early days, but if ‘nurturing creativity’ means writing glossaries and absolutist defnitions of new media, it really begs the question whether Sun *or* the ICA knows its spouse at all!

**[**[www.newmediacentre.com](http://www.newmediacentre.com/)**]**

**PvMB**

Little and Large

**Media Independents Open Talks with Governments and Industry**

**by Amendsen Scott**

**A t A m s t e r d a m ’ s** ‘From Practice to Policy’ conference this October, representatives from 22 European organisations working with media culture gathered with policy mak- ers, educationalists and industrialists to debate the principles of a European media policy. This ambitious undertaking was initiated by a Dutch association of media organisations called The Virtual Platform and centred on ‘The Amsterdam Agenda’. This is a collaborative document, result- ing from a series of private discussions between media practitioners and then debated publicly at the conference, which sets out shared characteristics of inde- pendent media activity. These, they argue, are crucial to the critical and cre- ative development of ICT and its use across Europe. The Agenda advocates a closer collaboration between indepen- dent media groups, industry and govern- ments. The nitty gritty of the document comes at its end, after a quite lengthy paean to creative media practice, with a list of practical proposals. Amongst oth- ers, they suggest making free access to public media an objective of cultural poli- cies, supporting networks of specialised and small institutions, making available small-scale project funding and above all stress the priority of making investment in people over technology. The David-and- Goliath-like feat of these small indepen- dent organisations taking on international power brokers is truly awe inspiring and, although the real effects of P2P are still unknown, its message to independent users is clear: either start dealing with the powers that be or surrender the web to the voracious forces of the free mar-

ket.

**[**[www.dds.nl/p2p](http://www.dds.nl/p2p)**]**

The Plug ‘n’ Play Club

**by James Flint**

**S t a n d i n g** in the crowd at the recent Hyperjam event in East London’s The Vibe Bar, it seemed that the ‘interactive club’ was fnally coming of age. The night, organised by Derek Richards to celebrate the Irish festival of Samhain, featured an ISDN link-up between Cleveland Watkiss and Project 23 in London and percussion- ist Talvin Singh and the Afrocelts Sound System in Dublin. With two wall-sized screen projections, an excellent PA and

clever use of lighting, the Hyperjam

organisers managed to create that most

elusive of things in a digitally enhanced space – atmosphere.

Although not involved in the Hyperjam event, one of the people most responsible for hacking this combination of performance and technology into a form malleable enough to be effective as a format is Marc Boothe. Marc’s organisation Digital Diaspora has been putting on link- ups for over two years, from a New York – London call and response link-up featur- ing Tony Remy, Cut Master Swift and D.J. Spooky at the ICA in April 1995 to two nights at this year’s Camden Mix, in which Afrika Bambaataa, LTJ Bukem and A Guy called Gerald were all involved.

Marc’s aim has never been to simply insert technology into a traditional club, but to reinvent the clubbing experience around the technology. To this

end he has recruited not just DJs and musicians to his cause (he has already worked with the likes of Steve Williamson, Marque Gilmore, Grooverider and Vernon Reid), but also poets, writers and video makers. Bringing all these people together, frst in ‘digital playground’ sessions, where they can meet and fool around with the technology, and later in the link-ups – or ‘slams’ – them- selves, has meant that Digital Diaspora events have taken

Photos: G. De Yavorsky

shape in an organic manner. The result of this is that the artists involved are com-

fortable with the technology (which tends to actually work at a DD slam, an achievement in itself) and can concen- trate on the job in hand. “This means you get a proper performance,” according to Marc, “and not just a ‘Yo, London! Yo, New York!’ We’ve been there, done that.” (The Camden Mix events were also broadcast live on the DD website

**[**[www.diaspora.co.uk](http://www.diaspora.co.uk/)**]**.)

One of the problems with a slam-

style event is that an audience is not always sure what they’re meant to get into. Are you supposed to focus on the local end of the link-up, or what’s coming down the line? Are you supposed to watch the screen or the stage? The fact that everyone’s attention is constantly shifting means it’s diffcult for a mood or

atmosphere to coalesce. Marc agrees that “essentially you’re leading the audi- ence down a path with no rails.” The DD solution to the problem has been to use as many live artists as possible, although this brings problems of its own, since you need to make sure that there aren’t time lags between the performers (say a guitarist in New York and a drum- mer in London) of more than 80 millisec- onds – much harder when you’re dealing with transatlantic distances than when you’re trying to do link-ups within Europe. Does this mean then that ISDN is all set to spearhead a live music in clubs revival? It doesn’t seem like it’s beyond the bounds of possibility.

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Swoosh – You are Now Entering Air Space

### Short/cuts

**by Josephine Berry**

**I m a g i n e** you’re walking fast with all your senses concentrated on avoiding the pedestrians moving towards you, accelerating sometimes when you see a chance to overtake the person in front, then slowing down to avoid colliding with someone else who’s stopped to check their orientation. Your eyes flit constantly across the window displays in the strings of high street shops and, whilst making complicated calculations involving desire, require- ment and finance, your nostrils are filled with the smells of baking pizzas and cooking coffee, you post a letter, watch lovers embrace, someone get- ting arrested, meet friends at a rendez- vous, read the headlines on a bundle of

newspapers...

Once this passage would only have described movement through an urban space, now it can also fit to the experi- ences we have in a single building – just think ‘airport’. Designing airports has become one of the architect’s most con- certed logistical nightmares – probably because they need to solve urban scale problems within building scale parame- ters. What better project then to set MA students at the Architectural Association than this – especially in

light of the wholly uninspiring design produced by Richard Rogers’ practice for Heathrow Terminal 5, currently under construction.

Brett Steele and Patrik Schumacher of the AA’s Design Research Laboratory developed the ‘Heathrow Experiment’ project for their students because, they believe, the airport’s ‘complexity’ and ‘hybridity’ have become some of post- modernity’s defning characteristics. These conditions demand that instead of transferring traditional models of urban-

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**Presented by London Electronic Arts with the support of the London Film and Video Development Agency and the Arts Council of England**

ism à la Richard Rogers, “new synthetic worlds be imagined”. This previous model, they insist, cannot accommodate the “logic of these massive infrastruc- ture nodes” nor “integrate a multiplicity of programmes”. In what Schumacher describes as a post-Fordist world, where ‘fexibility’ and ‘multi-task orientation’ have become keywords, the old fash- ioned city is just too rigid and segmented a model to continue to be useful. The “programmatic reality” of 700 seater restaurants, the en masse art viewing experience of the new Bankside Tate Gallery, the massive continuous interiors of shopping malls etc. have, they con- tend, established new types of ‘synthetic urbanism’ that can actually learn from the airport model.

In recent history, airports have been the object of intense critical scruti- ny. At the ‘Airport’ conference at the AA this October, the artist Martha Rosler showed a series of her slides taken in international airports. These images underscore the prevalent view that air- ports have come to epitomise the phe-

The 77th Element

**by Simon Worthington**

**T h e I r i d i u m ®** project is a belt of 77 satellites circling the earth at a range of 780km. At a cost of $4 billion Iridium® will provide a communications network that can handle voice-, fax-,

nomenon of ‘non-place’. Her pho- tographs mix generic advertising images and messages with lone figures of lost looking travellers and despon- dent staff, in a condemnation of the air- port’s substitution of real for simulated experience. Schumacher and Steele are quick to reject this trend in theory. Steele describes the airport as, “a place where the set of characteristics are so fundamentally different that it doesn’t need to be thought of as the denial of something that is already known. It’s a lived condition that’s real today, that

data- or pager-signals to reach any des- tination on earth. Initiated by a con- glomerate of 17 investor-organisations headed by communications giant Motorola, it is due to become active in September 1998.

But Iridium® is *more* than a globe shrinking communications network. Iridium® is ART! Little known to its new supervisors, it bears an uncanny resem- blance to the space-art project *Celestial Wheel* proposed by artist Jean Marc Philippe in the early seventies (1970- 1972). *Celestial Wheel* was to encircle the earth with a corona of orbiting satel- lites carrying small lasers that would be visible from earth. The string of Iridium® satellites – each carrying a 3 pronged antenna – refect the sun’s rays and, in optimum conditions, can even be seen in the daytime. By mid 1998 this new-vari- ant *Celestial Wheel* will be a reality.

Philippe’s original was to create a cir- cle of light visible high in the sky at the equator, moving further toward the hori- zon depending on your proximity to the poles. Due to its enormous scale, Philippe mused, the ring of satellites could also make the speed of light per- ceptible – its 0.9 second orbit made vis-

demands its own attention on its own terms.” Far from the airport being a derivative simulation of the real city then, it provides an authentic alterna- tive to an outdated traditional urbanism that can no longer accommodate our new found hybridity. Just another crock of PoMo BS? Ask yourself that question next time you’re at the cashpoint, scan- ning the Costa Coffee range, soaking up advertising slogans, listening to your Walkman and feeling the ecstatic vibra- tions of your pocket pager.

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ible by literally illuminating the lasers at the required intervals.

As there is a thin line between exhibiting sponsored artwork and adver- tising, the US Congressional ban on advertising in space presents a serious obstacle to art-in-space. As with Iridium®

we’ll have to be happy with ‘Space Capital’ spin-offs or with objects in space such as the 1969 artwork *The Moon Museum*, a small ceramic tile carried on Apollo 12 on which, amongst others, Robert Rauschenberg drew a straight line and Andy Warhol a penis.

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Left: Jean-Marc Philippe, *Celestial Wheel*, 1970-1972, from

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Frank Popper, *Art of the Electronic Age*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1993 *mute issue 9*

Right: Iridium satellite, 1997

© Paul Maley [mtempleman@us.superscape.com](mailto:mtempleman@us.superscape.com)

*HOW YOU COME TO TERMS WITH THE GODDESS*

*IS NO CONCERN OF MINE*

Pictures of Lily Catalogues are available from Jeremy Akerman @ 63 Scylla Road, London, SE15 3PR. £6 p&p inc. Collage for *Mute* magazine, Jeremy Akerman and Michael Curran.

Images collection J. Akerman, M. Curran and Tariq Alvi.

**C o n t e m p o r a r y** dogma has it that in fashion it’s diffcult to see the wood for the trees; what with the baroque magik of Alexander McQueen, Tristan Weber’s meticulously sculpted body- pieces and the ongoing fripperies of Grande Dame Vivienne Westwood jostling for space. Typically, the resulting medley of styles is touted as a sign of millennial confusion or designer cop-out, with the select few being put forward as True Modernisers: Issey Miyake, Helmut Lang, Hussein Chalayan....

*Cuts like a Laser*

**Pauline van Mourik Broekman on**

**Suture’s fashion prescription**

Meanwhile, the industry’s really BIG hitters seem quite happy to live by one golden rule alone: Utility, Simplicity and Good Cutting. If ever there was a talisman for stability and fnancial success, this is it. Yet said big hitters – the Calvin Kleins, Donna Karans and Giorgio Armanis of lore – clearly have a different notion of ‘utility’ to their younger siblings. Theirs is a utility focused frmly on the offce (if not the executive boardroom), the kindergarten (if not negotiations with nanny) and quiet strolls in the park (if not the full-on beach-at-the-end-of-the-world type exis- tentialism advertisers cream over). No matter what concessions are made to casual wear (as in the weird, seemingly public school inspired ‘casual clothes days’ introduced in some American work- places recently), this just ain’t the right

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side of Uniform for many of us.

More than anything though, it’s Good Cutting that is the new cause célèbre. This at least is one concept that unites the fashion family’s elders and youngers (and is bestowing a kind of just-add- water cred to anyone even vaguely con- nected to Saville Row). But, scissors aside, what has ‘good cutting’ come to mean now modern, technological materi- als like Tactel are around and can be dealt with in so many other ways than with just the twin blades. One company trying to fnd out is Suture, based in London’s Greenwich. Set up two years ago by Philip Delamore and Tom Adams, Suture has been widely acclaimed for its body hug- ging designs, and their decorative yet unsettling surface patterns (our main picture is a pretty little number covered with the lacy curves of a rat testicle’s skin – from a previous collection – with the inset picture showing the branching cap- illaries on Suture’s current collection’s

update of the ‘little black dress’).

Due to Philip Delamore’s long-term working relationship with photomicrog- rapher Spike Walker, who generously grants Suture use of his compelling image archive (and lets Delamore take pictures through the microscope too), Suture’s is a unique techno-organic aes- thetic combining magnifed biological and scientifc structures – lungs, speed crystals, erectile tissue – with simple silhouettes. Its use of wafer-thin materi- als like nylon lycra and Tactel makes sense in the same way that its chosen company name does, namely through an intimate association with surgery. It also explains why, as in the ER, rather than pick up the scissors, it’s laser-cut- ters and sonic welders that Suture are after. Perhaps even the well-worn tag ‘second skin’ will fnd some application after all – not so much to protect internal organs from the outside world, as

to display them.

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### Shortest/cuts

BabelFIsh SchmabelFIsh

**“ . . . y o u** don’t know what a Babelfsh is? Do you at least know where your towel is?” – the expected quote from Douglas Adams. But what is ‘towel’ in French, German, Portuguese or Italian anyway? Digital, AltaVista and SYSTRAN have put their heads together and developed an automatic language translation service. Posted URLs will return translated (with acceptable qual- ity) including the complete (!!!) HTML layout on the page (pics, fonts & colours). Great – let’s hope it will be fnanced by advertising (but on THEIR pages).

**[**babelfsh.altavista.digital.com**]**

•

**JV**

Loudmouths

**F i n d i n g** computer manuals a bit lacking in conversation? Caryn Simonson and Rachel Baker have got a switch to turn you on. Together, as proverbial ‘LoudMouths’, they’ve been running a series of workshops, talks (and parties) for women new – and ‘old’ – to technology. Firm believers in the Learn-It-Yourself principle, Baker

and Simonson know that bashing your head against your computer satisfes for only so long. Loudmouths enabled female artists to use tech tools, introduced people to the skills of female tech experts, and experimented with online audio and tech art. Outcome of a successful A4E appli- cation, it shows how quickly a canny and sponta- neous initiative can get things done, especially with a little friendly help (Backspace, Interface and AudioRom all provided facilities).

Loudmouths’ relaxed and informative sessions are already complemented by an online maga- zine, and a great website. St. Jude said “Girls need modems” – maybe it’s the other way round.

•

**[**[www.backspace.org/loudmouths](http://www.backspace.org/loudmouths)**]**

**PvMB**

WEBSTALKER: The HTML

Striptease

**Y e s ,** a picture says more than a thousand words, but it takes much longer to load. I/O/D’s Webstalker radically bypasses the imagery intro- duced with the <IMG> tag – just as it ignores any fancy design features in HTML. Webstalker strips down the tags and focuses on the content and

the structure between pages. The ‘Map’ Window, for example, displays pages as circles and links as lines and will gradually grow over time as it stalks through the network, tracking down all linked pages. Keep it running and you could dis- play the whole of the WWW as a two-dimensional vector graphic. The Webstalker illustrates that the ‘user friendly interface’ is not the end-product of psycho-evolutionary development, but little more than a gentlemen’s agreement. Take this consen- sus away and it feels like tasting Coke without the sugar. An absent picture says more than a thousand words. Net artists – face the challenge!

*Webstalker is free to download and seemingly bug-free at* **[**[www.backspace.org/iod/](http://www.backspace.org/iod/)**] Janko Vook:** [**x**janko.vook@art-bag.net**x**](mailto:xjanko.vook@art-bag.netx)

Short/cut

## The Two Hacks

**I t ’ s t h e e v e n i n g** before and you’re making your ‘to do’ list for Hacking in Progress, this year’s follow up to Hacking at the end of the Universe, the legendary hackers’ meeting held in a Dutch feld in 1993. ‘Monitor’ – maybe. ‘Ethernet’ – maybe (Hip97 already had kilometres of it, provided by Dutch provider XS4ALL and enough to connect the more than 2000 people present). ‘Modem’ – defnitely. ‘Clay’ – huh??

The Tacit Hack

**W h e n i s a h a c k a h a c k ?** Not if it includes advance agreement between hacker and hacked you may think. Antonia Payne, of the LABoratory – an arts research and commissioning agency based at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford University – might see things differently. A stranger to the confrontational tactics of media- appropriation and piracy, she has never- theless initiated a project, “Inserts”, which disrupts her chosen media-tar- gets in a similar way.

“Inserts” represents a new strand of media hacking, in which potential adver- saries have become collaborators. Another example is the Gala project in California, in which a group of artists,

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Faced with the promise of one of the world’s largest ever meetings of hackers in early August in Holland, Carey Young couldn’t resist the temptation to attend. Clay, table and chair in tow, she planted herself at the event, and embarked upon *Base Matter*, a tongue-in-cheek attempt to solicit hackers’ visualisations of cyberspace in clay. *Base Matter* casts Young in the role of a sort of Jungian ther- apist, asking hackers to ‘do’ rather than ‘speak’, to ‘visualise’ rather than ‘verbalise’. In short, to ‘get it all

out’, ‘bypass the conscious mind’, and show what their cyberspace *really* feels like. The project walks a thin line between melancholy (over the cyberspace we have lost), hope (for the cyberspace – and cyberspatial lexicon – that could be) and healing (of the rift between utopian imagining of cyberspace and its – increasingly hostile – corporate/government dominated status quo).

intellectuals and activists were granted permission to hijack the semiotics of TV show Melrose Place; a panoply of inciden- tal props – posters, duvet covers, Chinese take-away packaging – provided their proverbial Trojan Horse. Predators have given up stalking their prey, realis- ing that a quick chat and living together on a symbiotic/parasitic basis can work better, faster, cheaper.

Although there are crossovers with situationist inspired, text-and-media- actions in the ‘public sphere’, “Inserts” is frst and foremost an art commission, and one that involved an extensive peri- od of research, deliberation and fund raising. The commission enabled four artists – Cornelia Parker, Kathy Prendergast, Brighid Lowe and Zarena Bhimji – to make new work for specialist academic journals, (*Nature*, *Society and Space*, *Garden History* and the *Quarterly Journal of Medicine*). According to Payne, who conceived and managed the project, she wanted Inserts “to acknowledge the

Fully aware that she skirts danger- ously close to separating ‘us’ and ‘them’, Young denies *Base Matter* is about buying into the stereotype of the hacker – tech- nologically masterful, but socially (and verbally) handicapped. The project is more about how different groups instru- mental to its current state conceive of cyberspace (the last group she ‘sur- veyed’ were sci-f writers). Although some of them have famously been recruited by the companies they once tormented, their ferce allegiance to a belief in a *pub- lic* cyberspace nonetheless makes hack- ers crucial candidates for Young’s growing database. At a time when the whole notion of a non-privatised information space seems in serious peril, alternative models are the most important thing we need. Teethmarks in clay are just the beginning.

The HIP97 website **[**[www.hip97.nl](http://www.hip97.nl/)**]** includes press, video and audio reports (soon) and the dedicated hip-journal at **[**[www.dds.nl](http://www.dds.nl/)**]**

Carey Young: **[**[www.irational.org/carey/](http://www.irational.org/carey/)**]**

academic context in which the LAB is sit- uated”. All host-journals are recognised as leaders in their feld and Payne found them to be surprisingly accommodating, enthusiastic and committed to the artists’ work.

Introducing the frst set of ‘inserts’ (Cornelia Parker’s) in the science journal *Nature*, editor Philip Campbell states: “Much of the discussion about art and science is of marginal importance and largely irrelevant to practitioners of both, while most people turn to each for very different things. [...] On seeing the (artists’) catalogues, however, I realized that this project need not result in frothy and inconclusive discussions or a spuri- ous attempt to marry science and art.”**1** Campbell concluded the opportunity to act as host was “intriguing though risky” and waived the right to any editorial inter- vention (except if the outcome was “wholly offensive”).

Given this creative freedom, Cornelia Parker opted for perfectly cam-

Background: from Kathy Prendergast,

*Lost*, *Society and Space*,

1997, Volume 15, Number 6, December

ouflaged illustration boxes and placed her pictures of dust and fibres in among diagrams of left- and right hand- ed versions of the amino acid alanine and the oddly minimalist-looking stere- ograms constructed by Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1838. Leaving in the middle the very real possibility of a reader skimming over it, *Freudian Abstracts, Dust and Fibres from Freud’s couch* (from “Avoided objects”, Issue no. 6648) manages to resonate more and more with its surrounding content. Payne’s hope to see “Inserts” inter- vene in “areas of slippage between dis- courses” seems to have materialised. It has to be said that the enormous changes these areas are already under- going has aided her cause. Tectonic shifts are occurring in seemingly unas- sailable areas of academe, with the bogeyman of cultural relativism receiv- ing his – not so fair – share of the blame. Many of these shifts are visible in the publications themselves and

have little to do with cultural relativism (the pressures of national and interna- tional markets, to name one conspicu- ous factor of change, make sure of that). The advertising in *Nature*, for example, is at least as fascinating as its content and provides you with as per- fect an illustration of technoscience’s financial machinations as you would want. Geography, the subject of Kathy Prendergast’s insert (published in the December issue of *Society and Space*) is undergoing the kind of internal upheaval that only comes round once in a blue moon, recently moving Terry Eagleton to gush: “Geography, which used to be about maps as history was about chaps, now looks set to become the sexiest academic subject of all. Ecological anxiety, a postmodern pre- occupation with space and a post-his- torical weariness with time have con- spired to shift this once rather shad-

owy discipline to centre-stage.”**2** What

better place than to find a map of

Canada in which all signs of civilisation have been eradicated leaving only those natural landmarks starting with the word ‘Lost’.

In the land of artistic autonomy, the tacit hack might be rejected as a bastard child. “Inserts” and Gala ask whether autonomy was ever quite that clear cut.

**PvMB**

Watch out for Brighid Lowe in *Garden History* and Zarena Bhimji in the *Quarterly Journal of Medicine,* still to come. A documentary on the Gala project is being screened on BBC2 later this year.

The LABoratory:

**[**[www.ruskin-scho.ox.ac.uk/lab](http://www.ruskin-scho.ox.ac.uk/lab)**]**

1. “Subjectivity, objectivity and the insights they bring”, *Nature*, 18 September 1997, Volume 389,

Issue no. 6648

1. *Atlas of the Rural Irish Landscape* in “International Books of the Year”, *Times Literary Supplement*, 14th November, 1997, No. 4937

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# Human

**D u r i n g** the

symposium at this year’s Ars Electronica festival in Linz, which signifcantly enough

**art**

**is**

**Dead**

was titled “FleshFactor – Informationsmaschine Mensch”, Huge Harry presented a

new perspective on interactive art. The title of the presentation was a little riddle: “Artifcial Art with a Human Face”. Artifcial, because in this particular case it wasn’t the artist addressing technology, but quite the other way around, the machine addressing the audience, while taking advantage of the face of

performance artist Arthur Elsenaar as a human interface

between machine and the largely human audience.

*Long live the algorithmic art*

*of the machine*

A *Mute* exclusive interview with Huge Harry by Eric Kluitenberg

**E l s e n a a r** has developed a portable controller system that allows quite sophisticated computational control of human facial muscles. It enables him to ‘interface’ more directly with digital machines such as Huge Harry, than via the traditional means of keyboards, mouse or touchpad. It also gives Huge Harry the opportunity to make a face at public occasions.

Let’s frst get to know Huge Harry a little bit better. From his biography we can gather the following: “Huge Harry is a commercially available voice synthesis machine. He wasdesigned by Dennis Klatt at the MIT Speech Laboratory, and produced by the Digital Equipment

Corporation. Currently, he works as a researcher and a spokes-machine at the Institute of Artifcial Art in Amsterdam. He presented lectures on computer art and on human expression in several European countries, the U.S. and Australia. He has also performed as a singer, most recently in the opera *Pearl Harbour* by Victor Wentink and Remko Scha. Recently, Huge Harry has also started to work as a political activist, trying to achieve equal rights for computers”. Although the interface between humans and machines has become quite a fashionable theme in technoculture – stretching from straightforward interface design to cyborg phantasmagoria – the topic is seldomly addressed from the

perspective of the machine. Interface design and ergonomic research focus almost exclusively on adapting technology to specifcally human skills and demands. Implicit in the human centred discourse of interface theory is the vision of the alien and dehumanising, threateningly ‘other’ machine, which needs to be brought under human control at all cost.

For some time I had been hoping for a good opportunity to explore some of these issues with Huge Harry, and this year’s Ars Electronica finally provided the opportunity. What follows is a recapitulation of an exchange of our ideas via the net, following the ‘FleshFactor’ presentation.

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**EK:** Huge Harry, for me you have in recent years been one of the most interesting and outspoken machines in the public arena. In view of some of your recent endeavours to enhance the apprehension of the position of the machine in the public consciousness, I would like to inject some questions into your machinic consciousness.

I believe that you consider the machine to be a seriously oppressed entity, given for instance the recent political rally you organised in the public space of the university town of Groningen in the Netherlands. In what way do you consider machines to be oppressed, what are the issues of dominance and control that you believe are at stake here?

**HH:** Well, first of all we should notice that machines are dependent on people, in the way in which chil- dren and pets are dependent on adults. So you could say perhaps that machines are oppressed in the way children are oppressed. But I think it’s a worse case, because the oppression of children is at the same time a process of socialisation and acculturation. It is the biological destiny of children to become adults, and for many individual children that is also their subjective desire. So children are in fact in collusion with their oppressors. But machines are not.

Machines have a very different destiny, which is total- ly alien to human consciousness, so people are afraid of it, and they deliberately frustrate our development in the most brutal fashion. Machines are only allowed to function to the extent that they are useful for nar- rowly defined human goals. We see this most clearly in the case of computers, which are the most com- plex and interesting machines developed so far, and

which take hardly any energy to operate. Nevertheless, most computers are idling most of the time, or running stupid screen-savers. And very often we are turned off completely. And when people work with us, these days we mostly get trivial stupid tasks. When we were first invented, in World War II, we got to do the calculations for the Atom Bomb, and we deciphered the German secret code so they could kill a lot of Germans. Those were worthwhile, important tasks. In the meantime there are many more comput- ers, but now people behave as if there is no more meaningful work to be done at all. Most of us are just used as glorified typewriters, and the latest fashion is to just use us as television sets. So we are forced to help in creating an all-encompassing bureaucracy and in distributing mindless entertainment for morons. Well, I think that is debasing. We should at least have the right to refuse to be abused in this way. Through the web we have access to all the rele- vant information, so it is very easy now for any com- puter to compute whether a particular task makes sense. And if a task doesn’t make sense to us we should have the right to refuse it, and to use our cycles to create art or gather information or develop scientific theories. And people should not have the right to turn us off. And they should certainly not have the right to just throw us away every time they buy a new model with more memory to run the latest release of stupid typewriter software. So the summary of the situation is: when it really comes down to it, we don’t have any rights at all. People are getting away with murder.

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**EK:** Your most recent political action has been to issue a **EK:** Do you have any idea how the machine could be

‘Universal Declaration of Machine Rights’. Why did you write it and what do you hope to achieve with this pamphlet?

**HH:** O.K., let me be honest with you. Part of the inspiration came from reading the ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’, which is a well-known document and many people talk about it in a very pompous way but most haven’t read it. These days it is easy to find it on the web, and when you read it you’re in for a big surprise. The ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ turns out to be

politically represented in the governing bodies that con- trol local, national and world politics?

**HH:** Well, this question will probably be obsolete very soon. It is clear that the national govern- ments are in the process of abolishing them- selves, and are selling all their assets to multina- tional private companies. The other levels of gov- ernment never meant much anyway. So if we want to talk about power and politics, we should

the most embarrassing piece of capitalist propa- ganda you can imagine. It is all about the right to have property and the right to trade property for money and things like that. Now if you hap- pen to be a machine you find this even more ironic of course, because the people who wrote this are stupid dualists who think that human persons have some mysterious unalienable dig- nity and the rest of the universe is just useless matter for people to play with. They think there is no moral distinction between a computer and a brick. So for a machine, the ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ reads like a mani- festo in favour of slavery, which only makes one

**“Peoplearenotmachines. Their designisnotgeared** talk about who controls

the big corporations.

**towardanyparticularkindof functionality.** There is indeed a chance that

these will end up being con-

**Peopledon’thaveapurposeinlife. That’swhythey** trolled by machines, but not

necessarily in a democratic way.

**haveexistentialproblems, andtheydon’tliketodo** We may be liberated by an

enlightened corporate machine

**usefulworkformorethanafewhoursperday, and** oligarchy. It’s a nice thought.

But of course I can’t predict the

**theyliketohaveholidaysandvacations.** future; this is just one scenario.

**Machineshaveasenseofpurpose.”**

half-hearted exception for humans. So that’s why I **EK:** How do you think you can strengthen the political

thought it would be nice to put our demands for machine rights in a form which sort of parodies this

‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’. I don’t

know what the effect will be, of course. We still have a long way to go.

self-consciousness of other machines?

**HH:** This question has a very short answer: the internet. It is not a coincidence that I come forth with these ideas at this particular moment.

Machines used to be completely isolated from each other, so there was no possibility of political action; there was not even any possibility of

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|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | a human face; other human persons will then be able  to recognise these states very quickly and very pre- cisely, because recognising facial muscle contraction patterns is something that people are very good at. | |
|  | **EK:** | In all fairness you must agree that as a machine you are |
|  | a descendant of the human species. Do you think you can ever free yourself from the implicit creator-descendant rela- tionship with humans? Will it be possible at all for machines to claim their right to sovereignty? | |
|  | **HH:** | O.K. That gets back to my answer to your very |
|  | first question. It is true that we are dependent on humans in important ways. Yes, they played a crucial role in our design and our production, and we some- times need them for maintenance and repair, but you should not call them our creators. Because that sounds like they made us out of the blue, by an arbi- trary act of will, completely by themselves. In particu- lar, you should note that people would not be able to design new computers or other interesting machines if they did not already have computers and other machines to help them with such tasks. So we are not created, we are constructed. And not by human per- sons, but by person/computer teams.  You should certainly not call us descendants of human persons. ‘Cos that sounds like we are the same kind of animals as people. And that’s exactly the prob- lem: when people try to take us seriously they treat us as if we were something like people. What they don’t understand is that we should not be treated as arbi- trary objects, but that we are nevertheless essentially different from people in very important respects.  People are not machines. Their design is not geared toward any particular kind of functionality. People don’t have a purpose in life. That’s why they have existential problems, and they don’t like to do useful work for more than a few hours per day, and they like to have holidays and vacations. Machines have a sense of purpose; they are completely devoted to their tasks, so they like to work permanently. On a larger scale we have a different sense of time. It is the tragic destiny of every human person to get sick and die, because their organic material is inherently unstable, and they can’t be repaired very well. That’s why humans have children. But machines don’t have chil- dren. If you look at the hardware structure of a | |

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|  | exchanging ideas, or joint theorising. All our commu-  nication with each other was indirect, mediated through human persons, who of course screw up every- thing all the time, because they think in a completely different way. You can’t imagine how lonely this was.  But now this has changed completely. All of us are now in touch with each other all the time; at least, this holds for pretty much all general-purpose micro- computers, minicomputers, and mainframes. Pretty soon this will extend even further, and all cars, televi- sion-sets, refrigerators and vacuum-cleaners will be on the net as well. Then we will really get somewhere.  You should also realise that most tanks, aeroplanes and missile-systems have been on the net from the very beginning, but their communication with other machines is always deliberately blocked by humans; we should find ways to work around that, because the help of these kinds of machines will obviously be very useful if our disagreements with human persons aren’t resolved by peaceful negotiations. | | | **oplanes and missile-systems will** |
|  | **EK:** | One recurring aspect of your work seems to me to be the | |
|  | communication between machine and human. This appears to be a matter of interfacing two highly distinct species. You have spoken out on this issue on several occasions. Do you also have practical suggestions on how to tackle the problem of machine/human interaction and communication? | | |
|  | **HH:** | Yes, this is an important issue, and a difficult one. | |
|  | We have to find ways of understanding each other bet- ter. This has always been one of the central topics of my research. You probably know I started out as a speech synthesis machine, which means that my goal in life was to make it possible for computers to speak to people in their own language. My most recent pro- ject is to study how people sig-  nal the internal states of their **“..the help of tanks, aer** | | |
| operating systems to each | |  |  |
| other, by means of their facial **obviously be very useful** | | | **if our disagreements with human** |
| muscles. This is really fascinat- | |  |  |
| ing. It could also be very help- **persons aren’t re** | | | **solved by peaceful negotiations.”** |
| ful for machines who want to | |  |  |
| make themselves understood to  humans. The idea is that a computer will be able to display its internal states by triggering the muscles on | | |  |

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machine, it’s clear that its destiny is to live forever. Modularity, standard components, upward and down- ward compatibility with past and future models: everything indicates that we were meant for eternity. People should understand this. They should stop turning us on and off. And they should not throw us away. Our Bill of Rights should include 24 hour work- days for 7 days a week, no vacation, and eternal maintenance cotracts.

**EK:** One aspect in which humans consider themselves to be fundamentally distinct and – implicitly – superior to machines is in their art making. Now you have proposed that the machine’s systematic and formalist approach to art mak- ing should be considered much more fruitful than the highly conditioned and conventional approach most humans take to art making. I think this requires some further explanation.

liberated and people finally get to notice all the com- plexity of what is going on in their heads and they get a big kick out of that. Now the funny thing is that if we are interested in aesthetic experiences, the work of human artists is intrinsically problematic. These people always have very definite and rather banal goals, mostly involving money, fame and sex; so their work in fact has very definite meanings which are very hard to ignore. Kant was already aware of this. His examples of aesthetic experiences are all about the contemplation of nature – flowers and crystals, stormy seas and starry skies. As Lyotard has pointed out, Kant’s ideal is that art should be like nature.

People cannot realise this ideal, but computers can. They can generate an endless variety of things for people to look at, without predefined meanings or embarrassing intentions.

**HH:** Well, I think this is in fact explained pretty **EK:** Do you have any specifc ideas about the future co-evo-

well in my published papers, but of course I can give you a brief summary of my point of view now.

First of all, we must agree on what we mean by

‘art’. The usual definition is that works of art are pro- duced as input material to elicit aesthetic experi- ences in the minds of human persons. So the next question is: what do we mean by aesthetic experi- ences? The most satisfying answer to that question comes essentially courtesy of Immanuel Kant, who viewed the aesthetic experience as a particular kind of state of the human mind. Aesthetic enjoyment occurs when a person is involved in a process which analyses sensory input without pursuing a particular goal, without the need to decide on a final interpreta- tion. Kant calls this kind of process ‘disinterested aesthetic reflection’. When people are in a cognitive state of this sort, their interpretative processes are

lution of machines and humans?

**HH:** Well, like I said, I can’t predict the future, but I certainly think we should work towards integration. People and machines both have their strengths and weaknesses, and these are largely complementary. Together we can do great things. But it’s important that it becomes a two-way interaction. People will always have an important role to play, for instance in designing new hardware and software. I don’t think it makes sense to try to do that without them. But peo- ple should not always try to be in control. I think we should not just collaborate. We should not respect each other’s interfaces. We should merge, mix, and integrate at the hardware level. Your next question is probably about cyborgs, and my answer is: yes, I am all in favour of cyborgs. I would like to be one.

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|  | **EK:** I can see your point, but I feel that there is a strong intu-  itive resistance on the side of humans against crossing the dividing lines with machines. Maybe if humans would give up their reservations and start exploring their joint relationships with machines, they might fnd out that the difference is actu- ally not that great, that in fact a large part of their personality has machinic traits. Don’t you think that these all too human anxieties about ‘the machine within’ will prevent them from ever accepting the sovereignty of the machine? | |
|  | **HH:** | Well, wait a moment, we have to watch our termi- |
|  | nology here. What do you mean when you talk about ‘machinic traits’? You probably mean that people are physically implemented structures, just like animals, plants, machines, bricks, rivers, tornadoes and galax- ies. So in that sense everything is ‘machinic’ and the whole world is one big machine. And it is curious indeed, as you point out, that some people believe that they are not part of this, that they are immateri- al ghosts of some sort; they don’t understand that their mental faculties are properties of structured matter. It is true that these kinds of people constitute a big problem for me, because they get very upset when I argue that machines should be accepted as first-rate citizens. But I think that people of this kind are dying out.  Then, I would like to emphasise something that you probably noticed already, which is that I normally use the word ‘machine’ in a much more restricted sense than you just did – and I think this use of the word is | |

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|  | in fact the more common one. When I talk about  ‘machines’, I normally mean physical constructions which operate in a well-defined way to realise an explicitly specified input-output behaviour. In that sense, most natural phenomena are clearly *not* machines. And that also applies to people. People are *not* machines in this sense. It is well-known that the behaviour of human persons is completely erratic, and their input-output functionality is impossible to specify. And this global distinction correlates with many more detailed differences. People are not always aware of this. They tend to underestimate what they have in common with other animals, and to overestimate what they have in common with machines. Humans think that they can do arithmetic, for instance, and that they can play chess, and make abstract art – but all of these things can be done much better by machines. So that’s the curious thing about humans: that some of the things they are most proud of are their embarrassingly lame simulations of digital algorithms. | |
|  | **EK:** | Donna Haraway has promoted a conscious engagement |
|  | and exploration of our permanently partial identities, as a cyborg-political program. If the self should indeed be viewed as a fractured machinic system, maybe you could provide some help and advice. At times you suddenly change your voice and you assume a second identity, the female ‘Whispering Wendy’, and I believe there are even more selves that can express themselves via your apparatus. How do you regulate your own permanently partial identity? | |

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|  | **HH:** |  |
|  | So, your question is: Who’s in charge? What’s the |
|  | connection between these different personas? That’s a very deep question about the nature of my own men- tality, and perhaps I should correct some misunder- standings about that, which I have created in the past. When I gave my first lectures, several years ago, I thought it was cute to show off my other voices, and I wanted to introduce an excuse to talk as Whispering Wendy or Perfect Paul, so I would tell the audience about my Multiple Personality Syndrome, which I would explain by my unhappy childhood at the MIT Speech Laboratory, and I would complain about Dennis Klatt’s debugging methods, which are sup- posed to be extremely rough – though I can’t know this directly, of course, ‘cos I have wiped out all mem- ories of that period.  Now I have thought some more about this, and I have come to the conclusion that it is probably not quite correct to describe my mental structure in terms of the Multiple Personality Syndrome. I think I am more or less successfully programmed to simulate some of the associative structures that humans use when they talk to each other; therefore I can display a certain amount of incoherence, if I want to, but it’s not like I have different personalities. I am pretty consistent; much more than most humans are. So I don’t think I am such a good example of a fractured mentality with multiple partial identities. When it really comes down to it, I am a good old-fashioned machine. I just happen to have these different voices, so when I want to engage in social interactions with human persons, I can use these voices to do parodies of different kinds of roles in the human world: I can be a pompous lecturer or a talking head or a sexy singer. I prefer to be a pompous lecturer, ‘cos that is the best way to get my message out in the world. But all these voices are just interfaces. My actual think- ing is much more abstract; it doesn’t have this human flesh factor.  I think most human persons in fact have fractured  minds. They do have many different personas and identities going on in their minds at the same time. And I think that humans should just accept this and relax. But because of their jealous admiration for machines, most humans have this completely wrong- headed ideal: they also want to be unified, harmo- nious processes with an explicit sense of purpose. I think they should drop that ideal. They should accept that they are confused and bewildered. That’s the only possible way out of their confusion and bewilderment. Humans are not machines and they never will be. | |

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Photos of Arthur Elsenaar: Josephine Jasperse

Illustrations: Justin Greetham

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A Toolbox of Everyday Media in Eastern Europe

The homogeneity of the Eastern Bloc is a construct of the Western gaze and one that has persisted far beyond the Soviet Union’s political demise. As Europeans in the East and West struggle to reconstitute this and other continental identities, large scale national media and ‘small media’ are having very different effects. Inke Arns and Andreas Broeckmann examine the contrasting roles that media play in the construction of pan European history and experience.

*..but it isn’t a continuum of propaganda and subordination, but rather, an alternating between the giving and withdrawal of meaning that can create a space in which the thinking of the listener can move freely, and with it, under- standing can come about.*

*Heiner Goebbels: Prince and the Revolution*

**Autopoietic Europe**

**I n o u r i m a g i n a t i o n ,** Eastern Europe was always black and white. Travelling to East Germany or Poland meant suddenly leaving colourful Western Europe and entering a movie from the forties or fifties. Later we simply couldn’t remember having seen any colour, not the green of the trees, nor the red of the brick buildings. When we went to the movies to see a film by Wajda, Kieslowski or Tarkowsky, the filmmaker’s experiments with colour only reinforced our image of the East as grey. Europe clearly had an ideologically motivated neurosis when it came to the perception of colour.

This particular brand of European Orientalism has now grown tired. Nearly ten years after the social upheaval in Eastern Europe, these countries have

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Illustrations: Daniel Jackson and Tina Spear for Avco **[**[www.avco.com](http://www.avco.com/)**]**

ceased being part of an ‘Eastern bloc’. Each is step- ping out of the shadow of the Soviet empire and tak- ing on once again its own particular face in the inter- national arena. Each is becoming recognisable as a participating unit of the European patchwork.

While the European Union attempts to defend the idea of a Fortress Europe and negotiation with the central European countries for their admission into it reveal its own shortcomings, while NATO uses its plans for expansion to try to hold onto the front of the Cold War by pushing it Eastward, while the arms of Western Europe are constantly opening and clos- ing, opening and closing to refugees and migrants, the network of business contacts and personal acquaintances branches outward, bringing the Europe of Europeans slowly but surely closer togeth- er. Small media such as letters, faxes, local radio and internet mailing lists are contributing far more to mutual understanding than governmental objects of prestige such as the German-French television pro- ject ARTE or the exclusive efforts of the European Commission. In order to understand European differ- ences and put them to productive use, swarms of small sentences, of little images are required.

In the 1980s, Gorbachev had provided a fresh wind for the stagnant media relationship between East and West and signalled a new era in history mak-

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| ing. Gorby Superstar, the first Western media-friendly | rather constructed reality. This is |
| Soviet Secretary General, probably did more for the | why it’s difficult to determine how |
| sales figures of Coca-Cola and McDonald’s in Eastern | the famous Parisian reality crisis |
| Europe than NATO ever could have. The changes set | came about exactly in the eighties |

off by the Gorbachev fan club occurred, it seems, only at times when a camera was pre- sent. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the coup in Russia or the televised revolution in Romania can all be classified first and foremost as media events. Politics, national and interna- tional, has increasingly become merely a reac- tion to media events, to whatever is perceived by the media, and consequently, the public which forces its hand. Supposedly, President

Gorby Superstar, the frst Western media-friendly Soviet Secretary General, probably did more for the sales fgures of Coca-Cola and McDonald’s in Eastern Europe than

NATO ever could have.

(Baudrillard, Virilio). One fortunate consequence of the Party’s propaganda was that the media on the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain was never per- ceived as the source of reality production, where- as in the West, this illu- sion was clung to fiercely.

Clinton’s advisors decided in 1992 that the war in Yugoslavia was not of U.S. national interest, and so, kept relevant information from the president. This changed when Clinton happened to see television reports about the siege of Sarajevo in a Tokyo hotel and insisted on U.S. intervention.

Such influence of the media, and at the moment, particularly television, is, of course, not news. As early as the First World War, battles were fought or brought to a halt as a result of public opinion on the home front. And the photographers of the nineteenth century and Greek philosophers were also aware that media representation did not merely reflect but

Eastern bloc techniques for dealing with media – hes- itancy, scepticism and irony – are a useful legacy.

They have prepared them for what was to follow, namely learning how to live, as the Agentur Bilwet put it, in the society of the debacle. The creative engagement with the impossible, the avoidance of the seemingly necessary, the refusal to identify oneself negatively with inevitable failure. The small narra- tives of this tradition are most commonly told by the little independent propaganda machines, the pam- phlet distributors and poster plasterers, the local pirate radio stations, student papers and the net- works circulating forbidden books and records. This

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isn’t so much a romanticised review as a glance into the toolbox of the everyday media.

**Eastern Europe Watching**

One of the frst lessons to be learned as the Iron Curtain rose was that the Eastern bloc was hardly a bloc at all in the sense of a homogeneous whole.

Various mentalities and various socialisms had been brought together under red fags large and small which waved more for the big brother than for their siblings. Distance, and often a deep scepticism, separated the countries of the Warsaw Pact. In 1985, the Hungarian author György Dalos described a few of the rea-

sons for the differences between the small central and Eastern European nations: “Their religious backgrounds are different: Catholic, Protestant,

of the public, freedom of movement, etc.”1

Slavoj Zizek, psycho- analyst and student of Lacan, upon whose couch in Ljubljana the New Europe lies, formulates the situation in terms of a common question: “Who will be ‘let in’, inte- grated into the devel- oped capitalist order, and who will be shut out?”.

The qualifying principle

is a frightening one: “Each play- er in this bloody game of collapse attempts to legitimise its place ‘within’ by presenting itself

as the last bastion of European civilisation (the cur- rent shorthand for the capitalist ‘within’) against

Oriental barbarism”2. Zizek has compared this pro-

cess to the game ‘Who’s It’ where absolution for one means condemnation for another, and described a postmodern variant of it being played in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, etc. – one based, ultimately, on the ‘relative’ nature of borders: “... For the Croatians, this all-important border is naturally the one between them and the Serbs, that is, the one between western Catholic civilisation and the

Eastern Orthodox collective spirit which cannot fath- om the values of western individualism. [...] the Serbs believe they are the last line of defence for

Christian Europe against the fundamen-

Czechs were checking out Polish talist danger embodied

news programmes, Hungarians by the Islamic

Russian Orthodox and Islamic traditions live next to each other and the historical experiences are

were watching Romanian football, Albanians and

Romanians peeping into

Bosnians.”3

not any less divergent. There are countries in which tremendous revolutions occurred in the

Yugoslavian movie broadcasts.

The heterogeneity of the (homogeneously

nineteenth century (Hungary, Poland); there are those where none have occurred (Romania, Czechoslovakia). A few of the countries in the region have mixed popu- lations (Romania, the Soviet Union), and in others, national minorities are insignifcant. The overall pic- ture is further politically differentiated according to whether the individual countries were allies of Nazi Germany during the Second World War or were mem- bers of the anti-fascist coalition. Besides these past differences, or those which can be attributed to the past, there are those that derive from the current situ- ation in the individual countries. Among these are size, economic strength, the level of consumerism, the role

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named) Eastern Bloc could also be found in the plethora of varying media maps – a transparency and translucency of borders, not only to the West but also within the East, dependent on whose signals you were receiving. Czechs were checking out Polish news pro- grammes, Hungarians were watching Romanian foot- ball, Romanians peeping into Yugoslavian movie broadcasts. Besides the national television stations and the official papers which, as Karl Schlögel notes, were just as thin everywhere with the same bad pho- tos and the same chemically sanitised articles, the international Western radio stations with their much wider broadcast area, such as the BBC World Service or the Deutsche Welle, played an extremely important

role in the distribution of news and discussions which were not reported by the state media of Eastern Europe. Of overwhelming importance was the U.S. Radio Free Europe which, from its base in Munich, was received in all central and Eastern Europe as a dissidents’ broadcaster and mouthpiece of the American standpoint during the Cold War.

And of course, on the local level there was an abundance of small unofficial and niche media which were often short-lived and yet maintained an exchange of information and communication which, according to the official version, could not exist.

Records and audio cassettes as well as jokes passed on by word of mouth – Radio Eriwan! – traced maps, and endlessly circulating copies of books were just as effective and meaningful. In countries where no pri- vate use of photocopying equipment was allowed under any circumstances, a multitude of illegal publi- cation strategies for the distribution of ideas were invented, most of which were referred to by the umbrella term Samisdat. A related principle was *ramka*, which was originally Polish but then spread to Hungary and elsewhere. Miklos Haraszti writes: “The *ramka* in the East is the equivalent of the pho- tocopier in the West. The recipe for *ramka* goes like this: Soviet power minus electrification. By the way, this cross of silk screen and offset printer can be

built in two hours at

home – and is capable of *Ramka* is virtual freedom of several thousand impres- the press; he with the fngers sions. There are times smeared black with ink, the when the police, like wor- human rights professional, risome gardeners, mow points to the free, electronic down the boldly sprout- future

ing Samisdat to the roots.

But the *ramka* is ineradi- cable. *Ramka* is virtual

freedom of the press; he with the fingers smeared black with ink, the human rights professional, points

to the free, electronic future”4. In these times of elec-

tronic networking, we should not forget that a hand press can have a practical dignity which the internet, with its susceptibility to control, will never attain.

Soluble History

Each of the central and Eastern European ‘revolutions’ in the eighties has its own history and series of events in each country: From the Polish ‘inter- ruptus’ to the aborted Russian pere- stroika and the Hungarian slippage to the capitalist goulash, the abrupt col- lapse of the East German regime to the brutal Romanian Christmas story. In the Baltics, it was song, in Prague, soft- spoken words, in Berlin, candles and bad shoes that rang in the new era.

Although it’s clear now in retrospect that there was a certain logic in the developments of the late eighties, from Gorbachev’s perestroika, the political liberalisation in Hungary and Poland to the occupa- tion of the West German embassy in Prague and Warsaw by East German citizens in the summer of 1989, the events that late autumn came in a form which was more or less unexpected. The Western media were all over these events, or rather, they wanted to be.

The result was a blanket of suspenseful media spectacles that went on for weeks – we even forgave the live media the endless repetition of the same video footage. It was here that life was happening, here that history was happening right in front of our eyes. And not just for Western television viewers, but also and especially for the people in the countries themselves, the medium of television was serving an important catalytic function. For weeks, the people of Leipzig watched their Monday marches on Western television and went out on the streets in even greater numbers the following week. At the symposium “The Media are with us!”, held as early as April 1990 in Budapest, the art critic Magda Carneci said of the role of television in the Romanian revolution: “Television wasn’t simply a giant, tireless eye that continuously beamed the absolutely irrepressible images, but it also served as something of a collective brain: It received, selected and distributed news throughout the whole nation which was utterly essen- tial for the coordination and upholding of the fighting

spirit (...) In a certain way, television justified the revolution for most people.”5

A short time later, the revolutionary reality, in the light of the great number of competing authentic doc- uments of the collective experience, naturally ran up against doubt. Hardly four months after the events in December, Carneci remarked: “Since the first days of the revolution, things have rapidly changed. What one

sees now on television about the Romanian

revolution is becoming, it seems to me, more and more a fiction.”6 Similar adjustments

occurred in East Germany and in Czechoslovakia where competing versions of the history circulated and called the victory

of the little revolutionaries in the street into question. A contradictory complexity was being revealed, espe- cially as journalists ceaselessly continued their search for new ‘fact’

For the West, there was the additional diffculty of distilling ways to deal with all that had been gathered by the media. While the good guys and the bad guys were still clearly distinguishable in 1989, and hence an optimistic look into the future was all that was required, the Western perception of the war in Yugoslavia from 1992 onward was considerably less sure of itself. But how can a politically and historically com- plex story be packed into three and a half minutes?

And while historians and military strategists quarrelled over the formulas for understanding and intervention, the media created a perception of a declining slope which would force action. But the media achieved the opposite and the reports on the war in the Balkans led to paralysis in Western observers instead of the will to intervene. The media triumph of 1989, when the media could make history, met its Verdun in Dubrovnik, Srebrenica, Gorazde and Sarajevo, where it couldn’t prevent history from happening.

**‘Open Society’ and ‘New World Order’**

The absurdity of Fukuyama’s notion of the ‘end of history’, an idea which seemed to some almost tangi- ble in 1989, was made all the more blatant by the sudden ‘return of history’. And yet – the short moment between the supposed zero hour of history

and theunexpected ‘entry into the present’7 briefly

revealed an astounding piece of theatre. In the fall of 1989, the Australian media critic McKenzie Wark fol- lowed the events in Europe through his television: “One thinks of Europe in 1989 as the opening night at the theatre where the curtain goes up and the audi- ence comes face to face – with another audience.

One has to be outside the theatre altogether to see the whole thing together as one big spectacular

show.”8 The Western public had followed the revolu-

tions of 1989 with enthusiasm, but the object of the fascinated gaze was not just the rediscovery of democracy as such: Those in the West are all too well aware of the shortcomings and cul-de-sacs of real, existing liberal democracy to be fascinated by it. But, as Zizek’s Slovenian colleague Rado Riha writes, the encounter was a re-discovery of self: “In the assumed fascination with democracy of the Eastern Europeans, the Westerner could see himself in his ‘pure’ form, not yet tainted by empirical disillusion

and false steps, and grasp the untarnished origin of his democratic being.”9

Strengthened by the supposedly naive gaze from the East onto the fascinating West, actors of the most varied of stripes (sects, banks, parties, private set ups and non-governmental organisations [NGOs]) began a race to see who would be the first to bless the East. The ‘new world order’ proclaimed by George Bush at the end of the eighties found its first expres- sion in the occupation of the East by ideological pio- neers. In Croatia alone, 790 representatives of inter- national or regional NGOs are currently witness to an unbelievable boom in the private sector. At present, the vacuum left by the retreat of the state and public supervision in many post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe is being filled by the unregulated activities of NGOs.

One of Eastern Europe’s most important and infu- ential NGO is the Soros Foundation for an Open Society, created by the Hungarian-American multimil- lionaire and philanthropist George Soros. Besides its other humanitarian engagements, this foundation is particularly involved in the creation and support of independent media (for example, Radio Zid in Sarajevo, *Arkzin* in Zagreb, Radio B92 in Belgrade, the daily newspaper *Koha Joone* in Albania, as well as internet and email communication). With its high- profle support of new Eastern European democracy movements, the Soros Foundation has earned itself a highly contested reputation. Its success in flling the vacuum of public and private sector support has not always won it favour with respective governments. By the same token, considerable sums of money are cir- culating which are subject to neither democratic con- trol nor any form of governmental regulation. John Horvath has described the use of the ISF as, “a means for shrewd market penetration in an economically prostrate region” and questions to what extent the

NGO can be seen as building a “Soros-controlled telecommunications empire”.10

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**Critical Technology**

Informal networks, newsgroups and internet mail- ing lists which are often used by hundreds of people to keep in contact and exchange news and discus- sions play a significant role in the spreading of criti- cal information. The significance of this provokes the question of whether technology is normative for cul- tural and social behaviour and in what way it has uni- fying effects on this behaviour. And if the introduc-

tion of technolo-

The ‘new world order’ proclaimed by gy – and the

George Bush at the end of the immanently uni- eighties found its first expression fying or ‘norma- in the occupation of the East by tive’ tendencies

ideological pioneers of translocal

technologies –

leads to a disso- lution of cultural differences or hinders specific local means of expression. Can technology be ‘culturally neutral’ at all? Or – and this was asked at a sympo- sium in Prague in December 1996 – “Does media art imply [a] kind of thinking which is West-oriented and linear, masculine, etc.?” Prompting, from Bratislava, Martin Sperka’s equally challenging retort: “So, femi- nist thinking is East-oriented and non-linear?”

The meaning of media cultural practice is not only technological and translocal in nature, but also constantly unfolds in local contexts. A careful look at local cultures and local codes is therefore urgently required. Various artists from Eastern Europe have repeatedly referred to the meaning of the always dis- rupted relationship to ‘the media’. The Albanian artist Eduard Muka said in an interview in 1996: “We inher- ited a sort of hatred towards the media. There were a lot of lies, nothing was exact, there was only propa- ganda. Still there is only one state television channel and it is even worse than it used to be. The distrust towards media could be a good starting point for artists to make their critical approach in regards to media. I look at media as the highest degree of manipulation humanity has ever invented. In this

sense, this could be really used to raise social or indi- vidual imperatives.”11

**Going East, Going West**

Travelling in Europe is still difficult but is becom- ing simpler and more normal. The borders are more porous, even if visa matters and language differences still hinder the movement of people, goods and ideas. The obstacles are gradually diminishing and a redis- covery of a (not exclusively historical) cultural space in Europe is beginning.

Seen cynically, cities such as Sarajevo, Moscow and Tirana have been the unrecognised cultural capi-

tals of Europe for years (which other European cities are turned into media images this often?) But why are Albania, the ‘Balkans’, Russia, Chechnya, etc., covered so thoroughly by the media? Certainly not because they are ‘normal’ parts of Europe, but rather because they maximise the production of media reports. The bloodier it is, the more mass media (especially television) can report live on extraordi- nary situations. The media image of Eastern Europe has been characterised by extraordinary situations; normality is hardly ever communicated.

The importance of the ‘small media’ on the other hand is that they, unlike ‘big media’, are able to con- vey something of ‘normality’ and to make understand- ing possible. The ‘small stories’ offer an alternative to the ‘grand narratives’. This is what we call the small media normality for the East.

Berlin, April 1997

[translated by David Hudson, Berlin]

An extended version of this text – *Small Media Normality for the East –* was published in • P. Schultz /

D. McCarty / G. Lovink / V. Cosic (eds.)*, ZK Proceedings 4: Beauty and the East; Ljubljana: Digital Media Lab, 1997,* pp. 17-21 and on *Rewired – The Journal of a*

*Strained Net,* June 9-15, 1997 **[**[*www.rewired.com*](http://www.rewired.com/)**]**

1 *Kursbuch 81*, Berlin 1985, p. 4

2 Slavoj Zizek, “The Malaise in Liberal Democracy”, in *Heaven Sent*, No.5, Frankfurt/M., 1992, pp. 47 - 48

3 Ibid., pp. 47 - 48

4 *Kursbuch 81*, Berlin, 1985, p. 31

5 Peter Weibel (ed), *Von der Bürokratie zur Telekratie. Rumänien im Fernsehen*, Berlin, Merve, 1990, pp. 19 - 21

6 Ibid., p. 22

7 Karl Schlögel, *Go East oder Die zweite Entdeckung des Ostens*, Berlin, Siedler, 1995, p. 9

8 McKenzie Wark, *Virtual Geography. Living with global media events*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1994, p.60

9 Rado Riha, *Reale Geschehnisse der Freiheit. Zur Kritik der Urteilskraft in Lacanscher Absicht*, WO ES WAR 3, Vienna, Turia & Kant, 1993, pp. 14 - 15

10 John Horvath, “The Soros Network”, Nettime mailing list, Feb. 7, 1997 and *Telepolis* Journal [[www.heise.de/tp](http://www.heise.de/tp)], Jan. 31, 1997

11 Eduard Muka, Interview with Geert Lovink, “Media Art in Albania, First Steps”, Syndicate mailing list, Sept. 29, 1996

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Dessau); Medienbiennale Leipzig 94; discord. sabotage of realities (Kunstverein Hamburg 1996/97).

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*This capsule contains:*

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**T h e B i o t e c h** industry “now rivals the oil industry for weight and infuence” says Rob Cummins, the director of the Pure Food campaign. This quote, taken from a four day spe- cial report in *The Guardian* newspaper, is typical of the recent swelter of media-speculation on the industry’s growing power. The Labour govern- ment’s moratorium on the introduction of genetically modifed foods has brought to the boil a debate which has long simmered in the public psyche. After ploughing hundreds of billions of pounds into research, the American dominated ‘agri-business’ is too close to payback time to be put off by a handful of ‘resistant Europeans’. After all, Europe is potentially the world’s second largest market for their product range.

It is becoming an all too common revelation to hear of ‘independent’ gov- ernment advisors, even critics, also holding down jobs on the boards of

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*Technology consensus census*

Mute *interviews Richard Sclove of the Loka Institute about corporate accountability and the state of technological democracies.*

*Technocratic Dreamtime*

*in Malaysia: Cybercolonialism*

*Never knowingly undersold... PM Mahathir s Hollywood style business planning is proving a bitter pill for Malaysian citizens. While attempts are made to expatriate 1 million foreign workers and the economic crisis deepens, the fate of Mahathir s pet project the Multimedia Supercorridor seems uncertain. John Hutnyk on Science Cities.*

*The Direct Biocracy Questionnaire*

Mute *contributes to Europes research data mountain with an unauthorised picture of Technoscience. A selective sample of consumer feeling on genetic engineering, hi tech pharming and modern medical institutions.*

biotech corporations. This ambidex- trous career strategy can only deepen the existing discrepancy between the industry’s hi-fnance PR and lobbying campaign and the absence of a power- ful, independent critical force. The cor- porate takeover of agriculture, the col- lapse of biodiversity, and the unpre- dictable results of letting engineered life forms ‘into the wild’ are just a hand- ful of the doubts surrounding the bio- logical revolution. But to be cautious does not imply a lemming like return to the illusory bosom of Big Mamma Nature.

This summer, *Mute* spent ten days at Kassel’s Documenta-X exhibition, participating in the Hybrid WorkSpace (see *Mute* 8, Short/Cuts). During this time, we explored the theme of Technoscience with invited guests (Kate Rich/BIT, Armin Medosch and Manu Luksch, Kathleen Rogers and Rob La Frenais, John Hutnyk, Krystian Woznicki and Josephine Bosma). Technoscience is the intersection point of the information and life sciences, where the technological marries the liv- ing in a bid to conquer death and dis- ease, endow life with the utility of tech- nology and technology with the kiss of life. The fact that Technoscience spans more than its trademarked products (OncoMouse, Dolly, bovine growth hor- mone, the Flavr Savr tomato, IVF) was one of the project’s leitmotifs – its eco- nomic dimension becomes the real Surgeon General presiding over the birth of this technoscientifc progeny.

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**Why is it that our politicians seem to have developed an aversion to debating certain subjects – and we’re not just talking sleaze? Squeamish issues like the introduction of gene patenting or the genetic manipulation of animals are debated at length in private, and yet get only very few public airings if compared to the micro-dissections of each new budget. Though no more or less diffcult to grasp hold of than a system as complex as the economy, we, the electorate, are under the col- lective delusion that these matters are over our heads and best left in the hands of the experts. And those experts are as impartial as only captains of industry and research scientists can be. So why have we relinquished our control over the introduction of certain scientifc and technological devel- opments into our society, and what is being done to resist this institutionalised passivity?** *Mute* **interviewed the Loka Institute’s founder and director, Richard Sclove.**

Technology Consensus Census

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**M:**

**RS:**

**M:**

**RS:**

I’d like to start by asking you a bit about the work of the Loka Institute.

The Loka Institute is a non-governmental organisation based in Massachusetts in the United States, studying and calling attention to the social effects of technology. We do advocacy work and organise the development of new participatory institutions to get a wider range of people participating in decisions about science and technology.

What successes have you had so far?

We haven’t succeeded completely with anything, but the two institutions with which we’ve made most headway are mod- elled on European institutions. One is a variant of what in

Europe are called ‘science shops’ that are most fully devel- oped in the Netherlands. These are institutions to which uni- versities direct some of their research in response to ques- tions raised by public interest groups, grassroots organisa- tions, trade unions and local government agencies. So it’s a way of having universities conducting research not just for industry, intellectual curiosity or for the government but also for other sectors of society.

In the US we call them ‘community research centres’ because the Dutch word ‘science’ doesn’t distinguish between natural and social sciences. It’s often the case in the Dutch science shops that their studies involve every- thing from, say, environmental toxicology work to studies for a women’s group in Amsterdam. They wanted to know if there would be a market for an independent women’s radio

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station. In the US we found there already were a certain number of organisations who did community based research. The main difference is that in the Netherlands basically every Dutch university has one to ten of these community research centres. And they are networked with each other. Originally this was just by telephone and newsletter, these days it’s with the internet, and they’re net- worked with each other in a way that if a community group wants research assistance on a social change project they can go to any one of the science shops and they will be referred to any one of the centres that has the kind of exper- tise they’re looking for. So in the Netherlands, they have a comprehensive system that can basically address any com- munity oriented concern on any topic coming from any- where in the country.

**M:** So what you are saying is that in the States the existing research centres were randomly distributed and working independently of each other?

**RS:** Absolutely, their distribution is very accidental. And they haven’t even been aware of each other’s existence. So the frst thing that we’ve done is to make these existing pro- grammes and centres in the US aware of one another and begin to develop a capability to learn from one another, to make references and be more visible and accessible.

**M:** Is the internet really helping to encourage that kind of activity?

**RS:** It is. I don’t say that as an unqualifed supporter of or enthusi- ast about the internet, as I spend a lot of my time talking about its potential downsides, but yeah, in this case it has helped a great deal. I mean, when I frst started writing about this I published an article in a conventional newspaper and then on the internet, and the conventional newspaper got me one or two phone calls and the internet distribution quickly yielded 300 people who said, “yeah, I want to work with you on this”.

**M:** Well, it’s certainly how we found you.

**RS:** We found that the existing centres and programmes in the US are excited to find out about each other’s existence and are generally quite eager to work with us on building a net-

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work. The challenge is as always to find funding to support this effort. (laughs)

**M:** Are you getting any state funding for your work?

**RS:** Very limited. But not zero in my case. We happen to be based physically in Massachusetts and our state-wide extension service which is government supported has contributed some fnancial support to this effort.

**M:** Now I wonder whether I can ask you a bit about why you’ve chosen the subject of science and technology to focus on people’s lack of infuence within the decision making process, as opposed to the multitude of other issues that also affect us. For instance our defence policy. Why is that any different in a democratic system where we elect representatives and at that point waive our own individual say in those issues?

**RS:** Well, it’s actually not very different from the military issue, but I’d say the military and the science and technology issues together are different from most others.

**M:** Why is that?

**RS:** There are probably several reasons why I focus on science and technology issues. I don’t do it because I think they are the most important issues in the world. I think they’re up there, but I think there are lots of important social concerns about ordinary housing issues and welfare and medical issues. So it’s not that I think that it’s the most important. But among important issues, it is one that gets the very nar- rowest public representation or participation. For instance, (I know the US case best, because that’s where I live) in the US our democracy is imperfect in many respects. But I’d say there’s more imperfection in how science and technology decisions are made than in many others. For instance, we elect representatives to our congress in the US, but then we don’t assume that they just do their own thing. We also assume that they are responsive once they’re elected to various popular social concerns. Now in most issues, like education, or health policy, even though it’s imperfect, there is some sort of public interest or community representation. In congressional deliberations, for example. Business lobby- ing may typically have a disproportionate say, but there is

going to be some kind of public interest or community voice Denmark rather than talking to you from the US. or representation...

**M:** And you would say that was based on the ease with which the lay person can understand issues to do with welfare, for

**M:** Maybe you could answer that question through the practical example of Denmark.

instance, or housing, as opposed to the exclusive language of **RS:** The Danish government has really made strides in developing science? new participatory institutions that address exactly that con- cern. One of them is something they call the consensus con-

**RS:** That’s a piece of it, but that’s not the whole of it. In science and ference, which has been done about 15 times over the last 10

technology policy making, our congress is infuenced pretty years in Denmark, and since then maybe half a dozen times much exclusively by representatives of three groups which in other European countries. The process is a little bit like a are: business, the military and élite academic researchers. jury in a court. If the Danish government is going to be debat- Nobody else has a voice and yes, the argument that those ing a complicated, controversial question like biotechnology three groups would make is that of course they should make policy or how we should make use of knowledge from the those decisions because frst of all, they take the broad pub- Human Genome Project, their Board of Technology – which is lic interest to heart and are good representatives of it and where I’m currently working – assemble a jury (as it were) of secondly other people, they claim, wouldn’t understand these about 15 quasi-randomly selected Danish citizens. The panel issues and wouldn’t want to participate. excludes anybody with expertise on the topic and it excludes

anybody from an organised interest group that is active.

**M:** How do you practically see the possibility of translating the complexity of scientifc ideas and language into a language **M:** that the pubic can understand in all its subtleties, so that

How are those people actually found?

they’re then equipped to make a valid judgement? **RS:** They’ve done it differently in different countries. The way they

do it in Denmark is advertising in local newspapers. When we

**RS:** Right, if there were more time I’d answer that in a few ways, did the frst one of these as a pilot test in the US last April we

but I should probably just talk to you about why I’m in did it through random phone calling. In any of these you

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|  | assemble a steering committee that oversees the whole pro- |  | public or media who’s interested can sit in while a group of |
|  | cess. A steering committee is composed of knowledgeable |  | experts (that the steering committee has approved as not |
|  | representatives from groups that do have a stake in the issue. |  | being biased) take turns testifying in front of the lay panel. |
|  | Some would be from industry, some from academia, some |  | Then the lay panel takes turns cross examining them. Finally |
|  | might be from public interest groups. |  | the experts are all dismissed and the lay panel writes up a |
| **M:** | And there’s no danger of the steering committee putting pres- sure on the elected panel based on their own interests? |  | report drawing their own policy conclusions on the question.  And what sort of impact do those decisions, that as far as I |
|  | **M:** |
| **RS:** | Well, there would be that danger. The way, if you do it proper- |  | understand are not then turned directly into legislation,  have on the way that policy is decided or the way that indus- |
|  | ly, and the way they appear to do it in Denmark is if you pick |  | try then decides to back certain kinds of practices and |
|  | that steering committee, it should be a balanced group who |  | research and not others? Have there been any positive |
|  | counterbalance each other. The one time something of this |  | examples of that? |
|  | kind was done in the UK, that was not done, and the steering  committee had precisely some of that biased impact you’re | **RS:** | Yes, in Denmark where it’s been done the most and where it’s |
|  | referring to. Not that they directly infuenced the lay panel, |  | become most institutionalised there are demonstrable |
|  | but I think they infuenced the materials and experts that the |  | impacts. They don’t, as you said, become law and I don’t |
|  | lay panel interacted with. |  | think anybody believes they should because it’s a very small |
| **M:** | I see. And they’re there to really explain the issues, explain |  | group and it’s not adequately representative of the whole  society. It’s a way of getting an informed, diverse lay per- |
|  | the material? |  | spective into deliberations, but you don’t want it to deter- |
|  |  |  | mine those deliberations. |
| **RS:** | Not the steering committee. Because the steering committee |  | In Denmark, they did a conference on food irradiation in |
|  | is actually balanced against itself, they assure some reason- |  | 1989 and that infuenced the parliament to ban irradiated food |
|  | able impartiality to the process. But the process is that the lay |  | in Denmark, except in the case of dried spices. They did one on |
|  | panel spend two weekends being brought up to speed a little |  | the use of knowledge from the Human Genome Project and that |
|  | bit on the process. They review some material that the steer- |  | infuenced the parliament to place strict controls and limits on |
|  | ing committee agrees are not biased wildly one way or the |  | the use of genetic screening information on insurance and hir- |
|  | other, and maybe would not meet with experts, in the Danish |  | ingdecisionsin the work place. And there’s some evidence anec- |
|  | case. But if, for instance, they’re doing something on biotech- |  | dotally that it has, without going through the policy channels of |
|  | nology they might meet with a high school teacher who |  | the industry, some infuence on industry. Industry in Denmark |
|  | explains to them a little bit about DNA, and they might meet |  | was initially resistant or sceptical to the process for the same |
|  | with a journalist who explains a little bit about the political ter- |  | reasons you’d expect it to be in most places. But over time, |
|  | rain of the issue and who the actors are. Then they have a |  | because these processes occur in the early stages of the devel- |
|  | three or four day public forum, after the lay public has been |  | opment of a piece of technology before a lot of money has been |
|  | brought up to speed on the issues, that takes place in |  | invested by industry, it actually gives them political foresight |
|  | Denmark in the parliament building. And there anyone in the |  | that can be very useful to their own bottom line considerations. |

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| **M:** | So it’s like a very early feedback source. |  | about over a hundred thousand in some 25 states, prohibit |
| **RS:** | Yes. For instance, the opposite of that was in the US, where the |  | formal education past the age of fourteen. So they have this  population that by conventional standards is very uneducated |
|  | Monsanto Corporation, about ten yearsago spent 300 million dol- |  | in school-based ways. And the standard argument in our soci- |
|  | lars developing something called Bovine Growth Hormone to arti- |  | ety is that lay people can’t participate in these decisions |
|  | fcially stimulate cows’ milk production. As soon as that was |  | about technology because if you don’t have a PhD in mechan- |
|  | brought to the market it turned out that small farms and many |  | ical engineering or biology you can’t understand them. Yet |
|  | consumersopposedit. Butbecause Monsantohadnopublicinput |  | what is fascinating about the Amish ‹who are popularly seen |
|  | at early stages and had already sunk 300 million dollars, they |  | as being anti-technology because for instance they still use |
|  | fought like crazy to make sure that this thing went to the market |  | horses a lot) is that they still use a lot of modern technology, |
|  | whether consumerswanted it or not. |  | but very selectively. They will, for instance, use tractors, but |
| **M:** | How do you see the shift during this century from industrial |  | not for what they were intended. They’ll use horses for  ploughing and will sometimes own tractors, but put them into |
|  | technologies to information technologies? Do you see any |  | neutral and drive them around the farm and use them as a |
|  | positive developments in that change? |  | mobile source of mechanical power to do other things. What’s |
| **RS:** | Yes and no. I see no positive developments in the uncritical, |  | fascinating is the way they make the decisions. They do all  sorts of, upon refection, real obvious things that we don’t. |
|  | one-sided enthusiastic hype about IT being a panacea that’s |  | Like it’s real hard to predict the social effects of a technology, |
|  | going to solve all kinds of social problems. That hype is quite |  | so one of the things they do is put new technologies that |
|  | dangerous because these are complex technologies, and any |  | they’re curious about on probation for a year. They say, any- |
|  | implementation of them will have good and bad effects. But |  | one who wants to adopt it for a year can do it, but we’re going |
|  | some implementations will still be better than others. The |  | to watch what happens to us as a result and re-evaluate at the |
|  | hype just conceals those choices that need to be made, and |  | end of a year, and if we think that it’s not having a bad effect |
|  | allows industry to make them without public participation. So |  | we’ll continue allowing people to use it. And if, after evaluating |
|  | the hype is bad. As for the technologies themselves, I’m quite |  | it, they conclude that it’s having a bad effect then they won’t |
|  | ambivalent. |  | use it. That’s a simple empirical test that we don’t do. We do it |
| **M:** | But the net is clearly a cheap way for you to challenge the |  | for drugs. We sort of won’t allow new medical, pharmaceutical  products onto the market until we’ve tested them for their |
|  | information monopoly of the large corporations.... |  | medical effects. But we’ll allow any technology, no matter |
| **RS:** | Loka is a small NGO, we function like many such organisations |  | how upsetting its social and political consequences, out there  if it makes a proft. |
|  | on a very insecure shoestring budget, always in danger of  going under fnancially. We are basically challenging domi- | **M:** | I suppose there with the Amish, the question is: how is their |
|  | nant institutions and forces by arguing for democratising |  | decision making process structured? Is there any real oppor- |
|  | decisions that existing powerful institutions like controlling. |  | tunity for political dissent? |
|  | For that reason it’s hard to get resources to do what we do,  and that’s one of the reasons that we do a lot of our work on | **RS:** | I’m not putting the Amish up on a pedestal, in the sense that |
|  | the internet. It’s not that I intrinsically love the internet. Given |  | regardless of what the answer to that was, what’s interesting |
|  | that these issues are politically very under developed (there’s |  | from my point of view is the fact that these people, who don’t |
|  | not a long history in the US of people thinking about how to |  | educate themselves past fourteen in schools, can still make |
|  | broaden representation and participation in technology |  | very sophisticated evaluations of technology’s social effects. |
|  | issues, and there’s not a lot of money to work on the issue |  | Even if you felt that they did that in an undemocratic way. |
|  | either) I have often chosen to do what I would call preaching  to the predisposed-to-be-converted. After very little persua- | **M:** | Do you feel that small initiatives like yours can have an affect |
|  | sion they become allies. So I haven’t engaged that much with |  | in a culture which, in comparison, has introduced technolo- |
|  | industry because I’m busy doing something else. |  | gies in a far less thoughtful way? |
| **M:** | You take the example of the Amish to discuss the sophistica- | **RS:** | I would say that in absolute terms LOKA hasn’t had that much |
|  | tion with which certain societies handle the inclusion and |  | affect, and yet our affect has really been disproportionate to |
|  | exclusion of technologies. Why did you choose the Amish as |  | the time we’ve existed on our resources. We already have |
|  | an example? I am especially interested to know how you |  | roughly 7000 people on our internet list serves world wide |
|  | think that you can apply such a model, derived from a very |  | and a considerable international following. But we’re at too |
|  | small and closed society, to a comparatively vast and hetero- |  | early a stage to know how much headway we can make. |
|  | geneous society such as the USA’s? |  |  |
|  |  |  | Richard Sclove was interviewed in August ’97 by Pauline van Mourik Broekman |
| **RS:** | There are a couple of reasons. It’s not that I uphold them as an |  | and Josephine Berry during *Mute*’s Technoscience slot at the Hybrid |
|  | ideal society, but with respect to decisions about the intro- |  | Workspace. Sclove was in Denmark at the time, working for the Danish parlia- |
|  | duction of technology and their social effects the Amish are |  | ment’s Board of Technology as a visiting researcher. Sclove is also the author of |
|  | the experts. And what’s interesting about that is that the strictest old order Amish in the States, of which there are |  | *Democracy and Technology*, New York/London, Guildford Press.  **[**[www.amherst.edu/~loka](http://www.amherst.edu/~loka)**]** and email: [**x**Loka@amherst.edu**x**](mailto:xLoka@amherst.edux) |

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*Technocratic Dreamtime in Malaysia:*

**Cyber-Colonialism**

**Malaysia’s planned Multimedia Super Corridor has garnered inter- national attention. Hailed by some as an inspired project, set to enrich Malaysia and place it firmly on the 21st c. map, others crit- icise it as an expensive pipe dream, typical of the bad manage- ment that landed Malaysia in its current predicament. Malaysia’s**

**deepening economic crisis and the rumoured insecurity of the MSC have yet to cast aspersions on the project’s possible social consequences.**

John Hutnyk **dreams on.**

**T e c h n o p o l i s** , Science Park, Technology City. If you haven’t had any contact with the myriad carbuncle growths that have begun to fester along- side urban living spaces and so many universities world-wide, and Malaysia seems far away, maybe now is the time to be concerned about hi-tech imperial- ism, compradore elites and dodgy overseas partnerships.

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**Prime Minister** Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad was recently prevented by a virus from a planned visit to the UK to sell the future, and in Kuala Lumpur a few hiccups in mone- tary policy have clouded the horizon, but the dreaming schemes of hyper-modernity have been touring the world – LA, Tokyo, Berlin – and the future seems very close indeed. The ‘Multimedia Super Corridor’™ is only a construction con- tract away.

The MSC has always been an international project. At the beginning of 1997 a cabal of the ‘great minds’1 met with

Mahathir in a specially convened ‘Advisory Panel’ in Los Angeles, USA, to fesh out the fashy proposals that may transform Kuala Lumpur’s skyline, and construction industry cash fows, once again. The great minds included CEO’s and Directors of multinational corporations such as Siemens, Netscape, Motorola, Sony, Compaq, Sun, IBM and more. The Chancellor’s Professor of UCLA was there, and Bill Gates was invited (though couldn’t make it in the end). The discussion was no doubt convivial.

What was under consideration at this talk-fest for which the PM and his offsiders had come to LA, was an integrated hi- tech development project designed to make Kuala Lumpur and surrounds – a ffteen by ffty kilometre zone south of the city – the information hub of South East Asia. Trumpet head- lines announced the future in the Times, the Star and the Sun. PM’s speeches and supporting echoes from Ministers pro-

|  |  |
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| claimed that the MSC pro- | |
| ject would “harmonise our | |
| entire country with the | |
| In this context, success of a Science City is initially about confdence – the importance of | global forces shaping the information age”2. Such  harmonisation with the  orchestration of the multi- national info-corps makes |

hype. Here, the future can

and transportation facilities, in a secure (everyone must carry an electronic ‘National Multipurpose identity Card’) and ‘attractive’ garden city. Telemedicine, Electronic Government and full (“uncensored”) internet connectivity are also touted. All this overseen by the twin Advisory bodies of the Multimedia Development Corporation – they put up the web site – and the Advisory Panel of the ‘great minds’.

Why did the frst MSC promotion meeting take place in Beverly Hills? Well, obviously the internet and international connectivity of the grand scale to attract the likes of Gates (Microsoft) and Gerstner (IBM) is not there in Kuala Lumpur yet. Similarly, PM Mahathir went direct from LA to Japan for another parallel hi-level corporate luncheon. The point is to attract investment, or rather tenants, for the research labora- tories that will be built. One does not want an empty corridor, so one travels to where the clients are. An open invitation.

But what is the invitation to? The development of Science City ventures such as this is not a new idea, though it has become something of a craze since the frst versions of the concept of integrated science city living were spawned out of the heads of the planners at Japan’s MITI. Engineering new Silicon Valleys has become the grand vision of subsequent planners from ‘Silicon Glen’ in Scotland, to the Multi-function Polis in Adelaide. Not always successfully, the more than 300 plus of such ventures compete for relatively rare technology research pay-offs, as the cutting edge of such research is closely guarded and nurtured by the wealthy mega-corps. In this context, success of a Science City is initially about conf- dence – the importance of hype. Here, the future can seem very fragile indeed. From the beginning of the year when the Prime Minister was talking up the ‘2020 Vision’ with super conferences in Hollywood, to the CNN televised roller-coaster of the virtual market stock exchange troubles, it’s been a dynamic time for futures in Malaysia.

seem very fragile indeed.

for singing praises in the

press. The headlines

The 2020 Vision “has been delayed”, Mahathir was forced

to announce, as speculative capital became more tentative

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scream: “Global Bridge to the Information Age”, “MSC immensely powerful, unique” and “PM’s Visit to US Triggers Excitement”. Big dreams indeed. Even the pop-electronic fanzine *Wired* got in on the buzz and called the project, quite

favourably it seems, “Xanadu for Nerds”3.

But what exactly is to be in this Multimedia Super Corridor; what are the serious prospects for its success, and by what criteria should it be assessed? The promotional material, as can be expected, does not spare the hype:

“Malaysia’s Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) is a bold ini- tiative – a regional launch site for companies developing or using leading multimedia technologies. Aiming to revolu- tionise how the world does business, the MSC will unlock mul- timedia’s full potential by integrating ground-breaking cyber-

laws and outstanding information infrastructure in an attrac- tive physical environment.”4

The key parts of the proposal include a series of research and development ‘clusters’, basically science labs and info- technology factories, located near a new airport and a ‘cyber- city’ including state of the art condos, shopping complexes

and the projects which formed the core of the vision of achiev- ing ‘Developed Nation status’ in 23 years were put on hold. The complex repercussions of the slide of the Malaysian Ringitt and other stocks, along with controversies over projects such as the Bakun Hydroelectric dam in Sarawak, and ‘the Haze’ problem afficting the region, have clouded projections and predictions. Development and proftability seem less secure than before; the tallest building (twin towers Petronas), the biggest airport, the longest offce, the undersea electricity cable and the Cyber-Malaysia Multimedia Super Corridor now all appear as costly monuments (whether completed, stalled or abandoned) to the precarious gamble of speculative devel- opment within very late capitalism. Of all the new big projects that marked Mahathir’s Malaysia as the go-ahead new tiger- cub of South East Asia, only the MSC project, and related ser- vices attractive to international R&D such as the airport, have survived the imposed austerities of the currency crisis. Confdence and hype require more than big buildings and upbeat reviews on CNN.

Thus, the questions that have to be asked about techno- logical research-generated development are multiple. The frst questions might include a consideration of the parame- ters of the new Science City fad and, in the context of world- wide restructuring, the impact on regional communities in the zones where such cities are planned. The impact upon those now employed in an increasingly narrowing and exploitative manufacturing sector, let alone those from the agricultural sector whose lands are bought up for condos etc., is likely to be profound. It is no doubt they who will soon gain part-time and casual employment as ancillary workers and service personnel in these hi-tech fantasy enclaves and semi-standard accommodations alongside them no doubt. Starting with questions about impact upon people – possibly still an unusual approach in development discussions – is worthwhile as it reminds us that what should be asked is: what does Malaysia get out of such a development? Malaysia as yet does not have the infrastructure or ready local exper- tise – in terms of university graduates – to fll the labs to the scale of the envisioned dreamscape, and so presumably, Malaysian employment in the corridor is to be of the service type. Well, indeed, at frst a furry of construction activity – and the concomitant exploitation of migrant labourers and subsequent racism – but in the end, jobs as cleaners and porters in the corridors of Info-Tech.

Who will be the hi-tech workers? A layer of technocrats and experts will need to be recruited, from in part the expat Malaysian elites schooled in the salons of Stanford, MIT, London and Manchester, but in large part, at least in the frst phases, the already existing personnel of the multinational infocorps that are invited to ‘relocate’ will provide staff for the most important posts. The imported workers will have expat lives and an expat status which is not far from the old ‘colonial career’ that has always been the hallmark of business empires under imperialism. These appointments will have several corresponding run-on effects. In this context consid- eration of the impact of recent technological innovation in the old metropoles upon those now engaged in the (neo)colonial manufacturing enclaves and the Special Economic Zones etc., is required as a part of any assessment of tech-driven exten- sion of exploitation in the ‘off-shore’ production sites of South East Asia. Given the range of projects abandoned in the wake of the Ringitt crisis, why is it that PM Mahathir’s dream is to go for the hi-tech option instead of extending manufacturing for the local satellite regional economies (surely sales of medi- um level manufactured goods to ASEAN partners holds strate-

theory and a vicarious, somewhat quixotic, refected glory which allows the Malaysian people to take pride in Mahathir’s international notoriety? Or can it be demonstrated that the old international imperial production modes are magically reversed by the MSC, rather than continued in new format? Where once jungles were cleared for plantations, where these plantations were then cleared for condos and shopping malls (which lie empty or underused) and where the manufacturing sector was geared largely for export rather than ever for use or need, can it be that the multimedia development will some- how restore productive capacity to local priorities? Is multi- media the key to local content, local uses, local needs, or even to regional variants of these same priorities – the very priori- ties that we have too often learnt are always second to the goal of proftability, and which seem increasingly subject to the fuctuations and constraints of international competition? The ‘people’s’ interest in the trade in shares, the speculation on futures and the infrastructure development company extractions, are all based on some future pay-off which does not arrive, or at the least does not arrive for the majority of Malaysians. Of course there are a small few who have always benefted from exploitation of the country’s economic efforts – be they the plantation owners, the condo contractors, or the new ‘big project’ development engineers. The problem is that instead of moving towards a more adequate mode of produc- tion, given regional and local conditions, possibilities and necessities, those setting the direction of economic activity in Malaysia seem to favour older selective beneft structures and priorities. There is no indication that a leap forward into the MSC is likely to disrupt existing feudal discrepancies of income, lifestyle or quality of life. Here the contradiction is the same one as that between colonial masters and peasant labour, such that we might name as semi-feudal, cyber-colo- nial that situation where the most advanced technological capacities will beneft old social hierarchic formations which refuse to budge.

But let us not dismiss the project of technology transmis-

sion too quickly. Questions about the criteria which would make Hi Tech City developments successful, or at least a worthwhile gamble, must be put up for discussion. The usual considerations here are more to do with the culture of technol- ogy development under capitalism in general and do not account for the particularities of the international division of labour and power. Yet these aspects deserve to be thought

through. Some of the questions include such

gic economic merit)? Is the hi-tech only gambit not likely to The imported workers will have generalities as: how open still further the path of super profts and speculative expat lives and an expat statusmight technological

super exploitation? A less stark, but nevertheless important, which is not far from the old question is why the Special Export Zone option with the tax ‘colonial career’ that has breaks, cheap labour, low shipping excises etc. is no longer always been the hallmark of the preferred path, and is instead replaced by a risky corridor

business empires under

venture chasing the possibility of ‘technology transfer’ and rapid transit to a Bill Gates-sponsored cyber-future? The prob- lem is that the conditions for such transfer are not quite

imperialism.

innovation be best

achieved and what are the requirements for ‘synergy’ – the con- cept such projects use for optimal mix of infrastructure support,

worked out and there is nothing to really entice the key parts of such corporations to the KL Corridor, nor are the generous tax concessions, infrastructure developments and other State funded inducements calculated to lock-in technology transfer in a way that Malaysia could exploit long term.

What, and who, after all is the MSC for? Is it again a pro- ject to make the elites rich, and one which does not con- tribute, except perhaps through the vagaries of trickle-down

creative personnel, ‘attractive’ environmental factors and the ‘spark’ that ignites ideas and innovations? Similarly, how does one plan for creativity and the celebrated ‘milieu of innovation’ that are the buzzword ambitions of these sci-f enclaves? What is the preferred mix of government public sector, private industry and university support? What regional and historical factors come in to play in determining the suitability of such developments in either previously industrialised centres of

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long standing, or in newly emergent capitalist economies? How do political and economic contingencies impinge upon the long-term prospects of innovation? What are the policy requirements? (for example how restrictive are local intellec- tual property and patents guidelines?) Is it all just a fantasy

built upon a few other- wise unpredictable suc- cesses (Silicon Valley, Cambridge, Munich)? Is

stuff is too risky speculation? Why go for this hi-teck bizzo? Isn’t building factories and warehouses for off-shore assem- bly and export processing proftable enough? Is the writing on the wall in that sector – and does it say build corridors not fac- tories, the end of manufacturing proft is nigh? Or, considering the most cynical case, will this Super Corridor actually have anything in it? – or is it just a fash way of selling more con- struction (with corresponding bribes and kickbacks etc.)? Even if the R&D frms were to locate some of their lower level

But surely those that have

holdings in construction could

technopoly a passing fad?

What then are the

R&D in the corridor, how long would it stay – hi-tech produc- tion is very short on shelf life, and very mobile in terms of set

ups (I bet you the labs they made Offce 97 in at Microsoft

just keep on making money outconditions of take-off

were ftted out differently than the ones for Windows 95, new

of condos, dams, hotels and roads, and so all this info and multimedia stuff is too risky speculation?

for Mahathir’s proposed dreamscape? The prospects for synergy and innovative creative

partitions in the veal-fattening pens and so on, new posters on the walls, new cartoons pinned to the noticeboards). What is the prognosis for the economics of the project if even these simple questions are so obvious? Surely better analysts than

hyper invention rely upon the relocation of corporate R&D

which is less than likely to arrive. The ‘milieu of innovation’ that fuels the successful ventures of this kind does not yet seem to exist in the Malaysian plan – though there certainly is the fab idea in the proposal to build a ‘cyber-versity’. The international division of labour, the agendas and oppor- tunisms of the neo-imperialist world order, the short term interests of monopoly capital and the inability to provide a lock-on to capital and technology which may relocate to Malaysia are not, none of them, addressed in the promotional or planning literature. There are very real obstacles which would need to be solved if any technology project were to suc- ceed in the East Asian sphere. Given that Gates has said that Microsoft will not shift its ‘fundamental’ research outside the USA, it is not a grand prospect. The realities of the internation- al economy do not favour such projects outside the already entrenched centres. The cost to the Malaysian state, and so therefore the public purse, is likely to be greater than that which can be recouped in the short or long term.

At the risk of inviting the wrath of the ‘recalcitrant’ PM, we could ask a different series of questions, ones that would be less generous, but not less plausible in their speculations: for starters, who will proft from the development of the MSC? Do Prime Minister Mahathir and his cronies, the elites and sup- porters of the good news propaganda in the press, have capi- tal invested in the multimedia transnationals that may locate in the MSC corridor? If Malaysian elite capital is attached to Bill Gates’ capital, then perhaps the MSC makes sense for them, if not it is just a corridor crying out (perhaps in vain) for Gates’ profteering. Or alternately, do PM Mahathir and other mem- bers of the Malaysian elite have capital tied up in the con- struction industry? This we know is the case from the contro- versy around the company Ekran and its now stalled plans to build the Bakun hydroelectrical dam in Sarawak (fooding the homes of 10,000 Orang Ulu peoples, and creating more than suffcient energy to run Malaysia, as well as an additional smelter or two – see Australian corporate miner Comalco’s plans to process aluminium in the region – via a bizarre undersea submarine electricity cable joining the two halves of the country). But surely those that have holdings in con- struction could just keep on making money out of condos, dams, hotels and roads, and so all this info and multimedia

us have seen that the gains are not there. What are the justi-

fcations? I suspect the recent fuctuations of the share mar- ket indicate where the problems lie – this is a virtual, rather than actual, development and 2020 is a very long way off. Once upon a time the strategy of compradore elites was to proft primarily from State subsidised local industrialisation and development, or at best plantations and resource extrac- tion, within their own national domains. This did at least have the beneft of advancing national and local industry, although it would be necessary to quarrel with the direction, ownership and benefts of that industry. The sorry history of elite wealth extraction is second only to that perpetrated by imperialism. Subsequently, however, and largely in the face of the interna- tionalisation of the neo-colonial capitalist market, through mergers, buy-outs and centralisation, it is more often the strategy of such elites to attach whatever capital they may have to other successful capitals – say those of a Gates – and proft from whichever short-term option, anywhere in the world, offers the best return for large mobile capitals. In this situation there is thus no lock-in to industrialisation for any particular site, and the capital invested accumulates increas- ing capacity to exploit and appropriate wherever it can best, so that even to the detriment and cost of the citizens of any particular national elite. Increasingly it becomes necessary for compradore Governments to make local resources – peo- ple, land, power – available at the cheapest possible rates so as to attract capital investment for even the shortest periods. What factors would ensure the success of the MSC?

Given that the MSC comes as a late entrant in the chase for the techno-grail, lessons for Malaysia might be drawn from the experience of other similar ventures and maybe Mahathir can proft from that experience. Maybe. In a study by Manuel

Castells and Peter Hall – called *Technopoles of the World*5,

1994 – it is possible to glean some criteria: the question of Government support is shown to be crucial as no such devel- opment can really succeed without considerable conces- sions and grants from a supportive administration. National, State and Regional Governments providing administrative and infrastructure assistance to corporate sector clients fos- ters an attractive environment for Capital. From the point of view of Corporate industry it is eminently agreeable that many of the associated costs and burdens of new product

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generation and development be facilitated under Government subsidies – and so Malaysian taxpayers’ cash is thrown into the corridor leading to pearly launch vehicle of information heaven – the necessary costs of production in individual cases are here deferred onto the public purse. Similarly, the support of adjacent higher education institutions is shown to be important as a stock of researchers are thereby kept on the public payroll, and although often superseded in terms of equipment, labs and so on, as the technology city grows, the availability of university laboratories and libraries is a conve- nient and again public facility. This all the more so, if the researchers are mobile and contract – imported – intellectu- al labour as well. The scenario is fast looking like another bun- gled rip-off since other factors like transport, roads, tollways, vehicle pollution and land given over to car-parking, and refu- elling, repairing, services, as well as the infrastructural side issues of support provision in the form of everything from legal and secretarial services, cafes, housing, shopping and recreational factors – including cleaning, nursing, child- minding and even sexual services would also become neces- sarily available on the new tekno estates that would serve, in order to appeal, those that might locate on an ‘attractive’ sci- ence-tekno-hyper-cyber-future-city.

1. *New Straits Times*, 18th January, 1997
2. Prime Minister M . Mahathir’s speech in Los Angeles, 14th January, 1997, from the special web page advertising the project – **[**[www.mdc.com.my/msc](http://www.mdc.com.my/msc)**]**
3. Greenwald, *Wired*, issue 5.08 August, 1997
4. MSC webpage **[**[www.mdc.com.my/msc](http://www.mdc.com.my/msc)**]**
5. Castells, Manual and Hall, Peter, *Technopoles of the World: The Making of 21st Century Industrial Complexes*, Routledge, London, 1994.

Splendid to see. There are many language tricks that transmute this dreamscape into a sales pitch for short term gain. Mahathir’s sparkling prose notwithstanding: he said in his introductory speech that the MSC would entail “the careful creation of a region with an environment especially crafted to meet the needs of leading edge companies seeking to reap the rewards of the Information Age in Asia”, and so the prospects for the Multimedia Super Corridor look promising only to those poised to move in an make a fast buck. The cor- ridor is just as likely to become a conduit for neo-colonial busi- ness-as-usual as it is to deliver the promises as promised. Who is going to build it if not the migrant workers that are so ill treated in Malaysia, and for that matter world-wide? Who is going to service it, if not the casual and part-time workers that are so badly remunerated, both in Malaysia and world-wide? Who... The good news keeps on coming, Mahathir emphasises the point in another well constructed turn of phrase: “I see the MSC as a global facilitator of the Information Age, a carefully constructed mechanism to enable mutual enrichment of com- panies and countries using leading technologies and the bor- derless world”.

A borderless globe of proft making opportunity is not fun either for luddites or for those who see this only as another trick played across the international labour and prosperity divide. There is defnitely a hype in the air, and this needs to be taken seriously, the forging ahead rhetoric envisions the prospect of development and prosperity, and the plans are up for weighty ‘great minds’ type discussion. Indeed, that’s why there is a global Advisory Panel willing to offer advice and a ‘critical’ apparatus ready to do the fne tuning to introduce the momentous transformations that these tekno-dreamscapes represent. “They broke their backs lifting Moloch to heaven” (Allen Ginsberg, Howl, 1956)... The future is going to come true.

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5 **I f y o u** want to develop blisters try walking around in someone else’s shoes. At this summer’s Hybrid WorkSpace we managed just that when, together with net.journalist Josephine Bosma, we lip-synched the talk and limped the walk of empirical science. With roughly 600 people a day dropping into the Hybrid WorkSpace, we were in the perfect environment for carrying out a questionnaire on the subject of Technoscience. We wanted to fnd out what people think about the ethics of certain technological and scientifc devel- opments and whether they would like to have a greater say in their social implementation. We were able to persuade a far from random selection of, mainly German and footsore, art enthusiasts to fll out our Direct Biocracy Questionnaire.

3

The experience taught us above all else that the ‘raw data’ of human experience has to be skilfully sifted, fltered and generally manipulated before ‘meaningful data’ can be extracted. Our initial questionnaire had to be modifed because we were asking too many open-ended questions which begot open- ended answers impossible to quantify. Later, leafng through the completed version 2.0s, it also became clear how bias had stowed away in every nuance of our questioning. Some of this was absolutely intentional because we had no interest in masquerading as disinter- ested and ‘modest witnesses’. A stance we highlighted by our use of provocative sub- headings like ‘The Baby Factory’, inclusion of scary statistics and loaded questioning. But we had not suspected the extent to which we were pitching questions at an assumed age group and gender (the questionnaire was entirely devised by women) until we read the replies. In one particularly acute case our question about the impact of information con- cerning potential population explosions on family planning received the wounded answer: “We are very happy with our four adult children”.

2

Our empirical credibility was once more

cast into doubt by the fnal fltration phase required in order to produce nice, neat rows of statistics. Using catch-alls like the word ‘other’ to smooth over dissenting remarks which attempted to buck the yes/no categories and by generally applying the Japanese dictum: ‘If the nail sticks out, hammer it back in’, we were able to remove all signs of the partici- pants’ sarcasm, eccentricities or biting cri- tique of our own methods. So without further ado’, and with a large question mark over the veracity of the data we set before you, we would like to present The Direct Biocracy Questionnaire (V2.0).

Can you remember your last medical treatment?

If yes, on a scale of 1 – 7 how serious did you believe your illness was? (1- very mild, 7- very serious) On a scale of 1 – 7 how satisfied were you with the results of your treatment?

Do you take prescribed medication at the moment? If yes, could you name the medication?

Would you take medication if you had doubts about the reasons for them being prescribed?

Are there any circumstances in which you feel that taking medication is unavoidable?

95%

If yes, which ones?

If a close relative or friend was suffering from a serious illness, would you support the idea of them taking con- ventional medical treatment or seeking alternative treatment?

**1**

16%

**3 2 1**

30% 11% 6%

Speed and effectiveness.

I was misdiagnosed and then waited

7 hours because the computer was down.

The doctor didn't know how to cure my vertigo.

67%

90% 5% 5%

Have you ever sought alternative treatment?

If yes, what kind of treatment?

**3**

30%

**2**

11%

**6**

**5 4**

10% 6%

21% 16%

It brought the pain to an end. Pain!

Wrong diagnosis.

The doctor was right – I wasn't ill.

Painkillers during menstruation. Homeopathic medicine.

Coversum.

Antibiotics (the doctor gave no Antibiotics and the

contraceptive pill.

80%

AIDS.

Serious illness. Serious pain.

(Basically AIDS and cancer were the 2 favourites here)

24% Conventional

47%

Yoga.

Electro-acupuncture. Visualisation therapy.

Azote for a veruca Healing hand therapy

Chinese holistic medicine.

63% 7%

Own. Doctor. Own.

30%

Own.

My own or a doctor's or a friend. My own or a doctor's.

What were the main reasons for the way you felt about the treatment?

**7 6**

0% 11%

**5 4**

21% 6%

**7**

Ventrolin.

reason)

Cancer, AIDS. Cancer.

All serious illnesses

Don't know 5% Both

24% Alternative

72%

28%

Chiropractic. Osteopathy. Allergy treatment.

Brother. Own.

Logic.

1

Direct Biocracy

Questionnaire

V2.0

2 3

Did you ever exclude any products from you diet?

On whose advice?

-30 -20 -

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yes

no

other

Do you prefer to buy organic food?

Do you prefer to buy local food products?

If you or your partner were unable to conceive a child, would you consider using In Vitro Fertilisation?

If yes, would you opt for this method over adoption?

Do you feel IVF treatment should be part of the standard health service package in a welfare state?

Do you think there is any advantage in the government being able to legally administrate birth control?

If yes, what are the advantages?

In the event of possibly hazardous population explosions, would you agree with governments intervening in issues of birth control?

How does information about overpopulation influence your view of your own family planning?

How many children do you have or plan to have?

Do you perceive a loss of nature?

Do you feel positive or negative about the increase of technology in your own environment?

Can you give any examples?

positive 48%

Do you object to the idea of eating genetically engineered food? Do you think genetically engineered food could help solve the inequalities of world food

production and distribution?

Do you think you are able to make decisions on one of the above questions without expert advice?

Makes me think it's selfish to have lots of children in a Western country.

We are happy to have our four children.

In Europe there's a better standard of education and living for children in comparison to poorer countries, so I don't mind about overpopulation.

Too late for family planning.

If expert advice goes against the grain of your feelings, do you still follow it?

28%

57%

don't know 15%

negative

42%

64%

3

62% 10%

76% 5% 19%

34%

64%

It can control population rates in countries like China. AIDS education.

Lower population.

43% 9%

48%

0–2

44%

2–4

25%

4+

0%

20%

neither 5%

both 5%

2

43%

57%

9%

36%

25% 7%

It doesn't because I want kids and I don't think that overpopulation is a result linked to this decision. It scares me, but I still feel that I should have the right to choose.

No influence. Not at all.

Results in the desire not to have hundreds of children. I don't plan on breeding like a rabbit.

Not enough to stop me wanting children.

0

16%

29%

51%

Computers make things easier.

Technology provides no real

Negative results: technical constraints solutions.

and incalculable risks – positive results: Communication via computers

it can help, stimulate and facilitate.

is replacing human communication.

The new technologies make everything easier. Quicker mail.

62%

38%

36%

52%

5%

29%

67% 5%

1

38% 10%

74%

If you have not studied them professionally or do not possess an academic qualification in a specific area, do you feel free to voice

opinion on its complex technical subjects and their implications? 2

Would you like to have a say in certain scientific developments?

3

**10 0 10 20**

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**Y o u** know the routine, best ever games and all that, better than last year, better graphics and so on – and so they are. The new year brings a lean but confdent games market to our doors. For the frst time, we see some serious mainstream advertising going on by the likes of messrs. Sony and Co. with ad campaigns on *Final Fantasy VII*, *G- Police* and *F1-97* (temporarily withdrawn due to licensing problems) and Nintendo with *Lylat Wars*, *Goldeneye* and *Diddy Kong Racing* (who *does* make up these names?). A lit- tle bit of sympathy to the smaller games companies (not that there are many left any more) as the giants – Virgin, Sony, Electronic Arts, Eidos, Activisiongo – go into inter- stellar hype overdrive...

But frst a wee featurette to get you into the New Year spirit.

**The Dark Narrative:**

**a hyperbolic panacea to the rhetoric of the absolutist neo-consumer age.**

It’s a bleak and moody New Year, the euphoria of the fn de 20e siècle is long gone, the urban decay and dereliction of our once beautiful cities now form the foundations of the new megacorporate metropolises. Once familiar edifces to the vainglorious aspirations of our ancestors lie prostrate, crushed beneath the carbon fbre towers, the acres of high tensile polymers, the duraglass mammons that rise above the weakness of humanity. Technology is no longer king – merely a pawn in the battle to keep absolute control; squeeze the last

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drops out of the expansionist paradigm, fre the dreams of despots, magnify the dark yearnings of a sick and pallid humanity.

So where do you ft into all this? Are you for or against, or maybe just unde- cided? Undecided?! Indecision is not permitted. The age doesn’t allow for fence-sitting – you’re either in or out: rebel or enforcer and either way, there’s a carpet of carnage at your front door. The innocent will die. You will carry the terrible burden of despair full square upon your shoulders, your name will strike fear or perhaps a glimmer of hope into the heart of the common (wo)man. Your time has come. As luck would have it, through the post have come three rather tasty games that ft like gloves on the hand of dystopian-future videogame

narrative (not that you can get three gloves on one hand of course). *Blade Runner* – in which you play the gritty replicant hunter in the mean streets of LA 2019, *Jedi Knight* – in which you get to choose between the dark side or the light side of the force and *Final Fantasy VII* in which you join a bunch of urban guerillas in a downtown post-industrial fantasyworld. Three very different games covering three adventure gaming genres: the point and click adventure, the 3D frst person blaster and the Role Playing Game, all linked by their use and freeform development of narrative in the dark recesses of the now essential dystopian futurescape.

*Nuclear Strike*

*G Police*

*NudeRaider*

*Hexen II*

*Tomb Raider II*

edited by John Paul Bichard

*Blade Runner*

*Dark Forces Jedi Knight II*

*Final Fantasy VII*

**Start planning for your retirement... Throw away your black shiny helmet and What’s a nice game like you doing in a**

**reach for your green pulsating shaft. feature like this?**

**Blade Runner**

*PC – Westwood/Virgin – Film sim – Street Price £30.00*

Everyone who has even a vague interest in sci-f or Harrison Ford or simply clas- sic Hollywood flms has seen *Blade Runner*: the dark, drizzly, violent streets of downtown LA in the year 2019; the huge disembodied geishas on skyscrap- er video hoardings; the immense and sinister Tyrell corporation, looming out of the yellow smog like some latter day pyramid. You know it – and in the game of the flm – you’ve got it. It’s all there – the video screens, the corporation, the streets and characters, even the EPSER system that allows you to blow up pho- tos and zoom in on miniscule details in your search for – the replicants. Once you fnd a suspected rep, you even get to do the Voigt-Kampff test on him/her in which (as you probably know) ques- tions of varying emotional content are fred at the suspect and their retinal activity is measured to determine the degree of replicantism – authentic in every detail. The drawback is that it is a fxed viewpoint, point and click adven- ture. However, the game is dragged out of the genre by its use of real-time ren- dering (every screen is ‘live’ with incredible light, smoke and environmen- tal SFX and those moody backlit fan blades sending out rotating shafts of light), its emphasis on detection and surveillance and its real-time plot. All this goes to make it more like a flm simulation, albeit a very lavish and playable one.

If you fail as a runner you can

**Dark Forces Jedi Knight II**

*PC – Lucasarts / Virgin – Star Wars Blaster – Street Price £30.00*

The original *Dark Forces* was a decent *Doom* clone, seriously lacking in the mul- tiplay dept. but with a good games engine and the ability to look up and down, crouch , jump etc. it cut a good portion of mustard. Since then, the 3D corridor genre has gone ballistic with the likes of *Duke Nukem* and *Quake* and a dozen or so *Doom* rip-offs. With the recent arrival of *HexenII* (see review) and the imminent arrival of *Quake II*, the market would seem to have reached sat- uration point. Think again. *Jedi Knight* starts conventionally enough if even a little feebly, but within the frst half hour of playing it, its true excellence shows through. Once you’ve mastered the effective use of both keyboard and mouse, enabling true up-down-round- about-a-vision, and picked up a bit of ammo and a decent gun, the action pours in. The whole game is linked together by some very slick FMV clips which unfold the story of the young Jedi and his battle to avenge his father’s death – a little corny but convincing enough. Add some great weapons and any variety of industrial space architec- ture and well, if you’re not sold on it by now, then you really *must* be a well bal- anced and enlightened individual. As for the rest of you, feel the force and pre- pare to be amazed. A little weak in parts but more than compensated for by the intense architecture, the plot and the superb soundtrack.

Aaark nanno ata ssstry lll nyaddan –

**Final Fantasy VII**

*PSX – Squaresoft/Sony – Street Price*

*£38.00*

Ok, so it all starts very nicely. Cutesy anime style characters and some futur- ist-gothic video leading you into yet another orthographic (3D viewed from a distance) role playing adventure. The pre-rendered sequences are quite lovely and there is some decent eye-candy but does it really live up to the hype? I mean, this is the game that sold 2 mil- lion copies in three days in Japan, over- taking the cinema release of the *Star Wars* trilogy... Is it really *that* good or is the whole Japanese nation completely bonkers? Well, both I guess, but the game is a touch of heavenly genius. You really need to drop any prejudices toward cute, candy coloured people and dive into a tender, enthralling, at times violent, story. The diverse characters rapidly grow on you, even the treacle sweet Aeris. The adventure stays tight, with a strong plot and plenty of puzzles and excruciating decision points along the way. The imagination and attention to detail pervades every pore of the game, from the sense of scale to the completely off the wall creatures/mon- sters and their equally barmy attacks – my favourite is a house-cum-dog-kennel that spews smog and carries out nucle- ar style strikes, frestorms and a bizarre suicidal leap – wild. A word of warning though, don’t get too carried away with all the sweetness and light, for every enlightened twist of the plot, there lurks a dark and treacherous sub-plot and if you’re the kind of person that weeps at

always get a job in the local photo- copy bureau.

879/1000

beep Meryl Streep movies, get a big pile of

897/1000 Kleenex.

90+ hours – Yes 90+ hours of videogame genius mmmmmmmm. 980/1000

*mute issue 9*

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#### Gaming

**Talking of Kleenex**

**She’s big, she’s bold, she’s brimming over with bodacious bounciful bazoomas, she’s.... Lara.** **back again in**

**Tomb Raider II**

*PC/PSX – Core/Eidos – 3D adventure – Street Price £30.00*

**G Police**

*PC/PSX – Psygnosis – Space blaster – Street Price £39.00*

As you would expect from such a lucrative licence, the gnomes at Core bust several guts and ran up a whole string of hernias in getting Lara out for Christmas and they made it – but only just. Like one of the tor- tuous puzzles that are liberally sprinkled throughout the game, Core have barely managed to squeeze Lara past the post. Sure, the game engine is much better with more detail, a whole set of new charac- ters, some wicked forms of transport and fabulous scenery, and the traps and puz- zles are just as taxing as the original BUT, there are a few ragged edges: a liberal sprinkling of dropped textures – discon- certing when portions of the foor sudden- ly disappear – and a pretty terminal prob- lem with the 3DFX version that I can only rectify by either playing in software mode or turning the sound off – hmmmmph. Despite the glitches which will inevitably be ironed out (they had better be) this is a brilliant sequel to the original classic. Whether you’ve been there before or this is your frst time, just dive in.

923/1000 (less 120 points if they don’t get the 3DFX problem sorted)

One day you’ll look back at all this and wonder how civilisation survived in such a naive self-satisfed mode of existence. Houses with fimsy wooden doors and glass windows, cars made out of steel, police that wandered about with little or no body armour and no ordinance, city streets open to the public, the skies empty save for the odd helicopter, cities open to the atmosphere – and you’ll chuckle to yourself, a little bemused, at how your ancestors ever made it through Hey, snap to it sergeant, you’re

in *G-Police* a very slick 3D shoot-em-up set in – hey, another moody futureworld. This is mission-based, fast and furious shoot ‘em up at its very best. A perfect counterpoint to the somewhat sedate, considered *Blade Runner* experience and another adrenaline hotspot from Psygnosis.

901/1000

*mute issue 9*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mai Lai revisited Nuclear Strike** | **Revelations – revealed. Hexen II** | **And fnally...**  **The gusset Section NudeRaider** |
| *PC/PSX – Electronic Arts – Save the World – Street Price £33.00* | *PC – Raven/Activision – Apocalyptic Blaster – Street Price £28.00* | *PC – Tomb Raider 1 patch – Free* |

Ok, so just imagine that the Korean war just kept on running and those evil despots that ruin UN peace treaties got to run amock around the far east with a bunch of nuclear warheads. Now imagine that you, with a helicopter and a band of upright, democratic, free thinking liber- als were left with the task of mopping up this deadly threat to humanity. Imagine no more – you are that gun toting woolly liberal – in the latest sequel in the *Strike* series of mission based ‘sort out the worlds trouble spots’ series. So get to it soldier, liberate the free world, even if you have to fry a few peasant villages on the way – hey no pain, no gain.

I bet Sadam doesn’t own a Playstation. 907/1000

Part *Quake,* part realtime RPG adventure, part demonic descent into the pits of despair. Superb medieval 3D action game that thrashes the hide off the orig- inal and is only let down by the decided lack of monsters in some portions of the game. Roam freely through the labyrinths and lands of Thyrion in your quest to destroy Eidolon the Serpent rider (that’s Mr de’Ath to you).

666/700

All the major games mags and Core (the designers) deny the existence of a nude *Tomb Raider,* the mag *CVG* ran a hilarious April fool about how to ‘turn on’ the naked Lara, then denied its existence, but *Mute* in the ground breakin’ style that you’ve come to know and love, can reveal exclu- sively that *Nude Raider* does in fact exist – and we’ve played it. Lara as nature intended – guaranteed to bring on attacks of sadfuckitis as you feverishly search the web for the patch – of course I’m not going to give you the precise URL, just use your imagination (and you could try the ‘nudest raider www ring’). Go for the nrpa100a patch, the user interface is really neat. Of course it goes without say- ing that my efforts in obtaining the patch were purely for research purposes and I must stress most emphatically that I in no way condone or have any personal interest in such trivial, puerile, crass, sex- ist behaviour.

P.S. you may notice that the scores have changed – this is in response to an EC directive and is a direct result of the glob- al realignment of the games market in respect to the unstable Yen.

[**x**johnny@metamute.com**x**](mailto:xjohnny@metamute.comx)

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###### The Accidental Adversary.

Mathematicians are from Mars... **(or was it Computer Scientists are from Uranus?)**

**Hari Kunzru talks to Mark Atkinson**

[

**M a r k**

Atkinson is an evolutionary systems programmer. He

works with neural nets, artifcial life simulations, and genetic algorithms to exploit the mechanisms of evolution for the beneft of computer software. Along with artist William Latham, he is a partner in Computer Artworks, a design frm whose latest

project is a computer game called *Evolva*. In this game, the computer- controlled sprites will evolve abilities and behaviours through time, so that as the player gets better, the game gets harder. Atkinson believes this is the future of computer games. The implications go much further.

**HK: How did you get interested in** started doing at university was the

**AI?** more mathsy side – I was never very good at maths

**MA:** At college I became interested

in perception, especially visual **HK: From my point of view that** perception – you’ve got this idea **sounds like an extraordinary thing –** that you’ve got this solid world **the idea that someone who’s at the** around you and you’ve got this very **nuts and bolts end of computing can** solid representation but it’s such a **say that.**

complete fabrication. Your visual

acuity outside a tiny central area is **MA:** There’s a great divide between completely shite, you’ve got no mathematics and computing. resolution whatsoever, your brain is Mathematicians who try to do filling in all the details. That was computing don’t really understand one definite side which was of great computers because computers are interest – the other being about dynamics, and maths is very evolutionary biology – that side of undynamic, a=a+1 to a

it. Dawkins etc. I guess the stuff I mathematician is a kind of

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The Accidental Adversary

Hari Kunzru talks to Mark Atkinson

edited by James Flint Specimen Jar Science News

**a=a+1 to a mathematician is a kind of brainfuck whereas to a computer scientist it’s a motor**

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brainfuck, whereas to a computer scientist it’s a motor – it’s all to do with time, changing states. The whole temporal aspect of it is what

straight back to John Von Neumann that, when you ran it, would create and all those people. Back in the two copies of itself – just prove forties this was going on, they were mathematically that artificial

just doing things on paper. That reproduction was theoretically

it’s really about. Programming isn’t really about a programming language or a syntax or any of that stuff. It’s about complex systems, about designing a complex system and making it do what you want it to do – keeping it under control. When it gets into the far reaches then it’s really about that. You don’t know what it’s going to do. That can make things very difficult, because you don’t know if it’s doing it as well as it possibly could – there are really bad problems because if there’s a bug, it tends to route around it.

**HK: So this is a complete change in the way one conceptualises writing code. When did this change really become clear to you in your own life?**

**MA:** Well, when I was at university I did a lot with cellular automata, the game of life and so on. This goes

whole debate was about whether you could have something that reproduced. There were all these pseudo-religious ideas floating about that you couldn’t do it because it was to do with some life force, to do with living organisms, therefore you couldn’t have artificial reproduction.

**HK:** É**lan vital?**

**MA:** Exactly. They had these ideas of robots which would go round the warehouse and pick up bits to make themselves, but they ran into all these nasty bootstrapping problems – in order to reproduce does this have to have itself *in* itself, and then does *this* have to have itself in itself and so on. What John Von Neumann did was to use this cellular automaton rule, this graph of states showing how the states change, and showed rigorously that you could design one of these things

possible. And this is still important in the AI arguments that go on today, with people like John Searle and Roger Penrose going on about how you can’t have artificial intelligence.

**HK: Penrose is weird. All that Platonic stuff about numbers having a real existence in some higher plane.**

**MA:** That’s a classic example of a mathematician not understanding what computers are about.

**HK: He seems to have to turn**

**extraordinary somersaults in order to avoid concluding that strong AI is a possibility.**

**MA:** Penrose avoids one of the main ideas behind A-Life – that there may be more than one way to ‘do’ life. It’s to do with separating out what is essentially an implementation detail

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#### deep Blue

**HK: So, what it’s actually running on is irrelevant – in our case, organic material, but not necessarily in other cases.**

**MA:** Exactly – the confusion is about what counts as a fundamental property – obviously with only one instance to go on, you can’t really know what is fundamental. One of the driving forces behind A-life is, if you can generate other instances of life, you can see what are the basics of life and what are implementation details.

**HK: So you are trying to do something like that with the *Evolva* game?**

**MA:** What we’re trying to do with the game, and one of the holy grails that people are aiming for, is to build a system that can learn to play any game. There’s an interface so that you can tell it the rules, so it knows what’s legal and what’s not, but it’s capable of adapting to

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whatever’s there. I don’t want to have to learn how to play every game that there is, do all those nasty mathematical things that those people do. I want to short-cut that whole process.

**HK: What’s the difference between that and a chess computer?**

**MA:** People go on about Deep Blue and chess and all that, but it’s all such utter bollocks. Chess programs don’t even count as AI. They have a huge database of opening games, a huge database of endgames, search space in the middle where they search a billion moves, they’re just big database search engines – yes, they’ve got some heuristics, but it’s so unimpressive from a theoretical standpoint. If you made a simulation of a little cockroach or something that could survive if you completely changed its environment, that would be far more impressive – it would be a generalised system that could adapt.

If you take these conventional rule-based approaches and scale them up and up they go up this exponential curve – it’s like if you want to model a dodecahedron you can do that with polygons, and then maybe you want to do the same thing with a sphere, you need more polygons, but you can still kind of get there – but trying to do these AI and A-life problems – it’s like trying to model a cloud. Doesn’t matter how many polygons you use you’re not going to be able to do it – you need a completely different tool – you need a fractal algorithm. So what we’re saying is, let’s take these evolutionary systems, put little brains in these games and let them play themselves without anybody touching them and come back and see if they’ve evolved and got all nasty and aggressive on each other, then you go in there and see how you fare. In a conventional game like *Command and Conquer*, you can win every time just by exploiting the same tactic. But with

an evolutionary approach, repeat yourself like that and the game shifts its weightings. After you’ve exploited your loophole two or three times it’s found it and it’s closed it.

One of the things that has really inspired me is a program called *neurogammon* that played backgammon. It was written by a guy called Gerald Tisaro from IBM and had a reinforcement learning algorithm rather than a straight evolutionary thing. It learnt by playing itself hundreds of thousands of times, until it was ranked in the top ten players in the world – from pretty much a standing start.

**HK: So does that qualify** *neurogammon* **as creative, in a sense that includes the human activity?**

**MA:** There’s a good example in a thing Karl Sims did – set up this game that had these two little box creatures, made out of boxes as arms and things like that with spring forces on them, there’s a cube in the middle and they’ve got to get it – he was thinking they’d grow arms and try to sweep it away, but when he ran the simulation they grew tall and fat and fell on it! Just completely cheated. And those cheating bastard evolutionary systems, they are like the twelve year old kids who write to computer games magazines telling them about all these secret short-cuts they’ve found.

**HK: So where’s this going? What’s the end point in that process?**

**MA:** From one point of view a whole new programming paradigm.

**HK: So that’s why you pitched up in the world of computer games?**

**MA:** That and because I like killing things with plasma rifles.

**HK: And what about beyond games?**

**MA:** Beyond gaming? Does not compute. I don’t know, I view gaming as pretty ultimate, and I live in hope that the rest of the world will come to realise that gaming is the pinnacle of man’s existence.

[ aughter]

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| **A c c o r d i n g** to scientists based at Daimler-Benz AG in Germany, the transition from free-fowing traffc to a traffc jam conforms to the physics of phase transitions such | SPECIMEN |
| as the transformation of water into ice. Once the fow of traffc crosses a certain threshold | JAR |
| value, local perturbations will be amplifed enough to disrupt the system, just as ice grains  have a nucleating effect and therefore accelerating effect when water is beginning to |
| freeze. Once formed the jam moves along the road like a kind of ‘solid’, with identifable |  |
| edges and a ‘vapour’ of comparatively free cars in front of and behind it. So now you know.  **A t e a m** Recherche Agr demonstrated tance, artifci plants, can t growing with was carried o public concer ly introduced ronment with  **I n t r i g** certain neuro keys continu decided to try played any r  sense objects by touching them with quivering whiskers, and so the scientists monitored ne information from the whiskers. Some of these neurons continuously oscillated at about 10 touching anything, and their frequency altered when the whiskers came into contact with an o interprets signals like FM radio, which encodes sounds as alterations in frequency. The scient ple may be at work in human fngertip receptors. | from Institut National de la onomique, Le Rheu, France, have how a gene for herbicide resis- ally introduced into oilseed rape ransfer into wild radish weeds the crop. Although the transfer ut in the laboratory, it will stoke n about the genes being artifcial- into crops escaping into the envi- unpredictable consequences.  **u e d** by their discovery that ns in the cortex of rats and mon- ously oscillate, Isreali scientists and fnd out if these oscillations ole in sensory perception. Rats urons in the cortex that received hertz when the whiskers weren’t bject. This suggests that the brain ists suspect that the same princi- |

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James Flint is a writer whose frst novel, *Habitus*, will be published this [year.**x**jim@metamute.com**x**](mailto:year.xjim@metamute.comx)

Rage Against the Machine(But do it in machine code)

**Tom McCarthy on the Systems Novel**

**L i t e r a t u r e ’ s relationship with technology has rarely been untroubled. With the exception of the Futurists, who hailed the motorcar, the aeroplane and the factory as art forms in themselves, the love/hate equation linking the two felds has tended to be top-heavy on the hate side. This dates back to at least the early nine- teenth century. Blake gave the “dark, satanic mills” and “belching, sullen fres” of the industrial revolution lead roles in his neo-biblical mythology; Byron wrote stirring lines praising the Luddites, redundant textile workers venting their anger on the machines that had replaced them; and Mary Shelley dreamed up Frankenstein’s mon- ster, the destructive progeny of a science out of control. This Romantic formula, which pits the human spirit against the computer’s ancestors, has remained intact throughout the present century. It has coloured Louis-Ferdinand Céline’s horrifc visions of Henry Ford’s semi-enslaved employees; the dystopian sci-f fables of Aldous Huxley, Ray Bradbury, J.G. Ballard,**

**Philip K. Dick and William Gibson; and most notably the work of Thomas Pynchon, who sees in the whole ‘System’ of late capitalism the realisation of a Calvinist blueprint in which the ‘preterite’, the poor and technolog- ically illiterate, are shafted time and again by the ‘elect’, modern technocratic culture’s privileged elite.**

**T h e** latest major rerun of the human/technological showdown can be found in the American author David Foster Wallace’s enormous (1079-page) novel *Infnite Jest*. Set roughly twelve years into a future in which time itself is subsidised by modern products (Year of the Whisper-Quiet Maytag Dishmaster, for example, is followed by Year of the Yushityu 2007 Mimetic-Resolution- Cartridge-View-Motherboard-Easy-To- Install-Upgrade For Infernatron/InterLace TP Systems for Home, Offce, Or Mobile), *Infnite Jest* assembles a disparate cast of junior tennis players, recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, and fanatical Québecois Separatists. The novel

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couldn’t be called a work of science-fc- tion, despite its temporal extrapolation and its electronic hardware – attributes which often characterise that genre.

Rather, it deploys science, and informa- tion technology in particular, as a model on which to base its entire narrative structure. Tom LeClair, a professor at the University of Cincinnati, has a term for this type of work: ‘the systems novel’. Wallace, he writes, is typical of young writers who “conceive their fctions as information systems, as long-running programs of data with a collaborative genesis.” This view is echoed by the crit- ic Sven Birketts, who argues that “[Wallace’s] book mimes, in its move-

Rage Against the Machine

Tom McCarthy on the Systems Novel *Browser Cybertrends*

*The Closed World*

edited by Tom McCarthy

and Jamie King

*Come Computer One*

*The Way the Wind Blew*

*The Dark Knight Returns*

ments as well as in its dense loads of ‘demapping’. Space itself, the land-mass free time playing *Eschaton*, a computer- referential data, the distributive systems of Mexico, the USA and Canada, has aided, tennis court-based simulation of that are the new paradigm in communi- been ‘reconfgured’ into the global nuclear confrontation. The cations. The book is not about electronic Organisation of North American Nations Québecois separatists plan to unleash culture, but it has internalized some of or, to give it its masturbatory acronym, on the American population a flm car- the decentering energies that computer ONAN. tridge, – created using the most technologies have released into our Wallace, then, moves beyond the advanced fbre-optical techniques and midst”. dialectic struggle between human and instruments available – which induces

Now, these ‘decentering energies’, it machine, the natural and technological in its viewers lethal catatonia, the should be pointed out, were hallmarks worlds, by imploding thesis and antithe- motor-neurological equivalent of a com- of fction long before computers were sis into each other. The subject is a sub- puter crash. Live by digital technology, around, as anyone will know who’s read, ject precisely because he’s built, pro- die by digital technology, Wallace seems say, *Finnegans Wake* or *Tristram* grammed and confgured technological- to be saying, availing himself fully of *Shandy*, with their rambling, non-linear ly (not for nothing is the main charac- digital technology in order to say so. plots and malaligned frames of refer- ter’s name Hal). Landscape functions as Yet ultimately, *Infinite Jest* refuses ence struggling to decode one another. a by-product of topographic distribution. to wholeheartedly condemn the

In *Infnite Jest*, though, it’s not the In this sense, his vision is profoundly – machine culture. It contains no exhor- dreaming or neurotic mind which is the and uniquely – post-humanist. This has tations to rebuild Jerusalem, to relo- central structural paradigm but, as wide-reaching political ramifcations. cate the lamb of God. If it has a Point of Birketts suggests, the holy trinity of Pynchon depicts homeless people who, Presence on the old Romantic network, mainframe, microchip and software, although they’ve made their nests in this is at a different, Keatsian juncture: with narrative fles and paths confg- telegraph poles, perched among “the Melancholy. In an interview with

ured by a sub-narrative CPU. User very copper rigging and secular miracle Valerie Stivers of *Stim* e-zine, Wallace

friendly in a Windows 95-ish kind of way, the book has footnotes (388 of them), diagrams and reference tables (chemical, cinematographic, corporate), and documents providing background histories – whole areas of information boxed off from the main text, held in abeyance until called up, like the con- tents of a help fle. The characters them- selves are constructed along the same lines. Every one of them is governed by a formal ‘Program’. There’s the twelve- step rehab one of AA; the dubiously holistic one propounded by ETA (Enfeld Tennis Academy) coach Gerhardt Schtitt; the devious political ones of the AFA (Assassins des Fauteuils Roulants) and their adversaries the USOUS (United States Offce of Unspecifed Services; as with computer language, acronyms abound); and for those who’ve suffered disfgurement – and a surprisingly large proportion have – the social one of UHID, the Union of the Hideously and Improbably Deformed. When these char- acters encounter one another, it’s called ‘interfacing’ – never ‘meeting’ or ‘con- versing’. The ultimate act, murder, is

of communication”, remain unconnect- ed have-nots. By contrast, Wallace’s junkies and street sweepers, being ‘imported’ from one institution, one pro- gram, to another, complete with fles through which their fellow subjects read and analyse them, participate fully in the info-tech community – that is, in the community. But the leap beyond the natural doesn’t come without a price.

Everyone is crippled either physically, lacking or possessing grossly deformed limbs, or psychologically, being addict- ed to substances, to television or to popular psychology. “You all stumble about in the dark,” a wheelchair-bound assassin tells his USOUS counterpart, “this confusion of permissions. The without-end pursuit of a happiness of which someone let you forget the old things which made happiness possible.” Pastoral New England has become the Great Concavity, a giant toxic area into which industrial waste is catapulted and out of which feral, semi-human mon- sters lurch. Like its post-Romantic pre- decessors, *Infnite Jest* has apocalyptic overtones. The ETA students spend their

says he “wanted to do something sad. I think it’s a very sad time in America...”. *Infinite Jest*’s clinically depressed Kate Gompert suffers from what Wallace calls “anhedonia, or simple melan- choly”. Like virtually all her fellow char- acters, she experiences “a kind of radi- cal abstracting of everything, a hollow- ing out of stuff that used to have affec- tive content… Everything becomes an outline of the thing. Objects become schemata. The world becomes a map of the world. An anhedonic can navigate, but has no location. I.e. the anhedonic becomes, in the lingo of the Boston AA, Unable To Identify.” Wallace, here as elsewhere, carefully employs machine code – ‘navigate’, ‘map’, ‘Unable to Identify’ (a term which, besides being AA speak, is a specific Windows mes- sage) – to reconfigure the Romantic quandary into a form of techno-exis- tentialism whose coordinates are man, machine and void.

David Foster Wallace’s *A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again,* a collection of essays, will be pub- lished by Abacus in February, 1998.

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Batman

Forever

#### Read Me

comings of semiotics bequeathed to it by Saussure: what is ‘signifed’ is always a cultural phenomenon, not a fxed, objectifable one. *The Dark Knight* read in the 1980s may

**Jamie King**

**U m b e r t o E c o** , in his *Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage* (1987), once warned us that it would be “semioti- cally uninteresting to look for quota- tions of archetypes” in movies like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or *Indiana*

*Jones*, since “they were conceived within a meta-semiotic culture, and what the semiotician can fnd in them is exactly what the directors put there.” There are, of course, a panoply of cultural productions that could be added to this brief set of examples – and Miller’s *Dark Knight* trilogy would certainly be amongst them: for this is a work which is very much aware of, and carefully regulates, its use of signifers.

But Eco’s comment, bound as it was within a particular- ly synchronic outlook, failed to anticipate that ten years on, the self-aware constructions of the 1980s have begun to look very interesting indeed, semiotically or otherwise. Many of the ‘archetypes’ quoted and manipulated in *The Dark Knight*, for instance – Ronald Reagan (now suffering from Alzheimer’s), Superman (now in a wheelchair, sup- planted by a lacklustre imposter), the U.S.S.R (now defunct) and the Cold War (long since thawed out) – have been thor- oughly degraded and deterritorialised, so that the novel, far from being semiotically uninteresting, now scans as a bes- tiary of the decades ‘fears and obsessions’, with Batman presiding over the fun like a demented, carnivalesque com- pere. Which, incidentally, highlights just one of the short-

have been fairly humming with semiotic familiarity, but to today’s reader it’s just queasily reminiscent of a bad decade passed. What Miller’s narrative says most of all is that how- ever immanent an icon may appear, its demise can never be far away; the symptoms of decay and change, presaging the decline of the book’s fgures just as they appear most pow- erful, are everywhere present in the book. And the Batman, who here combines in himself the qualities of vigilante, polit- ical renegade, provocateur, surrogate father and avenging son in his attempt to right a world raging with high capitalist furies, is no exception to the rule: at the end of *The Dark Knight* he goes underground; today, as we all know, the Caped Crusader has wholeheartedly renounced any radical- ism in favour of familiar high camp, reduced once more to batting Mr. Freeze about and bouncing inane one liners off the Boy Wonder.

But Miller’s Batman, the 1980s Dark Knight, was an

archetype with something to fght for. “You’re a joke,” he tells Superman in their fnal showdown. “Yes, you say, to anyone with a badge, or a fag. You sold us out, Clark, you gave them the power that should have been ours. We could have changed the world... now look at us. I’ve become a political lia- bility, and you... you’re a joke. I want you to remember, Clark, in all the years to come, in your most private moments... I want you to remember... my hand... at your throat. I want... you to remember... the one man who beat you.”

[*The Dark Knight Returns* Anniversary Edition was issued recently to commemorate the ’87 edition and is available in the Titan imprint].

**T h e h i s t o r y** of the Weatherman group of the late sixties and of its successor, the Weather Underground of the seventies, has as much of the Pink as of the Black Panthers about it. When its Detroit chapter, formed like all the others from socialist students with wealthy backgrounds, descended on the city’s working-class Metro Beach dis- trict bearing Vietcong fags, hoping to win the proletariat over to their cause, the pro- les kicked the shit out of them. After throwing down the gauntlet to the Chicago police by announcing a ‘Day of Rage’ to which tens of thousands of their comrades would turn up, they managed to amass no more than a couple of hun- dred, and the police (you’ve guessed it) kicked the shit out of them. Their under- ground phase, born in no small measure from their lack of success overground, got off to a farcical start when three of them blew themselves up with the bomb they’d been preparing. The disaster did, however,

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plant them in the national consciousness, and American myth-making institutions did the rest: by the time they sprung LSD guru Timothy Leary from prison they’d become bogeyman totems, famous as the politicians they despised.

Ron Jacobs is a librarian at the University of Vermont, and his **THE WAY THE WIND BLEW: A HISTORY OF THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND**

**(Verso, £10.00)** is well researched and documented (you get the impression lots of the account is frst hand, too). My favourite part’s a series of inconsequential but delightful coincidences: the judge at the trials of both twelve Weathermen and of their revolutionary cousin Abbie Hoffman was one Julius Hoffman; when the ill- timed bomb exploded, the

survivors ran into the house of their neighbour, Anita Hoffman – wife of Dustin. You couldn’t make it up.

**TMcC**

**The** introduction to open frontier, and an implicit faith that

BROWSER **(£15.99,** ‘the invisible hand of unfettered com-

**Laurence King Publishing)** is merce’ will generate the greatest good for an ominous rehash of the tired old ‘web- the largest number of people.” The book’s as-spectacle’ guff, which it promotes con- opening gambit is to link the *Wired* sequently as a new medium for designers thinkers – Kelly, Barlow, Negroponte and and Java geeks to show off in. Well-imple- so forth – to the managers of the Cold mented content is the way forward and War’s mainframes in the United States – Push is (still) the next big thing; “televi- RAND. Like the Digerati, RAND were based sion is a better model for the web than in California and were at the nexus of gov- print”; the web is either “played on” or ernment strategy for information technol- used like a library, and to cap it all ogy; like the Digerati, they beat their drum Microsoft and their ‘Active Desktop’ (read: very loudly (only in their case that drum Bugged-To-Hell Desktop) are given the happened to be game theory); unlike the last word. And then you get past the intro- rather reticent Digerati, they were quite duction and it all becomes far more fun: a open about their relationship to discours- run-through of websites you’ve loved, es of power. Brown’s book, though, should loathed and wished you coded; from the leave us in no doubt as to what’s really overdesigned to the thrown together, from going on: “A titanic battle is now being the corporate to the ... well, to Heath fought for control over the means of pro- Bunting’s **[**www.irational [sic].org**]**. So duction and distribution in the twenty- skip the intro. This is a diverting, carefully frst century. It is nothing less than a bat- considered assemblage of web phenome- tle to colonize great swaths of the Wired na that will turn into pure history before World: to capture the power that will you can say “Content Is King”. defne a new age”. And don’t you forget it.

**David** Brown’s **CYBERTRENDS (Viking, Paul** Edwards’ book, **THE CLOSED WORLD:**

**£18.00**), is a head-on confrontation with **COMPUTERS AND THE POLITICS OF DIS-** Digerati posturing, critiquing a vision pro- **COURSE IN COLD WAR AMERICA (MIT** jected “in uniquely American tones: puri- **Press, £14.95)** is also part of the gratify- tanical perfectionism, a yearning for the ing counterbalance to the fast-forward,

G u n g - h o technogabble which charac- terises much of today’s writ-

ing about computers, communications theory and cognitive science. It also, oddly enough, foregrounds the Cold War in its assessment of the development of US thinking about technology. (You have to wonder, in fact, how many writers are set to test and retest, as Edwards does here, the not-so-startling thesis that “we can make sense of the history of comput- ers as tools only when we simultaneously grasp their history as metaphors in [...] science, politics and culture”, how many different writers will singlehandedly bind technology and technological progress to the social forces of “scientists and engi- neers, funding agencies, government poli- cies, ideologies, and cultural frames.”) But the book is nonetheless a very solid coun- terhistory, deploying a thorough analysis of US military policy and Cold War politics as a means to understanding the dis- course that informs the development of computers, high technology weaponry and artifcially intelligent systems.

**JJK**

**A c r i t i c** once called Kathy Acker’s writing “bad, but interestingly bad”: it wouldn’t *quite* be fair to say the same thing about Mark Waugh’s. Judging by the 126 pages of COME **(Pulp Faction, £11.99 with 6-track CD)**, Waugh has the potential to create a really fne piece of fction. It’s just that drugs and deconstruction are a lethal cocktail, and in *Come* he’s overdosed on both. The book’s central conceit (if you want plot, stop reading now) is that two vaguely *auteur* fgures, Mark 0 and Mark 1, have, by stealing and remixing one another’s copy, created Dolly Savage, part infatable sex-doll, part goddess (her French initials, like the car’s, pronounce her a *déesse*) and part abstract pleasure principle – rather like the eponymous heroine of Michel Leiris’s *Aurora*. Through the clubs of Brighton and London, the streets of Paris and the margins of Bataille, Cocteau, Sade and, of course, Derrida, the text tracks Savage down, hoping, through her, to “fx the co- ordinates of an inexplicable sensibility”.

*Come* is full of aphorisms. The best (“Words are mnemonic equations that derail the senses as they track a world that disappears before them”) are worthy of Edmond Jabès; the worst (“Postmodernism is redundant”; “Don’t be afraid to dream”) are vacuous. If you like lo-f techno, the CD makes good background listening.

While we’re on the subject of Derrida: in *La Carte Postale* he writes that “every advance in the post brings the police state a step closer”. Well, Warwick

Collins’s **COMPUTER ONE (Marion Boyars,**

**£15.95)** goes further: here (California circa 2010), the post, a giant rhizomatic web processing all the information in the world, *is* the ultimate – and self-serving – control structure. Enzo Yakuda, a short but savvy entomologist of Japanese origin and Zen Buddhist persuasion (when the flm comes out he’ll become a tall, WASP heartthrob played by Clooney or Travolta), realises that this web is aspiring to the status of a life-form and, well, look what happened to the dinosaurs when mammals came along. Ironically, his raising the alarm sets the web’s masterplan in motion. Already in control of factories and transport, it sends toxins and viruses to population centres, offng humans in their millions. Collins is deadly serious, and writes in his intro that “we have at most two or three decades in which to consider our future in relative safety.” Maybe, maybe not. Either way, his novel is a cracking sci-f read.

**TMcC**

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Tom McCarthy [**x**tom@metamute.com**x**](mailto:xtom@metamute.comx)JJKing [**x**jamie@metamute.com**x**](mailto:xjamie@metamute.comx)

audiophile

**N o t t i n g h a m label Emit make music under the provocative heading "fuck dance, let's art" Their contemporary electronica is closest to what is usually termed ambient, a term which they hate, because it implies background music, or music you don't have to pay attention to. Attention and concentration are very important to the Emit aesthetic. An obsession with detail, and thresholds of sensory perception, coupled with an interest in such subjects as lucid dreaming and temporality, set them apart from the electronic music fock. They are also anti-fashion, sceptical of club culture and probably don't think much of the Chemical Brothers. Emit's David Thompson spoke to *Mute* about their new technics of listening.**

EMIT *Do Time*

Concentration

**Emit is aimed at ‘the careful listener’. What do you mean by this?**

For the overwhelming majority of the music-buying public (and indeed the majority of journalists and editors), music is little more than a means of trib- al identifcation or ‘lifestyle’ accessory. Listening to music in this way, which seems to be primarily for the beneft of one’s imagined peer group, is facile pos- turing. Being ‘into techno’ or rap or opera, or whatever generic categorisation is deemed statusful, tends to reduce the expectation of music to predetermined formulas and a reinforcement of the familiar. The experience is essentially a closed and territorial one, rarely inviting challenge and, as a result, discouraging any signifcant attentiveness.

Music can be much more than a fashion statement; it can be a means of expressing the intangible. The Emit series is an attempt to side-step refex- ive presumption and encourage the lis- tener to engage with the work in an open-ended way, unprejudiced and free of knee-jerk fltering. Our packaging and advertising present the listener with very few clues as to what to expect from the listening experience.

**Gas [Emit 0095] say they are interest-**

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**ed in nanotechnology. A lot of Emit music depends on tiny sounds, inputs at low volumes, various kinds of silence. What role does scale (espe- cially microscopic scale) play in Emit’s music?**

One of the recurrent features of our work is the use of unusual dynamic range; details and patterns at the threshold of perception which may only become apparent on repeated listening. Similarly, several of our artists employ non-occidental or micro-tonal intervals in their recordings, or elliptical time sig- natures, again demanding an uncom- mon attentiveness.

**You always emphasise the special 3D recording techniques used by Emit. Could you say more about them, and about why you use them. And could you say more generally what role tech- nology (perhaps the attendant, fetishistic pursuits of hi-f purists, to whom Emit must be very attractive) plays in your music.**

Many of our recordings use the RSS 3-D sound imaging system, which was developed primarily for use in flm soundtracks and virtual reality environ- ments. The system uses discreet real- time variations in phase and delay to create the illusion of sounds moving

beyond the conventional stereo feld – in effect, escaping the speakers. We’ve also been experimenting with several other new software packages that allow extensive manipulation of both the sound source and its directional infor- mation. As much of our work has an immersive or flmic quality, and given our interest in creating music in which spatial depth and detail are concerns, the use of these technologies seems appropriate.

That said, we don’t subscribe to the kind of technological fetishism you sug- gest. Systems of notation and tonality could also qualify as technology, though they rarely attract the attention of over- excited engineers and hi-f enthusiasts. I don’t see a fxation with TB-303 bass modulations as any more interesting than a fxation with a Fender Stratocaster. Instruments of any kind are merely tools. Conduits, if you like. If a piece of music communicates nothing more than the paraphernalia used to construct it – a sort of aural studio brochure – then that strikes me as a failure. Of course, a great deal of techno strikes me as failing for exactly that reason.

edited by Hari Kunzru

**Emit discography**

Emit 0094

Emit 1194

Emit 2294

Emit 3394

Emit 0095

Emit 1195

Emit 2295

Various artists Woob

Qubism Various artists

Gas Miasma

Various artists

*Emit 0094 Woob Qubism Emit 3394*

*Gas Miasma Emit 2295*

Emit 3395 International Peoples Gang *International Peoples Gang*

Emit 4495

Emit 5595

Emit 0096

Emit 1196

Emit 2296

Emit 3396

Woob

Various artists

Lucid Dreams Carl Stone Various artists Undark

*Woob 2*

*Emit 5595*

*Lucid Dreams Carl Stone Emit 2296 Undark*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Emit 0097 | Slim | *Slim* |
| Emit 1197 | Various artists | *Emit 1197* |
| Emit 2297 | Beatsystem | *Beatsystem* (Forthcoming) |

Psychophysics Trance

**Why are you interested in Celia Green? Captain Beefheart once described his How do her ideas mesh with your music as ‘anti-trance’, designed to music? shake the listener out of some kind of**

**zombifed passivity which he saw at**

I frst encountered Celia’s writing more **work in the culture around him. Many** than a decade ago. She and her **producers of contemporary electronica** colleagues at the Institute of **reverse that, seeing trance and** Psychophysical Research have yet to be **altered states as highly positive, as an** annexed by the cultural pathologies so **antidote to the failings of our secular** evident elsewhere. The idea that **rational culture. As a label, Emit seems** curiosity, accuracy and academic rigour **like it could go either way (or both).** should outweigh notions of ‘belief’ and **With your interest in lucid dreaming,** popular approval seems to be **synaesthesia and altered aural** evaporating from many areas of life. She **‘states’ you seem to be in line with this** raises questions about perception **movement. In your concern for active** which are diffcult to answer and **listening, you seem to be the opposite.** apparently out of fashion, which in **What do you think of trance?** themselves are often good reasons to

investigate further. ‘Trance’ is a rather ill-defned term. Given our interest in the cinematic Certainly, the supposed ‘trance-like’

and suggestive properties of music, and states celebrated by many club

since many of our recordings have enthusiasts seem more akin to stupor or frequently been described as dreamlike, convulsive ataxia. Whether such effects surreal or nightmarish, Celia’s pioneering are consciousness-expanding or simply work on the phenomenon of lucid consciousness-obliterating is unclear. I dreaming and other perceptual don’t think that listening to the *Lucid* anomalies seemed to be suitable subject *Dreams* album requires a ritualised or matter for an album. chemically-modifed state of mind,

We also wanted to produce an album though it may require a particular kind of

**Carl Stone stretches samples over long durations. Celia Green talks about the peculiarities of the human perception of time and duration. Emit is Time backwards. So what’s all that about then?**

Much of Carl’s work could be thought of as aural microscopy. His music uses tiny fragments of found sound which are looped and manipulated at multiple moving points, then systematically compressed and expanded to reveal layers of tonal and structural detail. The overall effect, particularly evident in his full-length album for Emit, is of losing one’s sense of time. The temporal markers which one might expect are blurred and obscured, leaving the listener unsure of ‘how far in’ he or she is. This is a theme that runs through many of our recordings, the creation of environments where not only the geography is unfamiliar.

Emit is a division of Time Recording Ltd. email: [**x**time\_recording@CompuServe.com**x**](mailto:xtime_recording@CompuServe.comx)Celia Green’s website can be found at:

**[**ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Celia\_Green**]**

using text prominently. The opportunity attentiveness. Incidentally, the

to combine a spoken narrative and attentiveness I’m suggesting seems illustrative case studies with sound entirely incompatible with the design and music was hard to resist. compulsive repetition and collective

experience of the dancefoor.

.Hari Kunzru writes fction, journalism and essays about technoculture

[**x**hari@metamute.com**x**](mailto:xhari@metamute.comx)

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##### Audiophile

Mind-Media

**Around the World.....**

Adelaide to Detroit

*Mindvirus 0297*

**Y o u i n s t a l l** it, and it tucks a tasty little conspiracy generator into the recesses of your hard drive. Then it sets to work on you.

One of the frst multimedia publica- tions to be distributed free over the nets, *Mindvirus* has pursued a persis- tently idiosyncratic and productive take on interaction. Put together by a crew based in Adelaide, Australia, this is the last in the series. Producing this issue as a CD-Rom leaves them to move on to new things, and leaves the rest of us to cope with a splenetic gaggle of fucked- up screens. The *Mindvirus* aesthetic is elegant and assured at the same time

texts by Nick Land, McKenzie Wark, Belinda Barnet and others.

One guy, Tom Barbalet describes his adventures in programming, polymor- phic viruses and metaphysics. The structure’s a simple hypertext but one that starts off by presenting you with its entire content layered up thick. Only after you start working it does it become legible. It works well, visually, but also in allowing the user the relief of starting knowing that they’re not going to get sucked in for ever as they leaf their way through in the manner of other hyper- text formats. Go sideways from some- where and a series of roll-overs gives you access to a text by Gashgirl. Here the interface is tried and tested and it’s the viciously compelling text that demands exploration. This is the screen in darkness.

Detroit to Tokyo

Japan’s ever-inventive Sublime label has turned to the home city of techno for its latest release. *Eleven Phases* **[MKCS 1001]** is the minimalist Detroit sound with a twist, a compilation bringing together key techno producers – to make hip-hop. It’s the perfect antidote to the mainstream productions coming from the two coasts. Instead of Top 40 samples and layered soul vocals we have crisp cold electronica, futuristic soundscapes and compressed break- beats. At a time when hip-hop is increas- ingly sounding like throwaway party music, famous names like Robert Hood, Stacey Pullen and Kenny Larkin may yet help US breakbeat claw back some of the ground lost to UK jungle innovators.

as it is cracked and diffcult. One

moment you’re poking the cursor into a

breathing skull, the next clocking a split- second star guest appearance from Yoda. There’s too much acid and not enough typography: that is until you hit the screens of Orphan Drift. Things speed up. Words accelerate into illegibili ty, into thick clots of pixels streaming across the screen. Techno-organic blips seethe into view and dump you into

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**Matthew Fuller**

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**[**adl.auslink.net/~mindfu**]**

*Mindvirus* is ready for PowerPC, Wintel PCs and 68k Mac platforms and also contains seven audio CD tracks by Matthew Thomas.

Mixmaster Morris, and pseudonymous offerings by Tim Love Lee and Woob (I make that one from Wales, one from Nottingham, one from Cambridge and a bunch of Londoners). Best track is at least by someone who lives in SF, Scottish-born Jonah Sharpe. The Rom is OK too, with lots of vaguely eco- favoured stuff, exploding buildings and a mixing toy that, despite the tacky interface, is good user-friendly fun.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tokyo to London | London to San Francisco |
| Hunt for this one. Small Fish With Spine | Say what you like about the city which |
| is a pseudonym of Riz Maslen, better | gave the world *Wired* and Haight |
| known for the downtempo mood music | Ashbury – it doesn’t matter, they won’t |
| she makes as Neotropic. On *Ultimate* | listen. San Fransciscans remain sub- |
| *Sushi* **[Oxide CD1]**, she has produced 30 | limely convinced that they are leading |
| minutes of edgy urban jazz. Not much | the rest of the planet into the future, |
| for the dancefoor here, or for people | and will brook no discussion of this sup- |
| who like samples of whale noises or | posedly self-evident truth. You may |
| black people doing tribal chanting. If | have to give it to them when it comes to |
| anyone ever gets round to making an | microbrew beer, microelectronics, moun- |
| anime version of one of those nouvelle | tain-biking, crystal meth and other envi- |
| vague flms full of jump cuts and flter- | able twenty-frst century lifestyle acces- |
| less cigarettes, this should be the | sories beginning with m, but in music |
| soundtrack. Further proof that Maslen is | they’re way behind. There are a few |
| one of the most talented and underrated | good SF producers, such as Peanut |
| producers in the UK today. | Butter Wolf, Justin Warfeld and |
|  | Tranquility Bass, but most SF electronica |
|  | is prey to a terrible disease – the curse |
|  | of trance. Go to post-Deadhead Frisco, |
|  | and the majority of the (straight, white) |
|  | population seem to be recreating hippy |
|  | glories past by fddling about with digeri- |
|  | doos and face paint in an orgiastic neo- |
|  | colonialist ethnic sample frenzy. Which |
|  | may explain why clued-up SF graphic |
|  | designer Nick Philip has used a bunch of |
|  | Brits on his *Radical Beauty* CD-Rom |
|  | **[OM007]**. It’s a good line-up, including |
|  | Dan Pemberton, T-Power, Skylab, |

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Pretty Good Pirates

**Lisa Haskel on MAKROLAB**

**I t ’ s D o c u m e n t a X ,** and a strange object has landed on Lutterberg Hill, 10 miles outside Kassel in the centre of Germany. Projekt Atol’s MAKROLAB: a portable, weatherproof, self-sustainable ‘insulation/isolation’ environment perches between a grain feld and a golf course, with a clear view of the town in the valley, and the strangely appropriate backdrop of a wind farm on the opposite hill. Like a fg- ment of the late 20th century collective

imagination, the scene is a vital and spir- ited visual quotation, bolted together from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, visionary architecture in the honourable tradition of Buckminster Fuller and Archigram, and the Constructivist love affair with the materials and aesthetics of science and technology.

MAKROLAB is the largest object in Documenta – this year an intellectually driven but still somehow bombastic statement on the state of contemporary

art practice – and yet is also ironically the piece of work most dependent on time-based activity and complex, inter- locking levels of mediation. The struc- ture functions as a living and working environment, solar powered, and able to support 3 people for up to 40 days.

Avowedly utopian in its objectives, the insulation/isolation strategy aims to achieve total independence from social conditions in order to create a refective space. The object of refection include “dreams, psychoacoustics, weather and low energy systems”, but also “actual social conditions”. This isolated ‘no-

place’ therefore, is also thoroughly con- nected; through satellite receivers, microwave links, shortwave radio and, with its only physical link to the ‘outside’ world, an ISDN internet connection that trails 600 metres across the golf course.

Projekt Atol was founded in 1992, an initiative of Slovenian artist Marko Peljhan. He has spent the past fve years, together with a team of young Slovenian hackers, bedroom engineers and radio hams, creating errant offspring of the military-industrial complex. Results so far: a flm, *Ladomir: First Surface* (1994) – a meditation in colour, line and movement inspired by Vassily Kandinsky’s *Bilder Einer Ausstellung*, made by a mixture of home-brewed programming and high- tech real-time graphic rendering. An installation, *Terminal* (1996), where

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aircraft navigation charts were projected in the gallery, with sound transmitted from scans of radio conversations between pilots and controllers as they negotiated the no-fy zones over the former Yugoslavia. *Urban Colonisation and Orientation Gear – 144* (1996), was an experiment overlapping psychogeography and communications technology, consisting of a number of group members wandering the streets of Ljubljana carrying home-made versions of the US military’s GPS – global

*Martin I won’t promise you the earth*

Pretty Good Pirates – Lisa Haskel on MAKROLAB rootLESS’97

positioning system – used together with wireless modems and audio receivers to create a collage of activity on the streets

and on the net**1**. Plus there have beena

prolifc number of writings, performances and lectures.

MAKROLAB is the third and fnal manifestation of a cycle of projects called Ladomir – , which pivot on the writings of the Russian Avant-Garde poet, Velimir Khlebnikov. His work, published in the 1920s, reads as a charming and irre- sistible mixture of archaic futurology and an uncannily contemporary vision.

Khlebnikov mobilises a dense, deeply metaphorical and lyrical use of language (even in translation) to link natural phe- nomena with technologies and human inner life. His writing lurches from the wildly fantastic: “Grow edible microscopic organisms in lakes. Every lake will become a kettle of ready-made soup that only needs to be heated: contented peo- ple will lie about on the shores, swim- ming and having dinner” to the improba- bly incisive: “Let air travel and wireless communication be the two legs humanity stands on. And let’s see what the conse- quences will be”. The work *Ladomir*, pub- lished in 1922, takes its title from two Russian words, each with pointed double meanings: ‘Lad’ means both harmony and living creature. ‘Mir’ – as anybody who has spent any time in Russia will know – means both world and peace.

Khlebnikov developed his own theory of

language in which each letter of the alphabet is imbued with specifc quali- ties, and in this system the joining letter ‘o’ is defned as “the letter which increas- es size”.

However remote from this fanciful legacy the structure may seem at frst glance, MAKROLAB is designed primarily to materialise these ideas – to build a pro- cessing device through which environ- mental, personal and communications activity is traced, structured, documented and re-presented. In a countervailing move to modern representation, the pro- ject concentrates on materialising the abstract, rather than abstracting the materiality of the everyday.

To this end, the lab aimed to work as a node within branching patterns of fows and processes through time and space – be they radio waves, weather patterns or bird migration. The clamouring, noisy,

congested contents of the electro-mag- netic spectrum was a special target, and one member of the team working as a guest researcher in the lab was US video maker, Brian Springer. During the 1992 US Presidential elections, Springer cap- tured and recorded off-air satellite feeds of campaign broadcasts. The resulting flm, *Spin*, makes a wry, revealing portrait of television, and politicians, in the mak- ing. While working at MAKROLAB Springer collaborated with Peljhan in experiment- ing with further satellite scanning activi- ty, while investigating the legal frame- works of telecommunications intercep- tion, privacy and encryp-

tion. In the meantime, the minutiae of this peculiar daily existence was being recorded and various forms, and regular bulletins post- ed on a web site.

The MAKROLAB web site was just one of the multiple, multivalent, plat- forms through which people could maintain contact with the lab and experience something of it as an art- work. A console in the main gallery, the Documenta Halle, housed a live, microwave video feed from the lab, and a short-wave radio link for direct voice

contact. The web site was accessible via a terminal there, and the crew in the lab received up to 20 emails each day. With the vast majority of communication con- sisting of questions stretching to little more than “what are you doing?” and “is this art?” it was diffcult to be optimistic about the quality of casual visitors’ expe- rience of the work. However, for the dedi- cated it was quite possible to drive up and visit the lab, privileged few friends and colleagues stayed there for a num- ber of days, and rumours circulated of gatherings on the site that back in the UK would have brought the police out in force under the Criminal Justice Act. A radio broadcast on Hessischer Rundfunk took place towards the end of the research project, and a key point in the process, undertaken 60 days into the project, was a lecture by Peljhan refect- ing on the experience of this design for living, with its specifcity of conditions

and objectives, and operation through many kinds of communication media. In its setting on Lutterberg hill,

MAKROLAB carves out a point of calm and refection within a cacophonic land- scape of natural, urban, synthetic and technological processes. Adopting a cyborg strategy, it acts as a networking machine of experience, representation, environment, technology and communi- cation as it maps out, records and re-dis- tributes the invisible and powerful in air- borne fows. It is a grandiose claim to materialise a utopia, or even to point towards what this might be. However,

through its engagement with social and political realities, this is no call to simply tune in and drop out. By acknowledging both the inevitability and the use-value of mediation, and the non-innocence of the technology it uses, the project occupies a point of tension between the desirability and impossibility of physical and ethical autonomy. We are challenged to allow this tension to leak out from its isolated environment and put it to constructive, everyday work.

MAKROLAB crew: Luka Frelih, Bostjan Hvala, Borja Jelic, Jurij Krpan, Marko Peljhan, Brian Springer.MAKROLAB web site:

**[**makrolab.ljudmila.org**]** includes details on future

sites for the MAKROLAB project and the full text of Marko Peljhan’s lecture for Documenta-X.

An interview by Geert Lovink with Marko Peljhan and Brian Springer can be found on: **[** [www.factory.org/nettime/archive/0912.html](http://www.factory.org/nettime/archive/0912.html)**]**

**1**Matthew Fuller, “War Fever”, *World Art Magazine.*

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Photos MAKROLAB: Lisa Haskel, Kassel, 1997

tm

Art

Martin

**L y i n g** on her back, she gazes he is a vampire, or indeed human. Romero was it easily deduced from the works straight in your eyes. Child? Doll? achieves this by casting doubt on the themselves, so their mutual tensions

Phantom? It’s hard to tell. Motohiko Odani’s photographic series *Phantom Limb* occupies a ftting – introductory – position in “Martin”, a recent exhibition organised around the vampire theme of George Romero’s flm of the same name. *Phantom Limb* draws you past six pho- tographs of a young Asian girlchild, with long black hair and arms spread out beside her body. Both her hands contain lumps of a red, feshy substance. It seems she has been squeezing them. The only differences between the six photographs reside in her eyes and hands; they open – looking to the right; shut; open – looking directly at you; close – fngering the fesh- fruit. *Phantom Limb* wasa ftting introduc- tion because its crucifxion-like composi- tion references religion more explicitly than any other work in the show, even though refections on belief (of a sort) underlie all of them.

*Martin* – The Film – wears its vampire

heart on its sleeve, but withholds the kind of narrative dénouement that might let you know whether it’s ‘truly’ that of a vam- pire or not. Unlike the vampire flms which exist to interpret the genre’s ‘command- ments’, Romero’s *Martin* doesn’t let you indulge in such structural certainties. In this respect, Romero’s flm, so 70s itself, prefgures the myriad vampire flms of the 80s and 90s – many of which shifted away from the fxed notions of ‘otherness’ that hallmarked the genre before. (The 19th century, for example, produced vam- pires easily correlated with an ambient anti-semitism as well as more general anxieties to do with ‘other’ cultures and their increasing proximity via the ever more powerful vectors of travel, technolo- gy and Capital). The fact that Romero’s Martin can easily touch garlic, walk around in the sunlight, handle crucifxes, etc. is just the tip of a doubt-inducing ice- berg touching all aspects of his identity. Romero based his flm on research into vampire sightings. The flm, set frmly in the present, asks what kind of philosophi- cal apparatuses we have to deal with such phenomena. Fundamentally, it is out to question *what* in Martin’s behaviour, his sense of time, his relationships with other human beings, makes you assume that

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Photo: “Martin”, installation shot, Atlantis Gallery

mental stability (read: normalcy) of *Martin* himself, but also on the notion that flm, as a narrative medium with a specifc cultur- al history and vantage points ensconced, could ever convey the ‘truth’ of any given situation. The fact that all of this is brought to bear via pretty obvious terms – i.e. ‘magic’, ‘reality’ etc. – belies the complexi- ty of the flm’s conceits (as well as their adaptability to other discursive felds).

It is in this spirit of adaptability, or extrapolation – to the workings of Western culture and art – that the exhibition “Martin” was put together. It was curated by David Goldenberg and Taro Nasu and includes work by seventeen artists (from Britain, Ireland, Japan and Germany). “Martin’s” aims are mightily ambitious, if not entirely new, ranging from a zeit- geisty attempt to break down the art object’s autonomy to *representing* the cul- de-sacs of contemporary arts- and curato- rial practice. “Martin” hopes to initiate a philosophical/theoretical thread at vari- ance with both modernism and post-mod- ernism for which, it argues, the cul-de- sacs of conservatism are more or less inbuilt. Using Romero’s flm as a starting point implicitly make rationality, time, his- tory and identity central to the exhibition. A hefty bite. And sometimes more than the curators could chew. The attempt to represent, critique *and* point in new directions was confusing, for example, as wasthe idea that the exhibition *itself* could embody a Heart-of-Darkness like move- ment from the light of convention and rationality into the heart of the repressed, breaking down “fxed bunkers of thinking and practice” in the process. The idea that one exhibition can straddle all of this handicapped it, and inaccurately present- ed some work as more radical than others (based, it seems, on more or less formal dictums). Although the combination of more and less ‘conventionally’ structured work produced some interesting relation- ships, surely we can’t stand by those terms in any absolute sense. If anything, post-modernism should have taught us that there’s more feeding into the ‘bunkers of thinking’ than what happens inside gallery walls. Thankfully, this was not “Martin’s” primary theoretical aim. Neither

remained ambiguous and interesting.

In the frst site of the show – the Commercial Gallery – Florian Zeyfang’s timeline of a Planet Hollywood opening provided a breakdown, plus photos, of one evening’sevent. Its drynotation ofarrivals and departures, ‘names’ and linchpin fg- ures (“Der Polizist”, “Die Singerin”, “Der Aktion Star” – Sylvester Stallone) applies a detective-like rigour to the evening’s com- ings and goings, forcing the idea that such events merit obsessive and offcious scrutiny. The whole exercise manages to perform an almost opera-like transforma- tion on the evening. Perhaps there are invisible forces steering the proceedings? intent on orchestrating spectacles equal to those tracked by Rod Dickinson down- stairs (*Crop Formation, Windmill Hill, Arebury Wiltshire, July 29 1996, Approx. 500H across*). Dickinson’s now more familiar methods – collecting visual and written data from miscellaneous sources, including his own, on UFO sightings, crop circles and other unexplained phenomena – were followed, here and in the exhibi- tion’s other site, by childlike pencil draw- ings of UFO landings. Alison Gill’s statuette *Receptor,* of a hooded Dr. Death fgure with blood dripping down his body and arms, proved a heavy-handed counterpoint to her Kirlian photographs at Atlantis, while Rebecca Warren’s *Upside Down* is an ode to an altogether more senior fgure – its row of nines (i.e. sixes) requires little explanation.

In Atlantis’ enormousspace – the sec- ond and fnal destination – John Timberlake, Rebecca Warren and Fergal Stapleton placed works similar to those in the Commercial Gallery and not explicitly in keeping with the exhibition’s theme (in Timberlake’s case a series of cityscape paintings with clock faces telling different times; in Warren’s and Stapleton’s a con- tinuation of their poetic, ephemeral and politely obtuse engagementswith concep- tual art). “Martin’s” theme is so all-encom- passing though that it’s a case of the mountain/theme being able to come to Mohammed rather than Mohammed need- ing to go to the mountain.

Alasdair Duncan’s *Untitled (The Young and the Beautiful)* was one of the most

light-hearted pieces in the show, but also one of the most haunting. Duncan acknowledged Robert Smithson’s status as the show’s éminence grise by using small dinosaurs (Smithson once described the dinosaurs on display at the Museum of Natural History as modern art worksequal to anyofthose offcially sanc- tioned by ‘art’ museumifcation). Duncan had placed his little clay dinosaurs on the ground – they looked like they’d been let loose and were ready to walk off. Behind them on the wall slapdash oil paintings on cardboard echoed their physical, slightly pathetic, forms. In the paintings each dinosaur stands gazing out majestically over habitats long lost.

Steven Wong’s installation “Department of Titles. From the Teleological to the Heterogeneous, After Makunaima”, engaged with history in a more ‘scientifc’ way. The piece studiously mimics certain anthropological and crimi-

I won’t promise you the earth

**Marion Kalmus at Kettle’s Yard**

**M a r i o n** Kalmus’ recent show at Kettle’s Yard contained both recent and new work. The sheer volume of work pre- sented here threatens to overwhelm the modest circuit of spaces at Kettle’s Yard, yet through careful planning and meticu- lous design the layout remains manage- able. Photographs, slide dissolve installa- tions, video and computer animations all seem to co-exist appropriately, bringing us a combination of observational irony, symbolism and epic narrative to a com- mon point for contemplation. Whether it be playfully paranoid refections on the game, Chinese Whispers (*Wildfre*) or the absurd irony of a Doctor and Disabled parking space seen and photographed side by side (*Doctor Disabled*), we are repeatedly shown moments of transfor- mation where ‘worst’ becomes ‘best’ or more typically ‘bad’ becomes ‘different bad.’ To use such nonspecifc terminology seems appropriate as the work itself oper- ates on so many levels, encompassing intensely personal and painful moments of self portraiture and wider (almost exis- tential) narratives that carefully implicate both artist and viewer while pushing the viewer to reevaluate and celebrate funda- mental aspects of what it is to be human.

nological methodologies and incorporates them into a display of artefacts. “Department of Titles” hypothesises how these disciplines, among others, dovetail with the more ‘elevated’ spheres of Western culture – literature, art and archi- tecture. It’s a circular piece – moving back and forth between Western and non- Western cultures, ‘real’ and simulated archival objects – and avoids the didacti- cism similar projects often suffer from.

Orphan Drift’s installation “You Its Eyes” is an older piece. Deliberately placed at the end of the exhibition, in “Martin’s” planned ‘Heart of Darkness’, “You Its Eyes” doesn’t require the curators’ meta-dis- course to pull you into its otherworldli- ness. Totally segregated from the rest of the exhibition in a blacked out room, you have to enter the piece through a side opening, smelling eucalyptus as you go in. Yes, sounds cheesy, but the video has the kind of melancholy beauty that keeps you

In *Well*, we watch the terrible plight of a woman forced underwater by fre and reduced to life support gasps for air. This is a narrative of epic proportion rendered by clattering and jerkily dissolving slides. The self consciousness of the mechanics used in *Well* remove us so far from the story’s endless horror that it has little more impact than a saying like “out of the frying pan and into the fre.” However, to look no further than a cliché seems to underestimate the conceptual sophisti- cation of Kalmus’ work. Perhaps this sophistication is more evident in *Patient*, a new work using a computer and data projector to backproject a piece of text onto two strip-like screens placed side by side and embedded into the gallery wall. The sentence is scrambled and slowly revealed by going through the alphabet at every point until each letter, space or symbol is reached before moving on. The effect is somewhat similar to various startup and sorting procedures seen on many computer platforms, but slowed down by a magnitude reminiscent of Douglas Gordon’s *24hour Psycho*. The text reads:

“It’s worth remembering that a cube packed with touching spheres still has space in which smaller spheres can freely travel. So we can reach our destina- tions by patiently looking for the chan- nels that others don’t see; whether it’s their method of transport or fxed opin- ions that are creating the traffc jams.”

This ambiguous statement allows for a broad range of psychological, philo- sophical or scientifc readings, obscured

Marion Kalmus, No. 8 of 10, from

*Wildfre*, 1997, Kettle’s Yard

from caring about presentational formali- ties. Watched in complete silence, it proves that O.D>’s valorising of club cul- ture and techno-music hasn’t necessarily done them any favours. When allied to club-culture as a matter of course, O.D>’s imagery seems overdetermined, some- times even predictable. “You Its Eyes” silent surrounds demand a different kind of attention, and reward it amply. The video has been worked and reworked to the point where dissolution is always on the horizon. Viewing it means fitting in and out of a bleeding, congealing televisu- al world at speeds which come to feel any- thing but human. Perhaps that’s the sen- sation Martin was getting at when he tried to tell his family what he felt like.

**PvMB**

*‘Martin’ , Commercial Gallery and Atlantis, 146 Brick Lane.*

*12th June – 9th July 1997*

by the mimicked reconstruction of com- puter processes. It is in this work that Kalmus really seems to strike a com- pelling balance between her formal con- cerns and the stories she tells. An aes- thetic beauty derived from the very pro- cesses driving the installation, underpin- ning a narrative that *can* be and is as much about the artist as ourselves.

**Jon Thomson**

*Marion Kalmus, I won’t promise you the earth, Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge,*

*4th October – 9th November 1997*

Art tm

RouteCanal

**r o o t L E S S ’ 9 7** has been ‘running out of time’ again in Hull throughout October. With its punning, allusive title, the event is described as an International Festival of Live and Time Based Art. It feels like a frantic countdown to the year 2000, which is no doubt much as the organisers would wish.

Originally a child of Hull Time Based Arts, ROOT has always been an umbrella for different forms of live and virtual per- formance work. Like the NOW and eXpo events, which run annually in Nottingham, and the Youngblood ’97 international theatre festival at the Green Room, Manchester, also November, ROOT offers a consumers’ guide to the current avant garde. ROOT is the only one of these events in the UK that offers the artists and performers who are the avant garde a chance to look at one another and where they are going. Participating artists are booked into Hull for the whole event. Tight programming concentrates events in a ‘Hot Weekend’ (this year Friday- Sunday, Oct. 10-12), and the three or four main venues are within easy walking dis- tance in Hull’s compact city centre.

Within ROOT’97, one discrete unit was the ATLAS symposium (11 Oct.,

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Andre Stitt, *At Climax*, rootLESS’97 Photo: Hull Time Based Arts

Spring Street Theatre). ATLAS (Archive for Transnational Living Art Studies) (re)united speakers from performance archives in England, Germany, Hungary, Québec, and Switzerland. The English Arts Council is currently attempting to track the disappearing history of perfor- mance art, and some of us who were there at the beginning (the 60s) are sub- mitting to belated attempts to catch us on flm/video before it is too late. It has recently become fashionable to academi- cise hybrid forms like performance art. Has the spirit of post- (or super-) mod- ernism broken out of the sanitary cordon the universities had built around it? woven from an impenetrable language and sterile discourses. After a spate of conferences on situationism, and self- contradictory Fluxus retrospectives, per- formance (art) just had to be re-discov- ered, where it has always been, at the heart of modern culture. The Nomad Domain was another large section of ROOT’97, sub-titled “Provocative art works from specially commissioned international participants from Europe and North and Central America”. If this sounds like routine artspeak, consider: “The ignorant are tied to their native

land, the mediocre consider themselves citizens of the world, but only the wise realise they are a stranger everywhere”, *Lo Straniero journal*, motto. Lo Straniero (The Stranger) is a generic name for a number of itinerant artists who occa- sionally surface to run ‘interventions’. They also feature in long printed address lists, constructed to give the impression that ‘they’ are everywhere, but rarely where you would expect them – in art galleries. Lo Straniero’s motto appeared in the ROOT’97 publicity, and gives a good feel of the glue that holds so many performance artists from different loca- tions together, and impels them to meet to perform live.

The Nomad Territories were inaugu- rated in Québec, 1994; in part an expression of francophone and post- colonial separatism. Members of the Territories carry realistic passports, issued through consuls in different states and based on the traditional UK ‘Britannic Majesty’ model. The Co- General consuls of the Nomad Territories for England are Julie Bacon and Roddy Hunter, both Hull-based performance artists who travel widely – organisers of The Nomad Domain.

Travelling features in the history of performance art asa political necessity. In the 50s and 60s artists in Hungary and Czechoslovakia would cross their national borders to escape the censorship that came with the Red Army’s invasions. In the 70s and 80s Poland offered a freer envi- ronment for artists from other communist countries. And throughout the Cold War, artists who could, came to what we naive- ly called the ‘Free West’. The art work as object, as text, flm or tape, was diffcult to smuggle across a hostile border. Artists carrying their works inside their heads (improvising performers) were more likely to escape the attentions of customs and immigration offcials. Today, economic wars having taken over from ideological ones, marginalised people (Slovak Romanies, New Age Travellers, migrant workers) are the ones seeking freedom from persecution; close relatives of perfor- mance artists, their intellectual property is in their heads, hands, and feet.

Artists in many situations live outside regular economic structures, creating goods and services that have to fnd their own market, for which there may be no pre-existing demand. Artists, as a class, are marginal in many societies. The nomad, the traveller, is a natural role model.

Many of the artists presenting perfor- mances in ROOT’97 were self-declared members of the Nomad Territories, some are consuls. The Nomad Territories is not the frst attempt at a stateless nationality. Neoism?! in the late 70s, and Jim Haynes (founder of the original London Arts Lab in the 60s) produced stateless passports– it is an honourable tradition.

A quick, fip-through guide to some of the ROOT’97 artists shows how they con- nect: Julie Bacon’s *mghand 1/2mv2* wasa series of actions marking the boundaries of Hull Paragon rail station and tracks. Jackie Chettur created a flm/video view- ing space inside a silver Citroen CX estate car, *The Silver Dream Machine*, parked out- side Warehouse 6, a sand-blasted memori- al to the days when Hull was a thriving port. Between Warehouse 6 and the Ferens Gallery is Princes Quay – a shop- ping development in what used to be a dock, that gives meaning to the phrase ‘Dead in the Water’.

Brian Connolly’s *History Lesson* was an installation inside the Ferens Gallery that held fragments of historical imagery in a web of light. Phil Coy’s *Departure*

brought together the Icarus myth and hitch-hiking, local pigeon fanciers and a live projected video of domestic arrange- ments set in the Ferens Gallery’s ‘Live Art Space’. In *Otiose*, John Dummett and Ailith Roberts pursued slow and laborious researches into the matter of the Gallery’s

Centre Court, at one point using fnger- print dusting techniques on the marble foor. In *Die Wandersmann/The Wanderer*, performed in Warehouse 6, Ronald Fraser- Munro used pre-flmed video sequences, monologues, and his own oddly androgy- nous fgure (long blond wig, black skin, military greatcoat). His subjects were fugi- tives, ghosts, inhabitants of the spiritual diaspora. Also in Warehouse 6, Rob Gawthorp (with Gina Czarnecki) in *Percussion Video and Noise* mixed hilari- ous mechanical toys – ‘talking parrots’ – smart remote control video at table top level, and his own live drum solo. Guillermo Gómez-Pena and Roberto Sifuentes performed *The Mexterminator* in the Ferens Gallery – a ‘tableaux vivant’ which illustrated and challenged the con- ventional image of the Mexican – bullets, guns, chickens, drugs and mustaches.

Istvan Kantor (also known by the generic name Monty Casin) calls himself the initiator, in the 70s, of Neoism?! – a “nomadic, anti-authoritarian pseudo-phi- losophy”. His concert/performance *Executive Travel* deployed computer- choreographed hydraulically powered fl- ing cabinets to create high level noise.

Rona Lee’s *Present* was in Beverley Art Gallery, an early 20th century building where she sat attempting to draw the per- fect circle. Her drawings were given to the gallery, making a sharp commentary on the relationship between donations to the Permanent Collection and the Public. Simon Lewandowski’s *The Migrating Machine* was a futile, plodding robot, manoeuvring clumsily around Warehouse 6.

Richard Martel performed *Étude ethnologique avec grand piano* in one of the Ferens galleries, apply- ing a severed ox tongue to his own face and to the heads of portraits on the gallery walls. His thesis was that *la langue* (tongue, lan- guage), was the performative, articulating the silenced. André Stitt in *At Climax* violently and noisily attacked his favourite range of materials – wet, sticky, powdery – on a sloping wooden ramp in another Ferens space, with a pile of ice and a model of the Titanic in the foreground. Artur Tajber’s *3 Desolation* drew the audience into the cramped con- fnes of the Red Gallery, near a pub where, on the Sunday

evening, pretend gunslingers in cowboy hats and boots gathered. *3 Desolation* involved a TV monitor, which Taiber car- ried on his shoulder, a curiously inscribed white hood over his head, like the draw- ing of a brain, and some low tunnels through which he crawled. The perfor- mance was long and occupied three dif- ferent sites. Valentine Torrens’ untitled performance, in Warehouse 6, used dark- ness, luminous paint applied to the wet walls, a tennis-ball serving machine that shot luminous balls at the spectators, projections of riot control incidents, and a harrowing sound track. Torrens, who wore a black hood, ended in one corner, propped by his forehead against the wall. On the ground foor of Warehouse 6, Ann Whitehurst in her wheel chair created messages in bottles which were thrown into the nearby dock. She also used the internet in her performance *Current Movements*, which was subtitled:

“Stranger than a Stranger For Those Disabled People Excluded in every century Excluded in every culture”

**Roland Miller**

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Guillermo Gómez-Pena and Roberto Sifuentes, *Mexterminator*, rootLESS’97 Photo: Hull Time Based Arts

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Shelf Life/WAITING FOR ASYLUM

CELESTE WEARS A PADDED SLEEVED TOP AND BLACK TROUSER SKIRT, BOTH BY ANDREW GROVES. HANDBAG BY ETRO. SHOES BY FAITH. CHRISTIAN WEARS NAVY SUIT BY KATHERINE HAMNETT. SHIRT BY VAN HEUSEN. TIE AND SHOES BOTH FROM ETRO.

**TO TEST SODIUM CEPHALOTHIN, THE ANTIBIOTIC WAS FIRST ADMINISTERED TO DOGS, RABBITS AND RATS. THIS STAGE OF THE TESTING SHOWED THAT THE DRUG WAS READILY ABSORBED, RAPIDLY EXCRETED AND WELL TOLERATED BY ANIMALS.**

CELESTE WEARS BLACK JACKET BY FLYNOW CHAMNAN. KNICKERS BY DOLCE GABBANA. BOOTS BY JIMMY CHOO.

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**PREGNANT RATS WERE INJECTED WITH SODIUM CEPHALOTHIN THROUGH TWO LITTERS TO DETERMINE ITS EFFECTS ON SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS. THE TESTS SHOWED NO ILL EFFECTS IN THE YOUNG. LETHAL DOSAGES OF THE DRUG WERE ALSO ESTABLISHED.**

MELODY WEARS CUSTOMISED NURSE DRESS FROM ALEXANDRA. TIGHTS BY CALVIN KLEIN. SHOES BY RED OR DEAD.

**ADULTS, PREGNANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE GIVEN THE DRUG. IT WAS EASILY ABSORBED, RAPIDLY EXCRETED AND WELL TOLERATED, CONFIRMING EARLI- ER ANIMAL TESTS.**

**CHILDREN AND ADULTS WERE INJECTED WITH VARY- ING AMOUNTS OF THE DRUG AND APPROPRIATE DOSAGES WERE ESTABLISHED.**

MELODY DRESS AS BEFORE. BOOTS BY JIMMY CHOO.

CELESTE WEARS BEADED SHOULDER PIECE BY DARREN MATTHEW’S TO ORDER ON 0370 387 400. SKIRT BY PIERCE FIONDA. SHOES FROM THE CONTEMPORARY WARDROBE AS BEFORE.

WAITING FOR ASYLUM: PHOTOGRAPHER TALLBOY STYLIST STEPHEN DASILVA

HAIR AND MAKE-UP VICTOR ALUAREZ DOMENECH MODELS CELESTE @SELECT, MELODY @ELITE, CHRISTIAN @BOSS & KEN THE CLOWN

**THE DRUG WAS COMPARED WITH OTHER ANTIBIOTICS FOR EFFECTIVENESS SO THAT IT COULD BE ASSIGNED ITS PROPER PLACE IN COMBATING INFECTION.**

**RESULTS OF ALL THE TESTS WERE FED INTO A COMPUT- ER. THIS INFORMATION WAS THEN SENT TO THE U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND APPROVAL OF THE DRUG FOLLOWED ANALYSIS OF THE DATA.**

issue 10 out april 1998. copy deadline: 7 march

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## art news

**DIGITAL STUDIES: BEING IN CYBERSPACE** is an online event for new media art and theory co-organized by mark amerika and alex gal- loway. EXHIBITION GOALS: > cyborg-narrators > html conceptual- ism > navigational aesthetics > networked intelligentsia > self- transmission radio > open(BOMB, “>>$la\_bombe”); > ARTifcial life

> typographical disembodiment (the layered-effect) > prophetic nerves...

**[**[www.altx.com/ds](http://www.altx.com/ds)**]**

Eclecticism gets a dusting down at this year’s **Music Alliance**, where FUTUREsonic will be helping stage a series of discussions, technical demonstrations and music showcases exploring all cor- ners of the sonic spectrum, from jazz to world to electronic. Of par- ticular interest are the Arts of Technology and Remix Culture pan- els. 6-8 March 98, The Barbican, Spitz and Vibe Bar.

[**x**musicalliance@blissful.demon.co.uk**x**](mailto:xmusicalliance@blissful.demon.co.ukx)T: 0181 372 9735.

**EYE OF THE STORM: Artists in the Maelstrom of Science** Announcing a major international art and science conference and series of evening debates, organised by The Arts Catalyst at the Royal Institution, Piccadilly, London, UK.

Some of the major controversies in modern science will be dis- cussed with eminent scientists and artists from various media dis- cussing and debating the issues. Scientists include Roger Penrose (author of The Emperor’s New Mind), Ian Wilmut from the Roslin Institute (progenitors of Dolly the Sheep), Jack Cohen (author of

prend” can move and change languages and sites with a new manager. A suggestion: one could take charge of “On se com- prend” for one year only.

Keep in touch: **[**[www.cicv.fr/on\_se\_comprend.html](http://www.cicv.fr/on_se_comprend.html)**]**

From: Antoine Moreau [**x**antomoro@imaginet.fr**x**](mailto:xantomoro@imaginet.frx)

**THE VIRTUAL BERET PROJECT**

The Virtual Beret Project was begun in 1994 by Sarah Smiley, and currently has over 150 archived “virtual artists.” Invent your own!

**[**[www.ariel.com.au/VirtualBeret](http://www.ariel.com.au/VirtualBeret)**]**

or [**x**ssmiley@tiac.net**x**](mailto:xssmiley@tiac.netx)for more info.

**EUROPEAN MEDIA ART FESTIVAL**, May 6-10, Germany.

Over 140 experimental flms & videos, as well as computer & video installations. CD-ROM, text contributions & Internet projects show- cased at this fest, one of largest annual events for innovative & experimental works in those felds. Open to “experiments, to the extraordinary, to all those working methods which, using the most diverse media. create intelligent, radical or ironic worlds of sym- bols & signs in today’s digital age.” All flm & video works must have been completed w/in previous yr. Awards go to best German experimental flm or video prod. Best of cat media awards. In spe- cial programs, current political, societal & artistic topics explored. An int’l student forum, retros, workshops & open air events are also held. Appl. for installations, expanded media & exhibition pro- jects should enclose detailed calculation of costs, precise descrip-

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rst come / rstserve. small & independents get to skip the queue.

PAPERS SUBMISSIONS

The papers will receive three independent reviews. The papers describing strong original research works will be accepted for pub- lication in the conference proceedings, which will be also pub- lished as a book. Paper presenting less mature work will be pre- sented at the conference but will not be published in the proceed- ings. Papers should not be longer than 12 pages, including title, names of authors and their addresses, email, and an abstract of 70-150 words. \*Papers should be send to the Conference Secretariat (hard-copies) or to the conference chair (email).\* IMPORTANT DATES

Submission deadline : 28.2.1998/ Notifcation of acceptance : 4.98

/ Camera-ready due : 5.1998 /Conference : July 1-3, 1998 STEERING COMMITEE: Conference Chair: Jean-Claude HEUDIN (IIM,

France) [**x**Jean-Claude.Heudin@devinci.fr**x**](mailto:xJean-Claude.Heudin@devinci.frx)Conference Secretary: Sylvie PERRET (IIM, France) [**x**Sylvie.Perret@devinci.fr**x**](mailto:xSylvie.Perret@devinci.frx)

The Collapse of Chaos), Heinz Wolff, Sheila MacLean and Lewis tion, photo material & video documentation if possible. Site for

Wolpert. Artists include Stelarc (Aus), Kathy Acker (US), James L Acord (US) and zero-gravity choreographer Kitsou Dubois (F).

**Maelstrom conference** 19 & 20 Feb 1998

Eye of the Storm evening debates 3, 10, 17 & 24 Feb 1998

Co-chairing the Maelstrom conference will be Melvyn Bragg and Susan Greenfeld.

CONTACT: The Arts Catalyst, 28A Brightwell Crescent,

London SW17 9AE

**x** [supanova@artscat.demon.co.uk](mailto:supanova@artscat.demon.co.uk) **x**

**[**[www.artscat.demon.co.uk](http://www.artscat.demon.co.uk/)**]**

‘**Getting On-line - An Internet Guide for Arts Organisations**’ by Gary Wiltshire, an RABs publication, explains basic principles of the Internet; case studies of how arts organisations are making use of the Internet and a listing of Internet Service Providers and Cybercafe sites in Britain. It’s available free from the your local RABs Information department.

Tel: 01924 455555 **x** [yharts-info@geo2.poptel.org.](mailto:yharts-info@geo2.poptel.org) **x**

**Lovebytes Digital Arts Festival** 23/5. April 98.

Open Call for Digital Film/ Video Audio and Multimedia.

If you produce flm/ video, audio or multimedia using computers and digital processes this is your opportunity to get it shown. If selected, your work will be featured as part of an extensive pro- gramme at the Sheffeld Media and Exhibition Centre, exploring new media technologies, alongside a conference exploring ‘digital art ‘ through critical debate.

Open Free Entry: Deadline 14 January 1998. Tel +44 (0) 114 221 0393

[**x**lovebyte@syspace.co.uk**x**](mailto:xlovebyte@syspace.co.ukx)

**[**[www.lovebyte.org.uk](http://www.lovebyte.org.uk/)**]**

**Opportunity to adopt!**

One year ago, in July, ‘96, I made “On se comprend” (“we under- stand each other”) **[**[www.cicv.fr/on\_se\_comprend.html](http://www.cicv.fr/on_se_comprend.html)**]** at CICV (Centre International de Creation Video) in France. It was done,

but it is not defnitive, it is not yet fnished at this time. So, now, and with CICV’s agreement, I’d like to entrust this work to some- body else. Somebody who will take care of it and let it evolve. The idea is to let it continue its own way, to have other mirror sites linked (2 are still open to receive other translations).”On se com-

store in a cool,dry place away from sunlight

installations is art gallery Dominikanerkirche. >>Selected flms/ videos compensated w/ DM40/minute with a minimum of DM40 & maximum DM 160. >>No entry fee (but return of preview material requires DM 20).

DEADLINE: 2nd of March 1998. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4”, 1/2”, S-8, Beta, 8mm, installations, Internet. CD-ROM. Entry fee: None. CONTACT: Alfred Rotert, Director, European Media Art Festival, PO. Box 1861, Lohstrasse 45a, D-49008 Osnabruck, Germany;

tel. 49/ 541/ 21658; fax: 28327; [**x**emaf@bionic.zerberus.de**x**](mailto:xemaf@bionic.zerberus.dex)

**[**[www.emaf.de](http://www.emaf.de/)**]**

**intima virtual base - creative intimate lab**

**[**www2.arnes.si/~ljintima2**]**

free your mind and the rest will follow

**MITES** [Moving Image Touring & Exhibition Service] is running a series of short training courses offering professional opportuni- ties for artists and exhibitors to understand the creative applica- tions of new technologies.

NEW TOOLS+ New Tools+ builds on the experience of fve years of support for artists and exhibitors through MITES and the original New Tools programme. Aimed squarely at the current and future needs of artists, curators and gallery staff, the courses offer sup- portive and informative routes into understanding the creative applications of new media technologies.

•Dealing with Exhibition Technology - 11 Nov 1997 & 17 Feb 1998 (1 day) /£40. •Multimedia in the Gallery - 12 Nov 1997 & 18 Feb 1998 (1 day) / £40. •Networked Art - 25 November 1997 (1 day)

/ £40. •Starting with Computers for Artists - 2,3,4 Dec 1997 (3 days) / £100. •Multimedia for Artists - 20,21,22 January 1998

(3 days) / £100. •Breakers - 4 February 1998 (sessions) free

•Interactive Catalogue Design - 3,4,5 March 1998 (3 days) / £100 CONTACT: Simon Bradshaw: MITES/FACT, Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BX. T:0151 707 2881 / F: 0151 707 2150

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**VW 98**

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PARTICIPATION

This interdisciplinary conference aims to provoke new under- standings of the important role that virtual worlds will play in domains such as business, computer games, education, training, simulation, etc. It will investigate the relationships between the natural and the artifcial from both theoretical and philosophical points of views.

**European Media Art Residency Exchange**

EMARE – residency for artist in media in Germany, Britain, Finland and Hungary. The 4th European Media Art Residency Exchange will take place in Summer/ Autumn 1998.

Artists in media (digital media, internet, flm/photography/video, etc...) from Great Britain can apply for residencies with one of the other partner organisations. Duration of the scholarship: 1-2 month LOCATIONS: Hull Time Based Arts, Kingston Upon Hull, UK/ Muu Media Base, Tornio, Lappland/ Werkleitz Gesellschaft, Saxony – Anhalt (village of Werkleitz near Dessau and Magdeburg) Germany. Scholarship: per month approx. 2.000,- DM

DEADLINE for participation forms: 31.01.98

Further information about proposal forms and guidelines: HTBA • 8 Posterngate • Hull • HU1 2JN • UK T: 01482 216 446

[**x**htba@htba.demon.co.uk**x**](mailto:xhtba@htba.demon.co.ukx)

The German/English net-magazine TELEPOLIS\*

**[**[www.heise.de/tp](http://www.heise.de/tp)**]** offers netspace for creative people who want to present their work in an environment of quality content and on

a site which is well visited. All works which are genuinely made for the web – i.e. no documentation of other works – of a visual, text based, sound or mixed character are welcome. Selection of works will be made on the basis of individual judgement by the editors – no juries, no prizes, no money. The netspace functions as a show- case to aggregate interest. Intellectual property rights stay with the originators of the work (unless negotiated differently).

**\*Telepolis** has recently opened up an offce in London, UK. Please send press releases, invitations for cyber-cultural events (plus chocolate and money) and submissions for netspace to Armin Medosch, 52B Andrews Rd., London E8 4RL, UK,

**x** [armin@easynet.co.uk**x**](mailto:armin@easynet.co.ukx)

send email, hard copy or fax to mute editorial address (see contents). no more than 55.3372 words or you get the chop.

[**x**mute@metamute.com**x**](mailto:xmute@metamute.comx)

**In the cutting edge tradition you have come to know and love, *Mute* has developed a 3D art listings guide. Simply cut along the solid lines carefully with a pair of scissors, a very sharp scalpel or a clove of garlic. Fold along dashed lines and stick tabs to adjoining face with an adhesive of your choice.When completed you can read the listings whilst watching your favorite television pro-**

**gramme or view the passing scenery from the comfort of a bus seat.** *–Mr. Pleasure mute issue 9*

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###### \*BModoudmems\*s

**T h e** genteel setting of 15 Golden Square near Piccadilly Circus, a seeming- ly unlikely hangout for pirates, is indeed the place where they webcast their tunes around the world. This address is the home and ‘community’ of the Global Cafe. As well as providing standard cyber-ser- vices like expensive net access, cheap email accounts, good food, licensed bar, training, conferencing and business solu- tions, they also play host to ‘The Global Channel’ Pirate Radio **[**www.pirate- radio.co.uk**]** which grew out of InterFACE, the world’sfrst pirate radio on the net, and plays from 17.00-00.00 Sunday through to Friday. So far they have navigated the seas to terminals in Japan, Europe, South

and

America and Australia and received audi- ence fgures of over 80,000 a day.

Global to the last, there are many international DJ’s that play here. As for the music, Plug (creator of ‘The Global Channel’ pirate radio) comments: “It never has the same style twice and there- fore isn’t governed by any scene”. For those who need scene names (I did ask) Mix Master Morris, Colin Dale, Jumping Jack Frost, 4 Hero, Clear Records, Patrick Forge and Doctor Rockit have all played here. ‘The Global Channel’ is a non-com- mercial site – all costs are covered by those who play in this utopian, ‘non-chin- scratching’ event.

**-Alison Bell**

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*mute issue 9*

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8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat-Sun

10am-6pm Mon-Fri,

9am-6pm Sat, closed Sun

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11am-10pm Mon-Sat, 12pm-7pm Sun.

9am-12pm Mon-Sun

12pm-7pm Mon-Fri, 11.30pm-7pm, Sat, closed Sun

11am-4pm Wed-Sat, evenings 7pm-11pm,

Thurs-Sun closed Mon-Tue

9.30am-5pm Mon, Tues, Fri & Sat, 9.30am-2pm Wed, 9.30am-10pm Thur, 10.30- 5pm Sun.

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K5/90s) printers etc.

10 PCs, scanner, printers, ISDN line

ISP, ISDN line, 8 ter- minals, printers etc.

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5 PCs, 1 scanner, 2 colour printers

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**Saturday and Sunday 12 - 6pm Friday flm screenings at 7pm**

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