Open the Museum's Gates to Pirates

Hacking for the Sake of Digital Art Preservation

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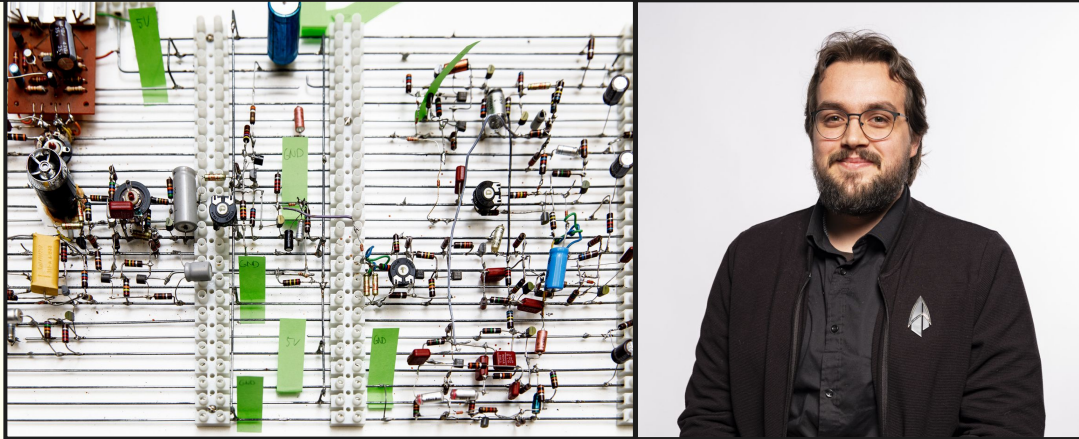# ZKM | Center for Art and Media

ZKM cross-disciplinary team

- electro-mechanical and IT engineers,
- registrars,
- restorers,
- media specialists,
- art historians,
- researchers

Matthieu Vlaminck

an autodidact tinkerer, programmer, and hacker

the preservation of art collection to follow the same procedure of experimentation

Rhizome Artbase

Making online artworks accessible

when they are no longer compatible with contemporary systems

Artbase

RHIZOME / ArtBase   About   Browse   Query   FAQ   User Guide

Welcome to the Rhizome ArtBase

This is an archive of **born-digital artworks** from 1983 to the present day. A small sample of artworks are shown below; you can also browse the archive by date or by artist name.

Some entries in this archive include external links to artworks maintained by artists or others. Some contain archived copies, hosted on Rhizome infrastructure. All of these, as well as forms of documentation, are called *variants*—distinct manifestations of the artwork, all accessible via the main artwork page.

| The Thing BBS | 1991 |
| Wolfgang Staehle | |

| Little Movies | 1994 |
| Lev Manovich | |

| Weightless Sculpture Project | 199 |
| Martin Sjardijn | |

Bar Code Hotel - Perry Hoberman (1994)

Unsupported disk

sound program, Max FAT 3.5, needed the original master floppy disk

Solution from the developers forum

"encouraged" other users to crack Max's older versions by illegally removing the copy protection

Copies and proliferation are certainly not part of software companies' business strategy.
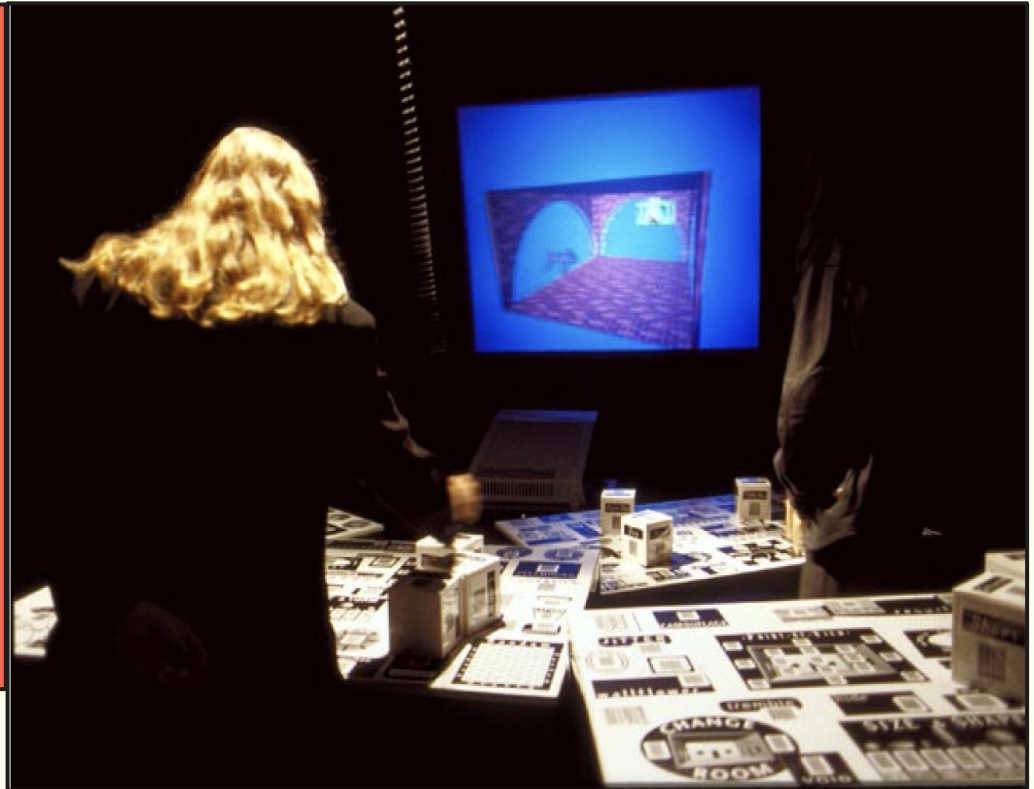
PIRACY AND FOLK PRESERVATION

Piracy

"historically we know that piracy has helped guarantee the survival of important works of literature and art"

Fork preservation

"preservation that is amateur rather than professional; distributed rather than centralized; and unauthorized rather than authorized"

Unreliable archivists

"Much as professional conservators might fear an army of amateurs, they have kept their culture alive without any institutional mandate or managerial oversight"

Cracking Max FAT 3.5

disabling the section of code checking for a valid master floppy disk

This is an unauthorized copy. Please insert the original master disk into any available drive.

Cancel

Remote Control - Shane Cooper

(1999)

Closed Alive!

Uses commercial 3D rendering software named Alive!
Requires a new license to install the artwork on another machine

Faking HostID

Make Alive! "believe" that it is still on the original machine

Crack makes it possible to install the software on as many spare computers as needed

SOCIAL HACKING

The public to actively keep the artworks alive

Help to think about power relationships between corporations and users

Think as distributed as the companies are centralized.

net.art generator - Cornelia Sollfrank

(1999)

Limitations with search engine APIs

Google terminated the free unlimited access, discontinued its special conditions for non-profit and cultural organizations

Crowd API

By donating their ID key to ZKM or to Cornelia Sollfrank, the public would actively keep the artwork alive.

Conclusions

Finding skilled persons for digital art preservation is hard

But, communities of amateurs are able to safeguard their own heritage for more than twenty years.

Sharing is the key

ZKM calls to all institutions and museums committed to preserve their digital art collections to build a sharing platform.

Copyleft spirit

Portions of code, patches to crack unsupported software.. for the whole community.

Thank you!