3rd draft for a
Manifesto
of the artwork on computer

Antoine Schmitt 15.aug.1998 - 4.dec.1998

Seing that today artists are only consensual public entertainers or *artistic directors* for advertising agencies.

Seing that with the very commercial internet, the computer is used as a simple terminal, a malleable telephone-television, being used to promote a narrow social and communicational vision. Seing that in any case on the Web, reality outpasses all artistic actions, that art is lagging behind and that one must wait.

Seing that in all artistic fields, the computer is only used to create evolved montage, that is to juxtapose in space or in time visuals and/or audio shapes, in the postmodern linguistic conception which also constitutes the vein of the main part of the contemporary production. Seing that this vein has dwindled, that it has selfdestroyed, that it has become advertising, entertainment, diversion. Seing that today the computer is only used to make it last longer.

Seing that contemporary art only recycles the codes and the mecanisms of advertising. Like it, it imposes the image, vector of message, to the spectator. Or does the opposite, which amounts to the same. Seing that today's art identifies itself to a meta-fashion.

This manifest poses the computer as such as a new medium for artistic creation.

Cybernetics : "Study of the process of control and communication in the living beings, in the machines, and in the sociological and economical systems. Word created by Norbert Wiener in 1948." (Larousse Dictionnary). Cybernetics, by its rooting in social sciences, offers a point of view that is new and fresh on human nature. If art is about the human being and humanness, art must consider cybernetics, from which were born the computer and algorithms. It is a duty. A duty that questions the artistic practice in its aspect of production of passive artworks. The matter is to consider the questionnings stemming from the actual nature of the computer, what it has been invented for : its nature of universal machine, capable of becoming the place of existence of any system, that is of all temporal process, whatever its complexity or its simplicity.

A realtime simulation on a computer (the functionning of a program) is a non-virtual reality, that is neither potential, nor imaginary, nor parallel, nor projected, nor fictional, but well present and effective in the instant. The simulation on computer is the existence of a real process, having effects. The proces exists and is. The effects are perceived. There is creation of a relationship between the process and the spectator, through the effects and their perception, the actions and the reactions.

This peculiar relation to time makes the computer a medium of creation differing radically from its passive predecessors. The creation of autonomous systems existing in time and in relation to their environment, using arbitrarily malleable algorithms, rules and models allows us to consider our own condition of behavioral and interacive being. Time becomes matter. The spectateur - or the performer - is involved in his flesh, here and now. The artwork on computer becomes partner.

Thus, the computer and the algorithms constitute a medium of creation, a radically new tool for analysis and action which questions the notion of artwork itself. It is an active and existing medium by opposition to passive and predetermined mediums like cinema, photography, video, painting, sculpture, written music, choreography, in short absolutely all forms of artistic expression except the ones involving an improvisation in front of the spectators.

Today some create, using classical mediums, fictions that are also realities, in which improvisation holds al large part, this way questionning the same mediums that they use. But they have the strength, the easiness, of only criticizing existing mediums. Here, the matter is to create a new medium. To place it. The task is immense.

Thus so :

To overcome the complacent and easy usage of the computer to do differently what is already being done in cinema, in video, in photography, on paper. To overcome montage.

To overcome the usage of the computer as a tool to create images, sounds, musics. To overcome the special effects. To overcome illusion.

To overcome passive mediums, vectors and materials for imposition of will. To overcome illustration. To overcome the showing of predetermined images and musics. To overcome the manipulation of the spectator.

To forget the race for technology, simple reflection of the ephemerical ambient consumerism. (As the notion of computer artwork is totally disconnected from the one of technology, of power, of computing speed or any other technological "breakthrough". The most simple computes can be sufficient to the existence of an artwork. The question of the means gathered must be subordinated to the one of the necessity for the artwork. Technology is not a criteria. This will become obvious when technology will allow the real time processing of images and sounds of cinema quality, which will be soon. At that moment, the technological race will stop and this will become obvious).

To not fall back in the pitfall of pure comcept.

We institute the following rules:

The existence of an artowrk on computer must satisfy the following criteria :

• To not contain images, sequences of images, sounds, musics, words, phrases, in short shapes that could be qualified of signifier as such relatively to the totality. Only include micro-fragments, micro-phonems, micro-samples.

• The assemblies, transformations, metamorphosis, transitions, juxtapositions, evolutions, of the fundamental images and/or sounds are fully controlled by the program or programs. There is no pre-written score or scenario.

• The artwork is constituted mainly by the temporal process implemented (realized from the model) by the program. The process, the visual and audio shapes through which it is perceived and the stimuli that it can receive all concur symbiotically to the globality of the artwork. If there is a signifier, it cannot be exclusively attributed to the shapes, the stimuli of the process, but it results from the relationships between these. In particular, the process *does not generate* shapes (images, sequences, sounds, music, word, phrases) that are signifiers in themselves relatively to the totality.

• The process is immerged in real time. It exists here and now.

• The process is essentially autonomous. It is not a purely controlled instrument with which one plays, nor a purely reactive system. In particular, it can contain elements, fundamental or superficial, that are random.

• No technological criteria is needed, except that the artowrk must exist on one or more computers.