

## **Week 2 - Ulises Carrión - Mail Art and the Big Monster from Second Thoughts**

This article presents a reflective analysis of Mail Art, arguing its essence lies more in the realm of artistic creation than in the medium of mail itself. Carrión emphasizes that Mail Art should not be underplayed as postcard production but recognized for its potential to challenge conventional communication systems, thereby engaging in a symbolic struggle against bureaucratic and institutional constraints represented by the 'Big Monster', "Mail Art knocks at the door of the castle where the Big Monster lives . You can tell the monster anything you like, according to your experiences and beliefs . But the fact is, that the Big Monster exists and presses us." A couple questions I have are:

1. How does the author's perspective on Mail Art expand the definition of what can be considered art?
2. Is there another instance of art challenging traditional communication systems?

## **Week 3 - Laurel Schwulst & Édouard U - Selections from Creative Independent and Arena How Do You Use the Internet Mindfully**

I enjoyed this reading and specifically the idea of website development as basically art that holds art. The freedom and opportunity for expression through an artists website as a valuable "house" that can complement the artists artwork is an important outlook on website development as an artists portfolio. Specifically this quote resonated with me the most: "They allow the author to create not only works (the “objects”) but also the world (the rooms, the arrangement of rooms, the architecture!). Ideally, the two would inform each other in a virtuous, self-perfecting loop. This can be incredibly nurturing to an artist’s practice" Additionally, website development does not necessarily have to be for portfolio purposes only. Websites are an art form, in whichever way you see fit for your intended website purpose. Hence, a website as a puddle, garden, as a thrown rock, etc.

1. Would you consider people who primarily use website development as their medium for self expression, artists or developers?
2. Furthermore, what are criterias for a successful website? Is there a fine line between art and nonsense?

## **Week 4 - Olia Lialina - STILL THERE Ruins and Templates of Geocities from Lost and Living (in) Archives**

Olia Lialina's exploration of Geocities reveals its significance as a digital artifact and its impact on web culture. Geocities, as a platform, embodied the early web's spirit of personal expression and community building. The effort to archive Geocities highlights the importance of preserving

digital history and the nuances of web design evolution. The archival process itself offers insights into the challenges and methodologies of digital preservation.

1. How does the archiving of Geocities challenge our understanding of digital preservation?
2. In what ways did Geocities contribute to shaping the culture and aesthetics of the early web?

### **Week 6 - Bojana Coklyat & Shannon Finnegan - Selections from Alt-Text as Poetry Workbook**

Coklyat & Finnegan reframes the creation of alt-text, typically a functional accessibility feature for visually impaired users, as a poetic and creative act. They emphasize the importance of alt-text in making the internet more accessible, while also exploring its expressive potential. The authors advocate for a thoughtful, nuanced approach to writing alt-text, highlighting its role in accessibility, its artistic possibilities, and the importance of considering diverse perspectives and subjective experiences in the description process. They champion alt-text experimentation and use it as a means of artistic expression that both respects and amplifies accessibility.

1. How can writers balance the need for concise, clear alt-text descriptions with the desire to explore its poetic potential without compromising accessibility?
2. In what ways can alt-text contribute to a broader understanding and appreciation of visual art among people who rely on text descriptions?

### **Week 8 - \_A Personal Computer for Children of All Cultures\_ from Decolonising the Digital**

This reading discusses the profound implications of cultural biases embedded within computing technologies, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by non-English speakers in engaging with computer programming and digital interfaces. Nasser, highlights the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) project as an example of how technology, aimed at universal education and empowerment, inherently carries assumptions and biases of its creators, notably through the reliance on English in programming languages like Python and systems such as UNIX. Nasser's personal project, Qalb, an Arabic programming language, further illustrates the depth of the challenge, demonstrating that even with the creation of a non-English programming language, users inevitably seek to a digital ecosystem dominated by English, from software libraries to internet protocols. This exposes a significant barrier to truly inclusive digital literacy and

underscores the need for a cultural shift towards more linguistically diverse technological development.

1. What are some effective strategies or technological innovations to facilitate truly inclusive and culturally diverse programming environments?
2. Given the dominance of English in the digital world, how can educators and technologists support non-English speakers in developing computational thinking and programming skills without enforcing a monolingual, English-centric approach?

### **Week 9 - Ben Duvall - Selections from New Modernism(s)**

Ben Duvall's "Selections from New Modernism(s)" presents an extensive examination of the evolving practice of graphic design in relation to modernist, post-modernist, and proposed hyper-modernist movements. It explains the complex relationship between elements like surfaces, signs, and their implications within graphic design. He introduces the term hyper-modernism as a term to describe the current shift in graphic design and cultural age, characterized by the standardization of hyperlinked signs and acceptance of universal language of design icons.

1. How does hyper-modernism relate between an individual's creative expression and the standardized, hyperlinked nature of digital signs and symbols?
2. In what ways might technologies, such as AR and VR, further influence the trajectory of hyper modern graphic design?

### **Week 11 - Dot Tuer - Beyond the New Media Frame The Poetics of Absence in Vera Frenkel's String Games**

Vera Frenkel's "String Games" is recognized as a pioneering work that intricately weaves the realms of performance, technology, and narrative to explore the contours of memory, presence, and absence in the digital age. The piece's innovative use of teleconferencing technology in the 1970s to create a performative exchange across cities underscores Frenkel's early recognition of the potential for new media to transcend physical and temporal boundaries, while also probing the limitations and ephemeral nature of digital connection. Frenkel's artistic journey through "String Games" and subsequent works such as the "Body Missing" website illustrates a profound engagement with the archival impulse, reflecting on how histories and memories are constructed, lost, and remembered through digital traces. This exploration reveals a consistent thematic concern with absence and loss, suggesting a critical stance towards the utopian promises of

technology and highlighting the nuanced interplay between presence and absence, visibility and erasure.

1. How does Frenkel's utilization of technology in her art challenge or reinforce contemporary understandings of digital media's role in shaping collective memory and historical narrative?
2. Given the emphasis on the poetics of absence in Frenkel's work, what implications does this have for the future of archival practices, particularly in the context of digital art and new media?

## **Week 12 - Paul Soulellis - Performing the Feed**

The text "Performing the Feed," by Paul Soulellis, offers a deep dive into the evolution of publishing in the context of network culture, highlighting the shift from traditional, physical forms of publishing to the ephemeral, continuous, and performative nature of digital feeds. Soulellis explores the origins of posting as a public act, tracing it back to physical posts and public proclamations, and contrasts this with the endless, algorithm-driven streams of content that characterize contemporary digital platforms. He reflects on the performative aspect of feeds, which create a new form of public space and engagement, and discusses the implications of this shift for authorship, the materiality of the published work, and the audience's role. This evolution raises questions about the nature of publishing, the authenticity of authorial voices, and the impact of algorithmic curation on our perception of information. Two questions I still have are:

1. How can we critically engage with and navigate the overwhelming and non-linear nature of digital feeds without losing our capacity for deep attention and critical thinking?
2. In a publishing landscape increasingly dominated by algorithms and non-human actors, what strategies can be employed to preserve and highlight human creativity and intentionality?

## **Week 13 - Neta Bomani & Sabii Borno - Beyond Dark Matter from Logic Issue 15 Beacons**

In "Beyond Dark Matter," the narrative tells the story of Gem, a student challenged by traditional learning environments, with broader discussions on the nature and use of technology. Gem's journey through "The Way" software update serves as an allegory for exploring systemic issues embedded within technological designs and terminologies, such as the problematic "master/slave" language. This story addresses the deep historical roots of technology and its impact on societal dynamics, highlighting how past injustices shape current technological

practices. By the end, Gem's realization about the importance of community and her own agency suggests a need for a more conscientious approach to how we interact with and create technology. This conclusion advocates for a shift towards more responsible and inclusive technological development, where the tools we create are reflections of our commitment to equity and communal well-being. The narrative encourages readers to think critically about the ethical dimensions of technology, urging a move away from accepting the status quo towards actively shaping technology in ways that empower rather than alienate.

1. How can technological design be fundamentally altered to avoid perpetuating historical injustices?
2. What practical steps can individuals take to ensure technology serves as a tool for empowerment rather than control?

## **Week 14 - Boris Groys - Art on the Internet**

Boris Groys's "Art on the Internet" touches upon the transformation of art and literature as they advance from traditional institutions to the digital sphere. He discusses how this shift leads to a "de-fictionalization" of art, where the way people perceive and interact with art is redefined based on the internet's lack of framing and inherent transparency. Groys argues that on the internet, art and literature are presented more as real processes and objects rather than fictional creations, blurring the boundaries between art and reality. Additionally, since the internet inherently functions under a regime of visibility and traceability, the process of creating art or writing is no longer secluded or private but is instead subject to observation and potential surveillance, enhancing the creative process. This shift challenged the traditional notions of art and its reception, suggesting a fundamental change in how we understand and engage with cultural productions.

1. How does the Internet's role as a "machine of surveillance" affect artists' creative freedom and privacy?
2. Can traditional artistic values such as authenticity and originality still be upheld in the digital realm?