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Poetrica>Critical Texts>Interview with Giselle Beiguelman by kanarinka

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background

from **Beiguelman**'s website www.desvirtual.com:

Giselle **Beiguelman** is a new media artist and multimedia essayist who teaches Digital Culture at the Graduation Program in Communication and Semiotics of PUC-SP (São Paulo, Brazil). Her work includes the award-winning "The Book after the Book" (1999) "Content = No Cache" (2000), nominated for the Trace/ Alt-X New Media Competition, and "Recycled" (2001).

kanarinka: I became interested in Giselle **Beiguelman**'s work after reading about her project poetrica [http://www.poetrica.net/] in which people from around the world send messages via the web, SMS, and WAP to be displayed on large advertising billboards in Sao Paulo. My questions to **Beiguelman** center around the fascinating way her projects break down fixed notions of space (such as public private real virtual) and her projects' connections to everyday activities like reading, writing, and travelling through your daily environment (which for many of us is urban and saturated with advertising messages).

interview

kanarinka: It looks like you began working with the internet first as a poet and that you have recently moved into creating large-scale public installations where people submit text messages via the internet for display in public places. Could you describe how/why you shifted from net.based poetry to net. based public installation?

Beiguelman: I don't think there was a shift, but a link. Actually my first contact with new media was related to public art, working with a non-profit organization Arte/Cidade (www.artecidade.org.br) devoted to arts and urbanism responsible for amazing urban interventions in downtown São Paulo, curated and coordinated by the Brazilian philosopher Nelson Brissac. In 1994 they were preparing a CD-ROM with artists and architects involved in their "The City and its Fluxes" project. It changed my mind and my life.

I was captured by the computer but all my work by this time was devoted to visual poetry. The web redirected this thematic and made me pay attention to ways of reading in entropic situations. Wireless communication spread the meaning of reading in entropic situations and I think "Wop Art' (Op Art for Wap) (www.desvirtual.com/wopart), a wap site I did in 2001, was a new turning point that pointed to the possibility of working with literature and with urban space. The first result of this was "Did You Read the East?" (2002), my first intervention in public space using electronic billboards and on line public streaming. It was done for Arte/Cidade East Zone project and it was a dialogue with the graffiti of São Paulo East Zone that resulted in a series of six videopoems. The audience was invited to choose one of them and upload to a commercial electronic billboard. They appeared in the schedule of billboard between regular ads. It was a very good experience because made possible to connect net based poetry to net based public intervention.

kanarinka: Could you describe the poetrica project? Is it similar to other projects that you have done in the past? What has the response to poetrica been like (how many submissions, what have the reviews been like, general public reception)? Have the responses to poetrica been different in Sao Paulo where the billboards are versus on the internet?

Beiguelman: Poétrica (www.poetrica.net) is an investigation about reading and reception in cybrid and entropy situations. It involves a series of visual poems conceived by myself with non-fonetic fonts (dings and system fonts) and a teleintervention mediated by creations made by the public using the same typographic background. Poétrica is an upgrade or expansion of things I've been researching in The Book after the Book (1999), Wop Art (2001), and my former public interventions Did you Read the East? And egoscópio _or egoscope (both from 2002), all at www.desvirtual.com.

Poétrica is a work in progress. It begun in October and ends in February. The opening was at Galeria Vermelho, in São Paulo. The closing, at Kulturforum, in Berlin, during P0es1s exhibiton.

All the broadcasted images were produced anywhere and submitted by SMS, the web and by wap. They appeared in three large electronic billboards located in downtown São Paulo, around Galeria Vermelho, between Paulista, Consolação and Rebouças avenues.

I received more than 3 thousand submissions and they are very similar: poetic experiences, love messages and urban messages (Rick, I will be at 5 in...).

The critical reception was very good too, including mailing lists, Television, newspapers etc.

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kanarinka: What do you mean by the term "nomadic poems"? What do

you think is the relationship of the text in the poems submitted to space? I am particularly fascinated by the complex interplay that your project creates between space and the activities of "reading" and "writing". What are

1 of 2 22.08.25, 23:47

poetrica - critical texts

you thoughts on those relationships?

Beiguelman: They are nomadic poems because they do not have a link to a specific support. For instance: Those images produced in the teleintervention were also transmitted back by on line webcams and reproduced in different devices (mobile phones, Palms, computers) and, in some cases, printed in large formats. All images are archived at the web site gallery.

Nevertheless, they result always in imagetic meanings independent of textuality and unlinked to their places of production and transmission. Everything that is created is seen, read and perceived in different ways, according to its reception context and this is not a consequence of the screen sizes to which the submitted images adhere. But due to a particular esthetic phenomenon pertaining to nomadic literature: on being hybrid and unlinked to support, it dematerializes the medium, and the interface construes itself as the message.

This is maybe the most interesting change in the ways in reading today. The nomadic reader is someone who reads on the move, in mobile phones and PDAs, in accordance to entropy and acceleration logic, it is a kind of multi-task reader adapted to distributed content who reads in between, while doing other things...

Poétrica seeks that reader: the inhabitant of the global city.

kanarinka: I am particularly interested in your work from the standpoint of the everyday activity of "reading". We all read billboards and advertisements every day of our lives, yet you are subverting the normal content of these consumer messages and inserting a new, "global" text into a local, specific context. How does this affect the "reading" activity that we conduct in our daily environment?

kanarinka: What are your thoughts on working in both real and virtual space? How and why do you choose to navigate both of these domains (or, perhaps more importantly, do you consider them separate?) Is the activity of "reading" different or altered across net space and/or public space?

Beiguelman: I do not consider them separate. Poétrica deals with cybridism, it means its default situation is a cross platform of numerous on and off line network (traffic, electricity, billboards, mobile phones, handhelds). And this, this "cybrid" state is what alters the activity of reading as an activity of dispersion and distribution rather than concentration and convergence.

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kanarinka: Have you had any unexpected responses or messages submitted to poetrica? What do you think is the space of "indeterminacy" in poetrica, e.g. what spaces did you as the artist leave open for participants to fill in?

I was surprised by the large number of love messages...

The indeterminacy is everywhere (connection, for example...) but I think the most interesting challenge of the project was to make people face the strange situation of hacking the advertisement structure as part of their public space signing it with non phonetic phrases that points to a new code, but a code they could understand and share with other participants.

kanarinka: What do you think is the role writing and reading in the urban landscape?

Beiguelman: It is one of the rules of the game... The metropolitan landscape today is a kind of photoshop image. Everything can be pasted to everything. The modernist dream is over and there is no logic neither formal logic. The lansdcape is so polluted by ads, signs, outdoors, banners and in cities like São Paulo, all covered by different grafitti _ a kind of visual guerrilla_ that you should be reading all the time. The city today is a palimpsest to be deciphered.

kanarinka: Could you explain more what you mean by teleintervention? Would you say that poetrica has a political agenda (i.e. what do you think that a teleintervention intervenes into)?

kanarinka: What are the dates/locations where poetrica will be shown?

Beiguelman: It was in SP from October to November. It is now at turbulence.org with ICONOgraphy_ curated by Patrick Lichty [http://www.turbulence.org/curators/icon/index.htm] ("only" net action) and it will be in Berlin next February, as part of P0eS1s project curated by Friedrich Block.

2 of 2 22.08.25, 23:47