

# EDITORIAL

In September 1997 the First Cyberfeminist International took place in the Hybrid Workspace at Documenta X, in Kassel, Germany. 37 women from 12 countries participated. It was the first big meeting of cyberfeminists organized by the Old Boys Network (OBN), the first international cyberfeminist organisation.

OBN is dedicated to Cyberfeminism. Although cyberfeminism has not been clearly defined--or perhaps because it hasn't--the concept has enormous potential. Cyberfeminism offers many women--including those weary of same-old feminism--a new vantage point from which to formulate innovative theory and practice, and at the same time, to reflect upon traditional feminist theory and practice.

The concept of Cyberfeminism immediately poses a lot of questions. The most important ones are: **1.** What is Cyberfeminism? What is hidden behind the fusion of "cyber" and "feminism"? **2.** What does Cyberfeminism have to do with Feminism? Will the addition of "cyber" give good old feminism another chance to fly, or is there a possibility for completely new content and new challenges? **3.** How do cyberfeminists deal with the new technologies?

In order to start a discussion and possibly find answers to the above formulated questions, OBN decided to invite cyberfeminists from all over the world to a real life meeting. As expected, we couldn't agree on one definition of Cyberfeminism, but agreed NOT to define the term. The strategy of keeping the term as open as possible was consensual. As a substitute for a definition The First Cyberfeminist International formulated the „100 Anti-Theses“ (see last page).

The "feminism" in Cyberfeminism is obvious, it cannot be overlooked. And that's as it should be. Feminism's heritage is our life-blood, but its institutionalization in public life and in the academies makes it inaccessible to most women today. In addition, the mass women's movement of former years has been fragmented into a bewildering variety of feminisms. Identifying oneself as a woman is no longer enough to serve as a productive connecting link. We have to find new strategies for political action.

The new technologies have provided a powerful new imperative for the feminist discussion. On the one hand new technologies provoke a discussion, because they are historically male dominated, but on the other hand, they also contain new means and methods of fundamentally questioning received role models and power structures, of deconstructing concepts of subjectivity--as feminist theory has demanded already long before the raise of digital media.

## Who is OBN and what do they do?

The Old Boys Network was founded in Berlin in spring 1997 by Susanne Ackers, Julianne Pierce, Valentina Djordjevic, Ellen Nonnenmacher and Cornelia Sollfrank. OBN consists of a core-group of 3-5 women, who take responsibility for administrative and organisational tasks, and a worldwide network of associated members.

OBN's concern is to build spaces in which we can research, experiment, communicate and act. One example is the infrastructure which is being built by OBN. It consists of a cyberfeminist Server (currently under construction), the OBN mailing list and the organisation of Real-Life meetings. All these activities have the purpose to give a contextualized presence to different

artistic and political formulations under the umbrella of Cyberfeminism. Furthermore we create and use different kinds of spaces, spaces which are more abstract. They grow out of the confusion which results through the interaction between virtual and real identities.

This Reader is a documentation of the First Cyberfeminist International and contains the lectures, texts, and works which were presented at the event. The meeting covered a whole range of approaches and perspectives, but it never claimed to be all-encompassing. Many important approaches are missing, but you are welcome to contribute to the next Cyberfeminist International.

At the initiative of Corrine Petrus from Rotterdam we are planning to hold the Second Cyberfeminist International in Rotterdam in March 1999. We look forward to a lively participation.

Cornelia Sollfrank  
Old Boys Network (boys@obn.org)

The Hybrid Workspace was a project initiated by Catherine David in collaboration with the Berlin Biennale, and located in the Orangerie in Kassel. The intention was to transform the Orangerie into a temporary media laboratory for the collection, generation, evaluation, cross-fertilization and dissemination of information and content. Those responsible for the organization and curation of the Hybrid Workspace included Eike Becker, Geert Lovink, Pit Schultz, Micz Flor, Thorsten Schilling, Heike Foell, Thomax Kaulmann, and others.

Additional thanks to:  
all who made our meeting possible, especially Geert Lovink for the invitation as well as (lovely) Thorsten Schilling, who supported us during our residency at the workspace with much patience and humor.

Special thanks to Diana McCarty and Faith Wilding for proof-reading and Tilman Baumgärtel for his support.

As well, our thanks go to the Berlin Senate Ministry for Scholarship, Research, and Culture, the Cultural Office of the City of Hamburg, and the Australian Council for the Arts, who provided the financial resources to make the First Cyberfeminist International possible. A grant from the Cultural Office of the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg provided partial funding for the production of this reader.



**International Cyberfeminist Organisation**

@ Hybrid WorkSpace  
(Eike Becker, Geert Lovink/Pit Schultz, Micz Flor,  
Heike Noell, Thorsten Schilling, Thomax Kaul-  
mann and many others)

@ Berlin Biennale  
(Klaus Biesenbach, Hans Ulrich Obrist,  
Nancy Spector)

@ documenta X  
(Catherine David)

\*\*\*\*\*  
call for contribution  
\*\*\*\*\*

## Targetting content: **CYBERFEMINISM**

There are countries, where Cyberfeminism has had a long life and there are countries where Cyberfeminism has never had a life. Germany belongs to the latter...

Cyber and Feminism — two terms coined through recent history, ideology and evangelism. What happens when these two words collide? Cyberfeminism is a new and promising term. It suggests a fresh ideology, embracing the notions of "cyber" and "feminism" and all they signify. It creates a space for women to invent, dissect and alter the trajectories of the new technological and information era.

Cyberfeminism....      Fresh ideology?  
                                    New code of behaviour?  
                                    Artistic playground?  
                                    Semiotic straightjacket?

The Old Boys' Network CONTENT strategy will be:

- collect material from literature, art and the media
- analyse and select the material
- connect people, ideas and machines
- connect the past and future
- produce new material in a variety of media
- distribute information utilising all available networks

For these purposes the Old Boys' Network will be expanded to include eXXperts from all over the world. Date: 20-28th of September, 1997

contact the Old Boys Network -- obn@icf.de

<http://www.obn.org>

This call for contribution has been published in June 1997 via different mailing-lists. Please note: The e-mail address obn@icf.de is no longer valid!

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# DIARY AND IMPRESSIONS

## hybrid workspace, kassel, september 20-28, 1997

### Saturday, September 20

Our week in the Hybrid Workspace started on Saturday, with an Opening Dinner. The dinner was organized by Kathy Rae Huffman and Eva Wohlgemuth in the tradition of the FACE SETTING dinners (see page 78), and took place in the Hybrid Workspace. Faith Wilding contributed a selection of food and dinner slides from the (feminist) art context. As most of the women who came together for the Cyberfeminist International did not know each other before, this was a good opportunity to get to know each other at an informal dinner.



Vali, setting up our computers

### Sunday, September 21

We had already started to set up the Workspace for our purposes on Saturday afternoon, and proceeded on Sunday morning. The flexible interior design allowed each group to have an individual set up. We had to arrange chairs, tables, couches, partition walls, projectors and computers. As we didn't want to be disturbed too much by the documenta x audience running in and out, we choose a set up in the beginning, which completely separated the lecturing and presenting cyberfeminists from the audience. But all our presentations were projected live onto a big wall in the public part of the Workspace. This was an experiment. We did not know if it would work-- for the audience and for us.

The Sunday program started at 3 p.m. with Shu Lea Chaeng. She wanted to show her current project „BRANDON“ (see page 41), but unfortunately we couldn't connect to the server in Canada where it was hosted. Therefore we improvised an interview between



Tamara, Barbara, Rasa and Vesna in the computer backspace

Shu Lea and Julianne Pierce. They talked about the origins and the background of her work. After that, Claudia Reiche gave her lecture „Feminism is digital“ (see page 24) which was accompanied with a lot of slides and very entertaining

clips from

the movies „Glen and Glenda“ and „The Blob“. Then Margarete Jahrmann gave her presentation on Avatars (see page 52) , Debra Solomon showed us her ongoing project "the\_living" (see page 56), which documents and broadcasts the daily life activities of a female digi-persona." Living, communicating, creating and being part of a live-experience herself she attempts to "be in the present" while simultaneously relaying her experience to her remote audience through streaming video and chat. „The\_living is hyper-living, living more than once, at once."

On Sunday evening from 11 to 1 AM, Josephine Bosma hosted the Cyberfeminist radio show. Josephine had prepared several interviews with FACES members and broadcasted parts of them interspersed with live commentary and intense discussion with studio guests which included Diana McCarty, Alla Mitrofanova, Julianne Pierce, Verena Kuni, Josephine Starrs, and Debra Solomon. This program will be online available as Real Audio file from the Site of Radio Internationale Stadt ([www.orang.orang.de/culture](http://www.orang.orang.de/culture)).

### Monday, September 22

After a short organizing meeting on Monday morning, we sat around the tables making up questions for Diana McCarty's quiz show "Who is that girl?" This turned into a really fun and funny session in which all of us dug into our various knowledge banks about the history of women's achievements and activities. We came up with almost 50 questions.

Our public program in the afternoon started with a presentation "Diagnostic Tools for the New Millenium"



Helene and Ellen, publishing the latest statistics



Daniela, formalizing conflicts

by Josephine Starrs (see page 54) who began by showing a 10 minute film "White" (made in collaboration with

Francesca di Rimini) which attempts to depict a state of madness. Josephine also distributed her "dating" questionnaire, Fuzzy Love, which is part of her online dating service Web site. "The desire for information seems to be reaching fetishistic proportions," she said. She also spoke about the high states of paranoia which the new technologies are creating in people, and showed us some of the "death interfaces" on the Internet which play on these paranoias.



After the Opening Dinner

Next, it was time for the Who is that Girl? quiz show. We set this up like a TVquiz show with 3 volunteer contestants from the audience and Diana (as Zelda, the Faces plant who knew the answers). Julianne Pierce acted as host, and Thorsten Schilling, one of the organizers of the Workspace, was the hostess who handed out the prizes. This was great fun, with many of the Faces sprinkled through the audience hooting and hollering and cheering people on. The questions proved to be extremely hard for the audience (no big surprise here, we all know that women's history is still not a topic of general knowledge)--amazingly no one could even answer the question: Who was the first woman Curator of Documenta? Our own Diana won the prize of a bottle of Cyberspace Perfume handed to her by the lovely Thorsten. The event was our best interaction with the audience to date.

The third session on Monday afternoon was Verena Kuni's talk: „The future is femail“ (see page 13). The theoretical part of this talk addressed some of the "utopic myths" of the Internet, for example, that the Net gets rid of hierarchies because there is a free interchange of information across boundaries; and the myth that the Net is non-gendered because you can be anyone you want to be in cyberspace. Verena ended by showing us some sample women's WEB pages and looking at some of the tropes (especially that of the supersexed cyborg femme, and the 50's cartoon model from cut and paste zines "tupperware aesthetics") which

appear repeatedly.

After a short pause we began a discussion which was initiated by Susanne Ackers who briefly recalled some of the different positions taken in three texts (Josephine Bosma's "What are words worth?", Wilding and CAE's "Notes Toward a Political Condition of Cyberfeminism", and Susanne's response to these pieces) which have been part of the Faces postings and discussions on feminism/cyberfeminism. The discussion finally broke up because of violent hungerpangs and most of us went to have a good meal at a spanish restaurant.

### Tuesday, September 23

On Tuesday morning we spent more than an hour doing stretching excercises and learning about RSI (repetitive stress injury) under the expert and gentle guidance of Josephine Bosma. She strongly counsels all of us to pay attention to what is happening to our bodies and to take action right away to change our workhabits. It was pointed out that the damaging relationship between bodies and computer work is also a political issue which should be addressed by us at another time. Thank you, Josephine, for an instructive and relaxing time-out.....

In the afternoon we continued our public presentations with Alla Mitrofanova's lecture „cyber/net/schizo feminist embodiment“ (see page 33), a conversation between Pit Schultz (one of the organizers of the Hybrid Workspace



Diana



Claudia



Vesna J.



Maggie



Susanne, lecturing



Lunch break

and co-founder of the mailing list Nettime" and Julianne Pierce and Kerstin Weiberg's presentation of „Dona Matrix" (see page 58).

Our closed CF discussion centered on trying to identify what the important topics were that we are here to talk about. We discussed the interview with Pit and talked further about our relationship to nettime (which is a very close and permeable yet also problematic one). Then Cornelia Sollfrank asked: Why are we here, and what do we want from this week? Ideas and topics flowed thick and fast and we were not able to discuss them all in detail. Some of the topics: We agree that we do not want any definitions or consensus on cyberfeminism. Instead we might come up with a list of 100 anti-theses or non-definitions. We want to create platforms and strategies for transmitting the ideas and presence of cyberfeminism. These might include a letter to festivals, venues, and museums offering cyfem workshops, presentations, speakers and artprojects. We want to be provocative and produce chaos, surprise, intensity, texts, appearances, works. Some of us want to develop a politics of cyberfeminism which connects to issues facing women globally. The evening ended on a note of excitement and



Vesna's Birthday Party

optimism and the promise that we will begin on specific taskforces (such as the public relations TF tomorrow).

### Wednesday, September 24

After organisatorial meetings of the Task Force Groups in the morning, we started the Wednesday program with Rena Tangens' presentation of „Der Druckertreiber". For this documentary film, which she had made together with Barbara Thoens, she had asked different computer specialists and hackers for a definition of printer driver (Druckertreiber) (see page 69). The activist section was continued by Corrine Petrus and Mathilde Mupe who talked about their experiences with the Webgrlls in Holland and reported on female computer handling (see pages 74 and 76). After that we had a conversation between Dorothea Franck and Babeth about „Media as Social sculpture" (see page 80), a concept which goes back to ideas about Social Sculpture of Joseph Beuys.

### Thursday, September 25

On Thursday we had another day of glorious fall weather. Most of us were beginning to feel much more comfortable and happy at the Hybrid Workspace. Our nomadic workspace home is self-organizing as cyfems gather around 11 AM every day to clean up, plan the day, prepare their presentations, work on their taskforces, teach each other new nettricks, check their e-mail, and smoke (or fight with the nonsmoker-a nonsmokerxx).



Audience

Unfortunately the architect had forgotten to integrate a kitchen or cooking facility in the Workspace. So even the supply with tea and coffee was a problem during the whole week. Everything had to be prepared somewhere else and then brought to the Workspace. We wonder what architects live on, when they work...

Good News: The night before, we had our first live video connection on enhanced CU\_SeeMe, and after five minutes we were asked to show our tits. So we showed them the (.) (.) stickers and they were a big hit. So now we've added a new sign to the cyberlexicon.

On Thursday we continued our experiment with opening up the private part of the workspace to the public during our presentation time between 3 and 6 pm. It was very interesting how much time we had spent thinking about and experimenting with our interface with the public, who was incredibly curious about what we were doing in here. This experiment worked pretty well, most of the people who came in stayed, behaved well, and seemed to be quite interested in the presentations.



Unknown Cross Dressers, at the Gender Bending Party (everybody with a dress or skirt was welcome)

This afternoon we started with the presentation of Sabine Helmers' „Enter Hack Mode“ (see page 65), a fancy little film made of stills, about the HIP (Hacking in Progress) Festival, which had taken place in Holland one month before. This film is a kind of a field research about a tribe called „Hackers“. After that Cornelia Sollfrank continued with her talk „Who invented the Information Superhighway“. In her lecture Cornelia gave a little history of the term which demonstrated how propaganda influences politics in the time of the information age. After that we learned from Susanne Ackers how to hack art history. „Language versus numbers“ was the title of her lecture (see page 39). On Thursday evening we did not go out, but had nice Italian food in the Workspace and celebrated Vesna's birthday.

### Friday, September 26

The public session on Friday started with Ingrid Molnar's lecture „Bordercrossing Feminism\_Cyberfeminism“ (see page 81). For this one-hour presentation Ingrid was in front of the camera, whereas usually you could find her behind the camera, documenting the whole event on video, together with Gudrun Teich. After that we had the conversation between Faith Wilding and Vesna Jankovic who talked about feminism and cyberfeminism and the anti-war campaign in Croatia (see page 71). Then Barbara Strebel offered us her very instructive research about health care for virtual travellers (see page 50). Daniela Plewe closed this afternoon with the demonstration of her work in progress „Ultima Ratio“ (see page 42). Before we headed off for the Spanish Restaurant, we had to start with the preparation for the big party on Saturday...

### Saturday, September 27

Before we started the public session on Saturday, we gave the official press conference at 11 a.m. The whole set up was different that day. Basically we had already arranged the space for the party, opening up all the partition walls. So we had full contact with the audience, and as it was weekend, this meant that hundreds of people would visit the workspace this afternoon. For the afternoon program we had chosen very entertaining presentations which would allow the intellectually highly demanded documenta audience to relax a little bit and have fun with the cyberfeminists. We started with a dance performance of our Serbian colleagues Nina and Vesna Manojlovic, followed by the conspiracy driven

lecture „Spiderfeminism“ by Helene von Oldenburg, who showed us that the nets we are currently using are nothing but a preparation for the rule of the real networkers, the arachnids (see page 46). We finished the lecturing and presenting in the Hybrid Workspace week with another version of the very popular game show „Who's that girl?“. Obviously the week-end audience was better educated, or more dedicated to feminist history, sometimes the whole crowd was shouting the answers.

After this highlight, another followed: The Gender Bending Party. We had distributed our invitations all over the place, and were looking forward to all the men who would show up in dresses or skirts, because this was the requirement for the party. In order to help out those men who didn't have access to a dress or skirt and not allow any excuses, we offered a big selection of dresses and skirts at the entrance door (borrowed from the Red Cross). Everybody could rent one for the night. With a few exceptions, all men took the opportunity and followed our request. DJ T-Ina took care for the sound (see page 84), Gudrun Teich's video installation „Dolled-up“ was screened upon the Workspace walls (see page 82), and we were dancing until early in the morning...

### Sunday, September 28

The next day, Sunday, was not only the last day of our week, but also the very last day of the documenta. After cleaning up the space, we opened only a little part for the public and showed pre-recorded material from the week. In the evening there was another radio-show, but only played material that Rasa Smite, from e-lab in Riga, Latvia, had collected and cut together during the week.

Exhausted and happy, we left Kassel and wondered what would follow after the First Cyberfeminist International...  
(Text: Faith Wilding, Cornelia Sollfrank)



Cornelia, cleaning the Workspace from Ideology

# manifesto no. 372

## delete the y chromosome? do the x?

# DO X

by Ulrike Bergermann

inspired by the women of the FACES-mailinglist

a message from your femalien from inner space no. 68



Dear Ladies and Gentleladies,

welcome to the most Hybrid Workspace this planet has ever evolved!

**Hybrid** has two meanings: first, the bastardization of areas, their sexual crossing, interbreeding, cross-breeding, mongrel-making. Secondly: being arrogant, exaggerated, daring, presumptuous, bold. So be welcomed... to adaring crossing of terms and beings.

**1. Feminism** has always been a cyborg, a notion that links rules and orientation (that is, cybernetics) to flesh and material (that is, bodies) in a way that is not considered to be natural -- but that questions the so-called **natural**.

We are org, organized organisms, because we is **language**, and that's how we pervaded you. The invasion started a long time ago -- your mother **tongue** invaded you as a baby -- writing always gets in your eyes, invented in matriarchal cultures long before the Egypt signs.

No, it is not the future of feminism that lies in cyborgs, cyberspace or cyberanything. Feminism itself has always been a cyborg, living in an alien space like the astronauts in the 1960s cosmos (where the term came up). Feminism is a **tactique** to move a matrix, a **technique** that **links** technique to a body, a body that links the body to technique: woman is the name for a specifically gendered body and at the same time the name for a kind of sign **processing**.

And feminism is what questions sentences beginning with \*xy is...\*. Feminism is the name of a **strategy** that tries to avoid essentialist terms but does not avoid using these terms, aiming at a non-essentialist mode.

Media theory and feminist activism both have to deal with the question of **representation** (how do words in a definition represent content, how do political subjects represent themselves, or: how representational structures are ahead of any content...). So there can be no such thing as a definition, not even communication about it, not even thinking about it, without the question of translating content into words or other signs, rather: questioning of this linear model of translation, of what is supposed to be translation of something previous (like the so-called real life) that may indeed be before (I am a word).

Now you see why \*Feminism is a Cyborg\*, the linking of technique and material, language. I am a word because *Each component (of a body as well as of language) can be linked or wired to any other, if there is a code that enables the exchange of signals in a common way* (Donna Haraway), because *Gender is electronic text* (Sadie Plant), because of the Cyborg: *She is a hypertext, not readable in a linear way, without end or beginning* (Katherine Hayles).



## 2. Feminism is about signs.

Feminism is the potential to understand. Not because of women being so understanding and understandable. Feminism is the **potential**(ity) of word processing. Understanding means: to understand differently. Differences are the condition of any communication, because it enables to tell one sign from the other. Meaning is based on **difference**, and we are going to give some very different meaning to you.

You may consider feminism as the activity eg. of the web, of the work caused by TCP/IP, as a translating and transporting process - but not in an essentialist sense, based on considerations of multitasking or breeding like: Women have always been busy in the household managing parallel tasks, or: Women as mothers are naturally suited for creating, producing..., because this way \*woman\* would remain the product of biological and social norms, defined by the old categories, instead of deconstructing them.

There are such things like women's issues: because the internet is made of words, and that's why the feminist theoretical tradition of considering the making of words, meaning, text or hypertext finds a space here that is different from everyday life (while of course everyday life can also be described as a product of symbolic structures). A medium that consists of different codes (letters, HTML codes, bits and bytes, down to the positive or negative voltage of disk and wire segments) is mostly apparent to be worked in + on when it comes to the topic of **codes** (codes that make up women: make up/no make up, clothes, children/no children, woman/weman/ wiman/waman...).

Feminism is the name of a processing model and a practice, of an ideology as well as of a new way of linking signs, combining notions, understanding the world. That does not mean that any given subject only must acquire the right intention to join in. This is not about **subjects** and intentions. Not about **genitals** either, but on the cultural effects of genitals as words or social systems.

It focuses on questioning centers like the self. It does not focus at all but deconstructs the metaphoricities inherent in the systems by using them upon themselves.

So that cyberfeminism is a **figure**: a model of how sign processing works (which is political: politics consist of signs), a corpse of discourses, a shape of things to come (see illustrations). \*Weibliches als Verfahren\*, femininity as processing (as proposed by Marianne Schuller and Eva Meyer) aims to work on the process of the creation of meaning in text, yet referring from this apparently formal side to what is called content by naming a certain practice with the word feminine, so that the duality of form and content becomes doubtful. Woman is an effect of word processing. Woman effects word processing.

## 3. DO THE X

In these sentences, you are asked to keep on writing the body sign of female genes: X X X

Do not use the old DOS command to delete (d), do not d the x. You might want to delete the y chromosome. Then x-ray and cross out the delete order. Signs can be rewritten, what is deleted will not really leave, so just cross out whatever hinders processing. Don't try to extinguish. Rewrite the command: let d mean do.

Then: **DO THE X**. Mark what has to be deconstructed, rewritten, combined newly.

**Sign now.**



Julianne Pierce

# INFO HEAVY CYBER BABE

In 1991, in a cosy Australian city called Adelaide, four bored girls decided to have some fun with art and French feminist theory. Creating themselves as a mini corporation, VNS Matrix, they made their first text/artwork 'A cyberfeminist manifesto for the 21st Century'; with homage to Donna Haraway they began to play around with the idea of cyberfeminism. As with many corporate slogans, cyberfeminism caught on, and like a wave of grrrl glory it spread its tentacles to many far reaching places.

Beginning as if by spontaneous combustion, from a few hot nodes in Europe, America and Australia, cyberfeminism became a viral meme infecting theory, art and the academy. It arose as a response to popular culture -- video games, the internet and especially Gibson's notion of cyberpunk. If the new breed of techno-cowboys could jack-in at will, well so could the grrrls. And with a vengeance, girls got digital and used the language of the new techno-culture to create their own conceptual vanguard.

Cyberfeminism was about ideas, irony, appropriation and hands-on skilling up in the data terrain. It combined a utopic vision of corrupting patriarchy with an unbounded enthusiasm for the new tools of technology. It embraced gender and identity politics, allowing fluid and non-gendered identities to flourish through the digital medium. The post corporeal female would be an online frontier woman, creating our own virtual worlds and colonising the amorphous world of cyberspace.

This first version of cyberfeminism was a flame, a moment, a spam which became hip. It was an impulse which became a commodity.

Cyberfeminism is an incredibly important 'movement', it somehow embraces a growing groundswell of activism and access for women using all forms of digital media. It is certainly a 'feminism', as it advocates that women participate in creating and defining the present and future of techno culture. But somehow the 'feminism' is the problem, some of the old guard see it as a vacuous

fashion statement (a sort of cyberspice), and the young guard don't need feminism anymore. So in this time of labels and brand names, perhaps we should abandon 'cyberfeminism'. There is no longer one cyberfeminism, there are now many cyberfeminisms -- as it grows and mutates and is adapted by the growing number of digital tribes.

The updated version of cyberfeminism is more about networking, webgrrrls, geek girls, FACES, OBN, online publishing, career prospects, list servers and international conferences. It's about Hybrid Workspace and the 100 anti-theses, it's about getting grants and funding to create opportunities to meet and make work. It's about training and creating opportunities, making money, doing business and doing deals. It's embracing diversity and difference, being opinionated, being loud and at times staying quiet. But the key to all of this is information, in the information society, to get ahead you must control the commodity. Information is political, it's a weapon, and the more knowledge we have, the more powerful we are.

The early heady days of cyberfeminism created a space where the imagination could fire, gender could be re-written and the promise of the post human released us from

the drudgery of post modern identity crisis. These spaces are important for dreaming, for creating a space for otherness -- but while we confront our subjectivities, Bill Gates is making \$500 a second. Big Daddy is flourishing and the suits control the data stream. The new cyberfeminism is about confronting the top-down with the bottom-up, creating a culture where the info heavy cyber babe can create her own space within a complex and clever info society. It's about creating foundations to build upon, so that in the next millennium we can carve our own paths, create our own corporations... in the words of VNS Matrix -- „unbounded, unleashed, un-forgiving... we are the future cunt“.



# CYBERFEM.ORG

## Are there any feminist (counter)strategies in electronic space?

At the beginning of my interest in 'cyberfem.org' I asked myself two questions:

- What do feminist approaches to the electronic space look like, approaches which not only react to new media and communications technologies, but which also use them for their own purposes?
- Is there any feminist location in 'electronic space' working with current techno-theories without supporting their intrinsic techno-determinisms?

„Cyberfeminism is a promising new wave of (post)feminist thinking and practice“  
(Faith Wilding and the Critical Art Ensemble)

Feminist artists and theorists view their media production as an attempt to attack patriarchal paradigms of new media technology in both criticising their sexist structure and yet re-animating them for their own uses. The basic question is whether it is possible to use technology against its original purposes which are serving the creation of hierarchic subject positions.

Cyberfeminism could mean an „up-to-date feminism“: while 'old' kinds of feminism emphasized a technophobic relationship with technology by calling technology a patriarchal instrument of power and control, is feminism with the new prefix 'cyber' right in the center of temporary discussions? This was at least the firm conviction of VNS Matrix, an Australian group of artists/media activists, who could be introduced as the 'inventors' of an explicit use of the term 'Cyberfeminism' and its implications:

**„Feminism must urgently be changed and adopted to the contemporary thinking, and cyberfeminism has brought up these issues into technology discourse which are important to women“**

(VNS-Matrix in an interview with Nova Delahunty at the ars electronica 96)

This statement leads to the question of whether 'actual' thinking is a desirable goal in itself and which thinking is deemed desirable and which not. It would be important to mention if actual thinking also includes criticism on actual situations -- does it support oppositional practice over a dominant use and theoreticisation of new media, or is its intention the re-working of a dominant cyberdiscourse? VNS Matrix used this provocative confrontation of 'new cyberfeminist theory/practice vs. oldfashioned critics' for the first time in advertising their

Cyberfeminism as an appropriation of the 'toys for boys', advocating a new connection between women and machines. Their manifestos, articles and artworks like the cd-rom 'All New Gen' proposed a model of a feminist counterpractice in electronic arts.

„Cyberfeminists are not anti-technology, on the contrary, they are technophiles and geeks who can't get enough of their machines“  
(Juliane Pierce, VNS Matrix)

Although VNS matrix could establish themselves as a critical voice in cyberspace, since their intense attacks were in opposition to a male-dominated computer(art) world, some of their messages like 'the clitoris is the direct line to the matrix' is a rather diffuse example of critique, trying to escape any concrete debates about the impacts of new technology: important questions such as access to cyberspace and repressive uses of media are being rather ironically answered :

**„We feel ourselves attached to the revolutionary underground and articulate our standpoint out of this perspective“**

„Technology is sexy“ (Sadie Plant)

Sadie Plant also tries to link women and technology in a new way; in her opinion Cyberfeminism also means an attack on patriarchal subject constructions.

„The male is basically becoming redundant.“

Plant confronts dominant fiction of technology with her very own story of technology and feminism. In 'the world's first cyberfem' webzine, 'geekgirl', she speaks in the tradition of technodeterminism, but in reverse:

„I'm working on cyberfeminism at the moment which suggests that there is an intimate and possibly subversive element between women and machines -- especially the new intelligent machines -- which are no longer simply working for man as women are no longer simply working for man (...). Capitalism, commodities, new machinery and women - all the things that served man's ends - are starting to pick up and go their own way. This is on a global scale.“

Plant's construction of cyberfeminism is about the idea of the end of patriarchy, since digital revolution will bring

the collapse of traditional gendered role models. Women are supposedly more appropriate in working with digital media because of their lack of an autonomous subject position which is threatened by new media technologies. Plant maintains they were conditioned to work as mediators, as in-betweens, not being one.

„Cyberspace is out of man's control - virtual reality destroys his identity, digitalization is mapping his soul and, at the peak of his triumph, the culmination of his machinic erections, man confronts the system he built for his own and finds it female and dangerous.“

Equating the development of machines with the development of feminist positions is at least since Friedrich Kittler's announcement of 'emancipation through typewriting', a classic model of connecting women with technology, however it opens the problem of a techno-deterministic point of view. In comparing the developing of 'autonomously' acting machines with the emancipation of women Plant commits herself to the myth of a feminine technology that women are especially symbiotic with.

In this point, Plant's theory is connected to Donna Haraway's metaphor of the female cyborg, an oppositional feminist figure. Haraway too wants to connect women with technology in a severe appropriation of technomyths. Whereas former cyborgs were created by men and through that defend their creators' capitalistic technology, the female cyborg offers a possibility for feminist politics. Unfortunately Haraway doesn't explain the forms of politics further...

„Let's take up the coding games!“  
Haraway stands for a feminist infiltration into the ... It is important to get competent in the field of digital media in order to challenge the prevailing authority.

Using the Internet could be seen as the preferred cyberfeminist strategy, as the Internet in general, is the desired object of divergent projections:  
Whether in the approach of a 'free market for free citizens' as in Californian Ideology or in propagating a Global Village with a Virtual Reality, where any real-life discriminations have vanished automatically, many approaches emphasize the emancipatory potential and the anti-hierarchical structure of digital communication networks. Sadie Plant calls the net a female technology since its structure destroys traditional male forms of communications in supporting female qualities like emotional binding.

„One of the great contradictions of Virtual Reality is that



doll yoko

it titillates our imagination, promising the marvels and wonders of a gender-free world whilst simultaneously reproducing some of the most banal, flat images of gender identity, but also class and race relations that you can think of.“ (Rosi Braidotti)

Cyberfeminism could offer a way out of determined use of technology. The problem was to enter cyberspace and create positions without repeating old mistakes: the feminist practices of counterstories could be an important tool for entering into the discourses about technology, but it's easy to go beyond the border of re-installing dichotomic myths and exclusions.

To „act-as-if“ could be a starting position for cyberfeminist acting:

„Feminist women who go on functioning in a society as female subjects in these postmetaphysical days of decline of gender dichotomies, act as if Woman was still their location.“ (Rosi Braidotti)

A kind of strategic essentialism is an important method to gain access to the electronic space:

„In so doing, however, they treat femininity as one option in a set of available poses, a set of costumes rich in history and social power relations, but not fixed or compulsory any longer. They simultaneously assert and deconstruct Woman as a signifying practice.“

Quotes from:

-- Faith Wilding and the Critical Art Ensemble:

<[www.obn.org/cfundef/condition.html](http://www.obn.org/cfundef/condition.html)>

-- vns matrix manifesto:

<<http://www.aec.at/meme/symp/contrib/vns.html>>

-- vns matrix:

<<http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns>>

-- Rosi Braidotti:

<<http://www.let.ruu.nl/womens-studies/rosi>>



VNS Matrix

# THE FUTURE IS FEMAIL

## Some Thoughts on the Aesthetics and Politics of Cyberfeminism

*„What intrigues me, is being alternative and completely conformist at the same time.“*

k.d. lang

### (0.1) Something like a preface

The following text mirrors the attempt to reproduce a lecture I gave not only „during“ but within the framework of a meeting of more than forty international artists, theorists and activists from thirteen countries: The First Cyberfeminist International; a meeting that took place during a warm September week in 1997, was framed within another framework: The Hybrid Workspace, which was framed by another framework: the documenta X. As my first lecture on Cyberfeminism had taken place only two and a half months ago, in the same city - Kassel -, but in a different framework, an interdisciplinary congress dealing with the relationships between media and arts, I was especially interested in the fact that for this second opportunity to discuss the same issue not only the context, but also the public had shifted significantly. Whereas my first Kassel lecture's public had been people working in the field of cultural sciences (i.e. art history, philosophy, literature, media theory), well trained in feminist theory, but for the most part newbies to the field of internet practice -- and most of them had never heard anything about Cyberfeminism before, my second Kassel lecture's public were artists as well as theorists more or less trained in feminist theory, but intimate with the internet - and more or less identifying with the issue of Cyberfeminism.

Consequently, I did not want to repeat my first lecture mechanically, but at the same time I was very curious if and how some of my theses would be discussed within a different framework and by a significantly different public. And as my talk centered on questions of visual representation of gender, I was especially interested to discuss my observations with those who - being artists (re-)presenting their work in the visual field of the World Wide Web - were themselves concerned with this issue in their everyday practice. Though there were fruitful discussions and face-to-face conversations following the talk, after leaving Kassel I was not „through“ with the issue at all, hence I continued to read, to think, to speak and to write about it. Because of this the task of contributing a documentation of my thoughts presented at Hybrid Workspace turned out to be more complicated than expected: though I'd already written it, I felt I would have to rewrite it again and again. To come to a point at last, I decided to handle my problem as follows: By adding further questions, discussions, references, scepticism, loss of enthusiasm, new enthusiasm and like between the lines, I tried to preserve the original talk for the main text as much as possible. Doing this, with respect to the original atmosphere of the talks determined by very different skills in the use of English corresponding to the fact that the majority of us were not native speakers I also dared literally to fall back upon my

own words and renounced a professional translation. I hope readers will excuse this and will be able to follow me on a rather bumpy and clumsy path anyway.

### (0.2) The Future is Femail!

Now, just to add an ad for Cyberfeminism - and to start with my Kassel starter, let us admit that...

The Future is Femail. This is a fact most men seem not to be capable of accepting - except in the case it is called Barbarella and has the body shape of Jane Fonda. Just look at the example shown in the first issue of Konr@d, the new computer zine of Gruner&Jahr publishers, where the data highway is transformed into a fashion portfolio starring Naomi Campbell, her eyes modestly cast down and her knees bent inwards, as a supersexy and supersexed female Cyborg.

One of the issues of Cyberfeminism should be to question how to get even with old-fashioned fantasies of that kind and to throw a pinch of sand into the gears of cybernetic bachelor's machines (Junggesellenmaschinen), how to finish off the damned sexist-machistic colonisation of Cyberspace...

### (1) The Internet: New Ground to Break?

New media tend to be decried as new ground to break, a kind of virgin soil waiting for conceptual and artistic reclamation, where all the carefully conserved and well traded structures and power politics cease to be valid either because they have not been able yet to gain a foothold or cannot be established for reasons of complete incompatibility anyway. Unfortunately, this is an all too simplistic view. As we can learn from other fields of practice, any medium is as new, open, fluid, revealing and/or revolutionary as the people it is used by - and any use of any kind of media is to be reflected within its context, especially within the sociological framework where it takes place. A new medium can become a tool to create new structures as well as a place to install them only if the users (and, what might be even more important, those who have access to the related resources) are interested in changes - and, given that interest, if they continue to succeed in looking after it for a while.

According to this no one will be surprised that any development as well as any use of new media is accompanied by pertinent utopias and myths. But it follows as well, that there won't be a media revolution for its own sake - hence if you want to change the world, there is still a lot to be done. The fundamental potential of a new medium will have to be discovered, claimed and defended.

If this can be claimed for any new media you choose, the relatively new medium internet and its graphic interface, the world wide web, shall not be deemed an exceptional case. Relating to the fact that in the first years (leaving out its prehistory in military technology) internet was

perceived as a kind of „underground“ technology where different cultural and social practices could take place, it is still being associated with a bunch of pertinent utopias or myths, two of which might be of special interest for everybody dealing with the theories and practices of Cyberfeminism:

**1.** The internet seems to allow and to support communication and exchange across borders and hierarchies in a way that enables its users to leave structures of power as established by other media (i. e. the one way structure of the so called mass media) behind. („Utopia of a non-hierarchical distribution and communication of information“)

**2.** The fact that normally net communication is based on language or a visual representation formed by the users themselves (the so-called net persona) suggests that one can communicate without respect to actual persons, and this would also mean: without reference to the bodily gender (the sex) of the person that communicates. („Utopia of a net-existence independent from real life sex“)

Taking both net-utopias literally, one could conclude that the internet as a new medium should be especially appropriate to encouraging women to act independently from the traditional, highly gender-coded hierarchies and systems of reference.

## (2) It's a Men's World

On the other hand many people perceive the internet as a space dominated by males, as a men's world. Why? Let's try out a quiz and quote some possible reasons:

**1.** „Women and technology“ - One of the current internet myths is that internet itself is a „male technology“ and because of this fact it is a male coded domain from the beginning - an assertion which is justified by the nexus between military technology and computer technology, i. e. the common history of these technologies which go back to the arpanet. This argument is being used by some essentialist or esoteric-minded Eco-Feminists as well as by all those who pronounce women peaceful by nature or for whatever reason being better than men only to cut them off from resources or to prevent them from filling leading positions.

This is sheer rubbish, of course. More serious is another argument referring to the current complex of pertinent phantasmata in the field of computer and internet technologies, especially fantasies in the course of which the computer is perceived as a kind of bachelor's machine. The subject of male technology „seems to work like a self fulfilling prophecy wherever it has to work as a motor for fantasies of exclusive professionalism - and this is the case wherever technology gadgets are sold as toys for boys“.

But of course, at this point we also could ask: Is it really a problem that women are ignored by the market?

**2.** „The real existing sexism“: Looking at the statistics, internet seems to be a male dominated domain indeed. At first glance, a closer look at the internet itself might confirm this impression: male dominated newsgroups, mailing list and so on. Personally, I do not believe in the importance of numerical proportions. When you look at a Harem, where quite a lot of women are grouped around one man, it is not interesting how many people of one or another gender are there to speak for themselves, it is the question of hierarchy, the possibility to speak that counts. Of course, it is still important to encourage women to use computer technologies and to show them how to use the internet for their own purposes. And of course this is still a problem of access to certain

resources (an unpaid housewife might have more problems to raise money for a personal computer, a modem, and internet access - and to gain some minutes to use it).

But once you have access to the internet you will discover another aspect of the fact that female voices are underrepresented in the internet (and at last one reason for it, too): the real existing sexism, from the special attention you are paid to the mean verbal harrasment you encounter almost wherever you log in with a female ID. Within the spreading branches of the World Wide Web we can find a growing world wide market for any kind of pornography, and whenever you feed your search engine with the key words „woman/women“ or „girl/girls“ you will be flooded immediately with thousands of URLs with pertinent offers.

**3.** „Old boys' club internet“: Last but not least let us take a look at the users. One could say: If computers and internet technology are being sold as toys for (old) boys, the World Wide Web is the playground, we'll say - as mentioned above - the most profitable soil for marketing strategies. But what about the people working in and with the internet, be it as microslaves, as engineers or as hackers, be it as artists or critics? Let us take a closer look at the „scene“ of net art and activism. At first sight, compared to other „scenes“ (i. e. the music business, the established art scene and art market, the universities and so on), the situation for women working in this field seems to be far better.

But taking the literature being published, the authors being printed, the lecturers being invited to and heard at bigger conferences, it is more than obvious that - especially in Europe - women are still underrepresented, especially in the range of important positions and well paid jobs. Even if you take the inevitable presence of male bigmouths for granted, one has to ask for the reasons why the traditional gender relations are still that vital in an area widely discussed as a „temporary autonomous zone“. One has to realize that, similar to his R.L. ancestors from the turn of the last century, the „Data Dandy“ however proud he may be of queering the space, will also continue practising misogyny as a traditional part of his radical chic. And if feminist critique is an important issue of net criticism, he will always be the better feminist.

As we have seen, far from being an undefined or neutral space where traditional structures and politics have lost their basis the internet is - as Kay Schaffer used to put it - a „contested zone“, a battlefield undermined by the same power politics and gender wars that are being fought everywhere else in our society. The question is how to deal with the new level of technology. At this point, Cyberfeminism becomes an issue of interest.

## (3) But what the hell is 'Cyberfeminism'? A definition beyond definitions

„At the same time as we started using the concept of Cyberfeminism, it also began to appear in other parts of the world. It was like a spontaneous meme which emerged at around the same time, as a response to ideas like 'cyberpunk' which were popular at the same time.“ (Julianne Pierce/VNS Matrix)

Cyberfeminism „is“ and „is not“, there are loads of definitions. No wonder that in the preparations for the „First Cyberfeminist International“ meeting during the dX harsh disputations flared up on the FACES mailinglist whenever the question „What is Cyberfeminism?“ came up. And no wonder at all that after one week of intense discussions and exchanges in the end there was no consensus manifesto, but a chain of one hundred „Anti-Theses“ that would tell you what Cyberfeminism is not.

But of course we have to ask ourselves if Cyberfeminism - once understood not only as a Zeitgeist phenomenon but as a movement or a tool - will be able to escape the corset of a (self-)definition instead of installing or incorporating itself as a „model“, and as such as a „tangible“ body of discourses that finally will be rated, gendered, sexualized and put in a corset again.

Indeed the discourses on the issue in the current practices seem to prove the absolute heterogeneity of possible Cyberfeminisms, and they can show in how many different ways possible concepts of Cyberfeminism can be defined, discussed and brought into practice. This kept in mind, we have to ask: Is Cyberfeminism nothing but a poor attempt to sum up feminist activities on the net?

But how to deal with the gestures of rejection Cyberfeminists articulate against „traditional feminism“? And what about a possible critique of Cyberfeminism that could be stated from the so called „traditional feminist“ point of view?

We will have to take a closer look to the theoretical framework of Cyberfeminism, where the issue was brought up prominently by the British cultural theorist Sadie Plant. As Plant put it in an interview with RosieX from Geekgirl magazine, her point of departure for a theory of Cyberfeminism was the impression that „there is an intimate and possibly subversive element between women and machines - especially the new intelligent machines - which are no longer simply working for man as women are no longer simply working for man.“ In consequence, she describes Cyberfeminism as an alliance developed between women, machinery and the new technology that women are using. It seemed to me a lot of women really love this type of technology and because of the 'toys for boys' complex it was curious that they did. I thought women should be encouraged to go with their desire, to start with I simply used the word 'Cyberfeminism' to indicate an alliance. A connection. Then I started research on the history of feminism and the history of technology. It occurred to me that a long standing relationship was evident between information technology and women's liberation. You can almost map them onto each other in the whole history of modernity. Just as machines get more intelligent, so women get more liberated!“

Following Plant, this correlation is being based on the fact that from the beginnings in a male dominated culture „women have always been the machine parts“ being „the means of reproducing the species, reproducing communications [...] which is obviously similar to the role of machines and tools.“ Regarding this connection as a cultural heritage, women should take it as a positive opportunity to use the alliance to technology as a basis for liberation. Even more radical is Plant's thesis that according to this strong connection between women and technology the technological development itself could be perceived as a „feminization“ of culture that will lead us to an increasing dissolution of gender by the way of „feminization“ of „male“ identity: men connecting themselves to or identifying themselves with machines switch to role models traditionally being identified with women. „We will see enormous changes in the whole notion what it is to be human. Women are just starting to realise that they have been defined by a male definition. As men slide out of this definition of identity, as they become more feminine, I doubt women will stay where they are. [...] Women too will become more feminine - even though we have no idea what that is. We are going to experiment with it: we are going to find it out.“

Even if Plant's radical affirmation of the technological development seems to form a clear contrast to Donna Haraway's critical reflections and her thesis that „tech-

nology is a deadly game“, the notion of a feminist potential of cyberspace owes much to the author of the already legendary „Manifesto for Cyborgs“. With the „Manifesto“ Haraway argued against the cultural dichotomies between „male technology“ and „female nature“ to propose a different notion of a hybrid or fragile self whose capacities are no longer built up on a concept of identity and demarcation, but rather on diverging concepts of embodiment, difference and solidarity. For Haraway, there is no consistent or „natural“ notion of „femininity“ or „womanhood“ and especially no state of being that could be called „women“. In the contrary, we'd have to realize that „women“ is just a category constructed by and within our tradition of social and scientific

practices. With this in mind, her figuration of the Cyborg can be understood as a discursive vehicle to escape from the associative power of a concept itself highly infected by cultural dichotomies.

Of course, Sadie Plant herself is far from understanding „femininity“ as an essentialist pledge, but rather as being a result of cultural contingency: „We cannot trace out what 'female' means - we can only learn from history how 'femininity' was defined.“ From her point of view the decisive point for the development of a future „feminisation“ of culture is to be seen in its autodynamic potential attended by effects of deterritorialisation that counteract and subsequently dissolve the power of top-down-structures, thus nourishing a new subversive energy. An energy, as Plant puts it, that already takes effect for example wherever women artists work consciously with means of replication and simulation rather than referring to traditional strategies of representation. At this point, it seems to be near at hand that electronic media - as they are principally supporting different techniques of replication and simulation - should match a correspondent artistic practice perfectly. Sounds like good news for feminist artists working with new technologies: Is Cyberfeminism just another name for a new born feminist avant-garde?

But we know that in talking about the artistic use of electronic media we have to distinguish between different facilities, i.e. between text-, sound-, image-based media and the so called multi-media, between network based systems and the different uses, different protocols and so on. And we already heard about the specific problems women working in and with electronic networks have to face once past the subliminal shift from „Mythos Internet“ to the harsh reality of daily internet practice. Especially if we do not want to rely on deterritorializing effects of „feminisation“ only, we will have to ask ourselves about specific effects of new media technologies that might seriously interfere with the break with concepts of representation as claimed by Sadie Plant. To answer this question in relation to the aesthetics and

politics of Cyberfeminism, the World Wide Web as an expanding field not only of feminist activities, but also of artistic practice seems to be an appropriate area to discuss.

#### (4) Label it! On Netchicks and PopTarts

Similar to the multitude of different notions and concepts of Cyberfeminism discussed in the field of theory we can find a broad range of Cyberfeminist presence on the Web: from personal homepages to ambitious zines, from webring, jumping stations and networks to artistic projects there is a growing number of sites provided by

women that are not only dealing with feminist issues, but also associate themselves explicitly with the label „Cyberfeminist“. But how can we distinguish between „feminist“ and „Cyberfeminist“ webwork? As I have already pointed out, regarding the discussions about the

relations between Cyberfeminism and the so called „Old school feminism“ on one hand, and the continuing disagreements between different feminist and Cyberfeminist positions on the other hand side it does not make very much sense to define Cyberfeminism as the sum of feminist activities. According to my account of a possible Cyberfeminist theory as discussed above in the context of Sadie Plant's notion of Cyberfeminism I would tend to propose another definition. I would like to define Cyberfeminist practice as both a political and aesthetic strategy - and, as I would also like to add: „a strategy working consciously with means of replication and simulation rather than referring to traditional strategies of representation“. But how far does this definition fit into a medium like the World Wide Web that by itself is loaded with one of today's most common means of representation: the image? Well, representation is not only built up on visuals, and do not forget that basically the WWW is nothing but a big hypertext. Unfortunately, this doesn't make things better at all.

Net politics begin with the naming of a domain or a site - and in general this will be a name that defines not only its geographic or physical origins, but also the contextual and ideal framework a project is situated in. According to this, let us look at how feminist and Cyberfeminist projects deal with this tool. What can be noticed here generally is that on the one hand a majority of feminist as well as Cyberfeminist sites refer to a spectrum of terms more or less explicitly associated with femininity resp. the female sex. On the other hand the way this term is related to the female sex seems to be a first criterion to distinguish between feminist and cyberfeminist presence on the Web. At first hand, this can be mentioned as an indication for the unease of a younger generation against concepts developed by an older one that worked on a different basis not only considering the historic situation and the socio-political context, but also considering the media available to work with - and therefore leading not only to a different self understanding, but also to different strategies. As RosieX from the CyberFemZine „GeekGirl“ remarks, even the idea of a „movement“ itself „is based on an older style feminist rhetoric which tended to homogenize all women with the same wants/needs/desires to embrace each other [...]. It's just not applicable for women who use the internet as a medium for their message or is that message? Heh, a bunch of us girls really like each other but we certainly don't piz in each other's pockets for ideas and strength.“

Whereas feminist projects tend to relate to terms like „woman“ or „femina“ or to go back to names grasped from the pool of history and mythology like „Ariadne“, „Elektra“ or „Sappho“ - thereby following similar concepts to many projects during the first and second wave of feminist movement that tried to point out the need for consciousness about a „female identity“, „herstory“ and so on - looking at projects associating themselves with the concept of Cyberfeminism we can find a remarkable predilection for the use of a special slang I would like to describe as an ironic play with the so called toys for boys, recognizing traditional notions of „female identity“ as already prestructured by the male perceptions of „the female“. For example, there are quite a lot of names using and sometimes also fusing the world of computer technology with phrases normally used as vulgars for women, for female sexuality or for ugly feminist, as in

Clara Sinclairs „Netchicks Homepage“, Akke Wagenaars „RadicalPlaygirls“, Crystal Tiles „Feminist Pop Tarts“, the german „Cyberweiber“ - and yes, we can even put the notion of „Cyberfeminism“ into this category. Another major part of the projects refer in a similar way to the word „girl“ changing it into „grrl“ and thereby citing the

Riotgrrl movement that emerged from the music scene during the eighties and transferring it into cybersphere, as it is the case in site-names like „PlanetGrrl“, „GeekGrrl“ and so on. Similar to the Riotgrrl movement in music (or the Bad Grrls in contemporary fine arts), this is also about the need to be part of a scene and at the same time keep one's distance to the gender politics it is ruled by. As Chrystal Tiles from the „Feminist Pop Tarts“ puts it: „A very practical reason grrrls/geeks/nerds use these codewords in titles or our site is to make it clear that we're not naked and waiting for a hot chat with you! I mean, just do an infoseek search using the keyword 'girl' or 'woman' and see what you find. Cybergirl.com (not to be confused with Cybergrrl!) is a nekkid-chick.gif site or something [...] Ever heard about the cliché 'It's not a man's world, it's a boy's world'? Well, I think of girl, geek, grrl, etc. as words women of whatever age can use to signify that we refuse to play the circumscribed, no-win, lady/cutie/muffin/angel/whore/bitch game, and a way to fight back against the boys will be boys and old boys stuff that is so subtle, yet so powerful in our society.“

Following this, it seems that within the „Name Space“ of the World Wide Web Cyberfeminist Grrlism is not only a means to create and to claim „free spaces“ for women in the net, but a strategy of masquerade as a tool to undermine dominating gender politics that keep control over the „female data set“ (i. e. visual or linguistic objectifications of that which male netusers regard as „female“) as well.

Furthermore we will see, this strategy is not only important for the naming, but also for the visual design of Cyberfeminist web projects, as I will try to demonstrate in my sketch of an „iconology of Cyberfeminist webdesign“ following below. By trying to find categories and common grounds I do not intend to return to the problematic issue of a „female“, „feminine“ or „feminist aesthetic“. Rather, my purpose here is to describe Cyberfeminism by the means of its aesthetical and political strategies - and thereby to develop perspectives on the representation of gender in the visual field of World Wide Web.

### (5) Masquerades of the Cyborg

Regarding the Web as a visual field and stating that Cyberfeminist politics include the screendesign, we will have to take a closer look at the constituting elements like the construction of a site, the use of logos and frames as well as colours, background textures and so on.

At first let us ask what a Cyberfeminist website could look like. Is there a possibility for an imaginary with a Cyberfeminist bent? For quite a lot of theorists in the field of Cyberfeminism the use of new technologies is more or less closely associated with the desire to erect a new symbolic order in cyberspace that allows not only for imagining notions of identity and sexuality beyond the binary code, but to incorporate them as well. In this context, the figuration of the Cyborg as outlined by Donna Haraway plays an important role as a synthetic technoflesh being that in itself already dissolves the gendered knot between body and cultural identity:

„The Cyborg as an imaginary figure and as lived experience changes the notion of what in the end of twentieth century is being understood as the experience of women [...]“ „Up till now (once upon a time), female

embodiment seemed to be given, organic, necessary, and female embodiment seemed to reside in mothering and its metaphoric extensions. Only by being out of place could we take intense pleasure in machines, and then with excuses that this was organic activity after all, appropriate to females. Cyborgs might consider more seriously the partial, fluid, sometimes aspect of sex and sexual embodiment. Gender might not be global identity after all." Cyborgs are creatures of a post-gender world. Nothing connects them to bisexuality, preoedipal symbiosis, non-alienated work or other temptations to come up with organic wholeness by the way of submission of partial power under a higher entity." „Cyborg gender is a local possibility, a partial identity. There is no drive in Cyborgs to produce total theory, but there is an intimate experience of boundaries, their construction and deconstruction." „Cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our tools to ourselves. This is a different dream of a common language. It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, spaces, stories. I would rather be a Cyborg than a goddess."

But how to imagine a feminist Cyborg that is „embodiment" and at the same time able to escape from the traditional matrix of representation? From the beginning, the imagery of female machines and mechanical she-dolls was a highly gendered one, the image of a perfect creature built and directed by man to fulfill his needs and desires - and last but not least, being that perfect, also an incarnation of all male fears. Just think of E.T.A. Hoffmann's „Olympia", the „Eve Future" of Villier d'Isle d'Adam, the RoboMaiden „Maria" in Fritz Langs „Metropolis" and so on. No wonder, the over-sexualized Cyborgs of today's popular science fiction imagery everywhere present from comic and magazines, movies and videos to software images, computer games and cd rom fit perfectly into this tradition. As Claudia Springer has mentioned, especially the popular representations of Cyborgs rather tend to intensify the characters and attributions of gender than to neutralize them: „giant blown up muscles for the men, enormous breasts for the women, flowers wherever female consciousness appears on the matrix."

Where old fashioned images won't cease to claim their power, desire for difference has to look for other paths. In this situation, another notion near at hand to discuss is the concept of hybridity, itself founded on the idea of difference rather than of identity: the longig for breaks and displacements of meaning, indefinite moments and oscillations that come into being when traditions and significant are being shifted. Correspondingly, Donna Haraway characterized her Cyborg - a hybrid being herself - as an ardent adherent of partiality, irony, intimacy and perversion". Following that, we may conclude that the potential of a Cyberfeminist figuration - and here I am coming back to any kind of public image, be it a logo, a corporate identity or a screendesign - could be based on a strategy of difference and hybridity. Or, if we prefer to speak in terms of visual representation (as Judith Halberstam proposes it in reference to Judith Butler) as a strategy of masquerade that maybe the only option to outline different images and different visions of possible alliances of women and technology. A masquerade of course, that we will have to examine again and again with the same questions Butler already posed in context with her comments on „Gender Trouble":

„Is masquerade following from female desire that had to be masked and therefore been changed into a defect now

being urged to come to light somehow? Or does it -just the contrary - follow from denying that defect, thereby trying to give the impression of being the phallus? Is femininity being constructed by masquerade as a reflection of the phallus to veil the bisexual possibilities that otherwise would disturb the construction of heterosexual womanliness? Or is masquerade transforming aggression and anxiety of revenge into seduction and flirtation, as Joan Riviere puts it? Is masquerade at first a means to

hide or to repress femininity and therefore a female desire that could be able to found a difference that is not suppressed by the male subject and that would reveal the necessary failure of masculinity? Or is masquerade just the opposite, the means by which femininity is founded, the excluding process of formation of an identity that rules out masculinity effectively and banishes it beyond the boundaries of any specific feminine gendered position?"

Finally, to be more specific by picking up again Sadie Plant's idea of a „Cyberfeminist alliance" and thereby coming back to our reflections about possible strategies for visual artists working on and with the World Wide Web: Is it possible to understand masquerade as a strategy of representation beyond representation, let's say: a representation that in the same moment undermines traditional concepts of representation by using techniques of replication and simulation, irony and parody?

With this in mind I would like to finish by looking at that what we could call the current reality of Cyberfeminist practice on the World Wide Web, thereby trying to condense the results of my investigations in this field into a short summary of that what I called before an iconological reflection" of the aesthetics and politics of Cyberfeminism. In so doing, I am proceeding from the assumption of the World Wide Web as a kind of graphic interface that can be understood as an arena of visual representation where aesthetics and politics are woven together inseparably.

## (6) Blue Stockings and Tupperware Aesthetics

Looking at the majority of websites devoted to feminist issues, in the first instance we will find a lot of them following what I already described as the traditional practices of first and second wave feminist movement. However plain and unpretentious the design of a site, there will be at least the good old Venus' Mirror as a sign to show the project's orientation, others will use the colour purple to design their letters, some even do not hesitate to use a floral patterns for their backgrounds and frames. And of course there is the traditional way of labeling, by calling the projects after „big names" from „women's history", be it mythological as „Artemis", „Ariadne", „Electra", be it historic like the zine „Blue Stockings" referring to suffragette's movement or just simply by „naming the public": „WWWomen", „lesbian.org" and so on. No doubt this politics of definition makes sense in a world wide business center, where you want to place and distribute your offers by using a clear concept for sales promotion - but thinking of Cyberfeminist strategies as mentioned before we will still look for something different. Given the fact that there are lots of projects calling themselves not „only" feminist, but „Cyberfeminist", this group will be our field of research.

Indeed, browsing through the variety of Cyberfeminist activities from personal homepages to those run by groups and associations, from e-zines to artistic projects, there's no question that the range of webdesigns

is being broadened significantly - but yet the impression will remain that in sum there are common features as well, allowing us to continue our reflections about how Cyberfeminist aesthetics and Cyberfeminist politics might correlate. And of course, we will also have to ask in this context, how far the practice correlates with the strategies projected and claimed in Cyberfeminist theory. For example, regarding the fact that representations of femininity on the web are widely dominated by the male gaze (be it to sell pornography, be it to sell technology as toys for boys) it is no wonder this is also an issue for Cyberfeminist activities longing for a practice of

difference. But at the same time, we will have to bear in mind that working on this issue means to get into the complex of representation, body and gender politics where difference is always in danger of being confused with and mistaken as „the other“, a perspective from which any visual notion of „women“ will be an image mirroring traditional points of view.

First of all, a really remarkable part of Cyberfeminist iconography refers to an already existing pool of images of „strong“ and „liberated“ women, i. e. the cross-dressing vamps of the „roaring twenties“, the superwomen known from comic strips like „Superwoman“, „Spiderwoman“ or „Hellcat“, the sexy biker bitches and supervixen pin ups invented by the sixties, up to the angry grrls of nowadays riot grrl movement - in short: in the majority stereotypes of liberated women that still bear a lot of sex appeal as well. And regarding the webdesign itself, it is also remarkable that quite a lot of them - if not addicted to the current fashion of technopop imagery with brilliant colours and psychedelic background patterns - tend to prefer pastels to create a new „tupperware aesthetics“. Even if the Cyberfeminist housewife no longer deals with household technology only, the GeekGirl operator girl is no longer surrounded with

phones and wires, but with motherboards and chips, even if some of the SuperGrrls wear intellectual glasses and even if the „All men must die!“ - homepage threatens the surfers with blood red weapons of all kind: In the end, all these images refer to a repertoire of one dimensional images of femininity - and we will have to consult them carefully again and again to ask in what way the intended shifts and breaks support a different notion of female identity and are appropriate to undermine rather than to confirm the traditional stereotypes of gender.

## Appendix: A Cyberfeminist iconology in short

### 1. the colour purple: old fashioned confessions?

Venus' mirror and the colour purple as we know them from the history of feminist movement, name spaces with reference to goddesses and heroines: constituting elements for the feminist rather than the Cyberfeminist design.

- *Godesses wear the colour purple: „Electra“ and „Ariadne“*  
<http://www.electrapages.com/>  
<http://www.onb.ac.at/ben/ariadfr.htm>

- *Venus' mirrors all over: From „WOWWOMen“ to „Lesbian.Org“*  
<http://www.wowwomen.com/>  
<http://www.womenz.net.au/>

<http://www.ceiberweiber.com/home.htm>

<http://www.lesbian.org/index.html>

- *Images from the „roaring twenties“: „Isle of Lesbos“ and „Webgrrls Deutschland“*

<http://www.sappho.com/>

<http://www.webgrrls.de/>

### 2. Here comes the next generation: gurls 'n' grrls...

- *Suzie Pop goes Techno: „gURL“ and „GeekGirl“*  
<http://www.gurl.com/>

<http://206.251.6.116/index.html>

<http://206.251.6.116/geekgirl/010con/backish.html>

- *picturebook Grrlisms: „Grrl!“*

<http://www.grrl.com/Home.html> or

<http://www.grrl.com/>

- *Masks and masquerades: „Womyn & grrls“*

<http://exo.com/~emily/feminist.html>

### 3. Superwomen and the Like

- *CyberGrrl Classics: The Universe of Planet „Cybergrrl“*

<http://www.cybergrrl.com/>

<http://www.cybergrrl.com/planet/>

<http://www.webgrrls.com/>

- *SuperGrrl with glasses: „GeekDashGirl“*

<http://www.geek-girl.com/>

- *Manga Pop: „Spidergirl“*

<http://www.yo.rim.or.jp/~ari/>

### 4. Tupperware Aesthetics

- *Pin ups in pastel: „RiotGrrls“*

<http://www.riotgrrl.com/>

- *Happy housewives: „Die Hausfrauenseite“*

<http://www.hausfrauenseite.de/>

- *Tupperware techno: Friendly Girls Guide*

<http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au/rob.upload/friendly/index.html>

### 5. Tech Babes

- *Tech babes from „Metropolis“: f-e-mail*

<http://www.arts.ucsb.edu/f-e-mail/>

- *Do the Cyborg: Victoria Vesnas „Bodies inc.“*

<http://arts.ucsb.edu/~vesna/>

<http://arts.ucsb.edu/bodiesinc/>

- *Rather temperate: the real „Techbabes“*

<http://www.techbabes.com/>

### 6. Superfemmes

- *Belle Silhouette: „Amazon.City“*

<http://www.amazoncity.com/>

- *LipstickFemmes: „SassyFemme“*

<http://www.txdirect.net/~sassyfem/mainpage.html>

### 7. Wombs und Vaginae Dentatae

- *Entrance to the female space: „yOni Gateway“*

<http://www.yoni.com/>

- *Heavy Metal Vagina Dentata: „Womb“*

<http://womb.wwdc.com/>

### 8. Men haters und Bad Bitches

- *Hot hearts cold as ice: „Heartless Bitches“*

<http://www.heartless-bitches.com/>

- *Even more bloody: „All Men Must Die!“*

<http://www.kfs.org/~kashka/ammd.html>

### 9. Ambitious bitches and disgusting girls

- *Marita Liaula: „Ambitious Bitch“*

<http://www.edita.fi/kustannus/bitch/index.html>

<http://www.edita.fi/kustannus/bitch/destdive.html>

- *Mare Tralla: „Disgusting Girl“*

<http://www.artun.ee/homepages/mare/kmm.html>

<http://www.wmin.ac.uk/~ghmlc/mina.htm>

### 10. Cyberfeminist Spaces and Bodily Architectures

- *Cyberfeminist Universe: „VNS Matrix“*

<http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns/>

<http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns/manifesto.html>

<http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns/spiral.html>

<http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns/themepark.html>

<http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns/game.html>

<http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns/gashgirl/>

<http://sysx.apana.org.au/~gashgirl/doll/dollyoko.html>

<http://sysx.apana.org.au/~gashgirl/doll/yukiko.htm>

- *Enter via Hymen: „Womenhouse“*

<http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/womenhouse/>

[http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/womenhouse/html\\_s/jones-1.html](http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/womenhouse/html_s/jones-1.html)

[http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/womenhouse/html\\_s/hymen.html](http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/womenhouse/html_s/hymen.html)

[http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/womenhouse/html\\_s/wilding1.html](http://www.cmp.ucr.edu/womenhouse/html_s/wilding1.html)

- *Coded Body: Eva Wohlgemuth „EvaSys“*

<http://www.thing.at/bodyscan/>

### 11. Radical Cyberfeminism

Marina Grzinic

# CYBERBODIES

OR STORIES ABOUT THE POLITICAL NETSPACE

## 11 THESIS for an oppositional reformulation of the body and the Internet/space

1. To understand the representation and articulation of the body in new media and Cyberspace and the the body immersed in the specific totalitarian/ Eastern Europe's Socialism and Communism/ or democratic context, we must first of all decode the intersection of cultural, political and theoretical strategies lying beneath such representation, both of the body and the space of the Internet.

2. We can talk of the common heritage of totalitarianism, as we talk of the common platform of (European) democracy. I propose to reflect on Communism as an oppositional, differential setting, and to do the same with the body.

3. Today Communism is being commodified for consumption and this is part of the process of circulation of cultural stereotypes. It seems that Communism was the 'lingua franca' and yet for those of us coming from the 'so called' Eastern European context, it is loosing it's status of 'lingua materna'. Ironically, Communism and it's big brother Socialism were developed as clear patriarchal systems.

4. The body today is like nature, a commonplace and powerful discursive construction. The body is a topos and a tropos, a figure, construction, artifact, movement, displacement. What is important is to determine to what scope are the representational politics of the body/space/Internet used in the past and present.

5. We have to approach the duality of the body and the Cyberspace as part of a larger system of visual and representational communication, as both a conduit and an agent of ideologies, as a sign system which contains a contingency of visual and signifying codes which in turn determine reception and instrumentality.

6. The aesthetics and politics of the body/ and the Internet space is (if we refer to Victor Burgin) fundamentally concerned with the articulation of representational politics.

7. We need to reconsider both the public space and the new media space as ideological, and as well their processes of transformation. This mise-en-scene of the space can be viewed in today's terms as ideological, precisely because it is so invisible and taken for granted.

We have to ask ourselves, in the manner of Fredric Jameson: what space?

8. What is happening on the Internet is increasingly seen and utilised as the new public space. The Internet and World Wide Web are becoming the space which is not only parallel to the public one, but is increasingly substituting it. It is the gradual process of substituting the 'res publica' with random information, and public opinion with communication. 'So called' public opinion is being formulated via the Internet and is perhaps substituting the actual.

9. Every day the Internet and the WWW seems to come closer to attaining the position of the prime media and ideological communication force of the 'so called' new world order named post-democracy. "Post-democracy is a system in which democracy is thought of as a simple conjunction between a state of the social (democratic 'individualism', and so forth) and constitutional forms." (in 'Post-democracy, Politics and Philosophy', an interview with Jacques Ranciere', Angelaki, 1 : 3, London 1994.)

10. A case (In the beginning of 1997 the opposition forces and students protested in Belgrade because the party in power (lead by Slobodan Milosevic) refused to recognize the victory of the opposition forces in the city elections of Belgrade. The first hand information transmitted first via e-mails and than spread through the WWW, but without additional analysis and reflection (i.e. about what is really going on in Belgrade and who is all taking part in the protests) seemed to be enough to lead some of the inhabitants of the WWW to proclaim that they were also taking part in the 'Serbian' revolution because they were obtaining first hand and eye witness information through the web. The community on the web and its opinion were the sum total of read and forwarded messages and informations obtained on the Internet.

11. A demand (An important question today concerning the Internet is to identify (following the decade of the fall of the Berlin wall) who are the old and new actors in the construction of this 'Brave New World', which is possible to rename as the 'World Wide Web', and also who and how is allowed develop a criticism of the Internet /The case od the Kosovo'Albanians reports on the net/.

# Notes on the Political Condition of Cyberfeminism

Cyberfeminism is a promising new wave of (post)feminist thinking and practice. Through the work of numerous Netactive women, there is now a distinct cyberfeminist Netpresence that is fresh, brash, smart, and iconoclastic of many of the tenets of classical feminism. At the same time, cyberfeminism has only taken its first steps in contesting technologically complex territories. To complicate matters further, these new territories have been overcoded to a mythic degree as a male domain. Consequently, cyberfeminist incursion into various technoworlds (CD-ROM production, Web works, lists and news groups, artificial intelligence, etc.) has been largely nomadic, spontaneous, and anarchic. On the one hand, these qualities have

allowed maximum freedom for diverse manifestations, experiments, and the beginnings of various written and artistic genres. On the other, networks and organizations seem somewhat lacking, and the theoretical issues of gender regarding the techno-social are immature relative to their development in spaces of greater gender equity won through struggle. Given such conditions, some feminist strategies and tactics will repeat themselves as women attempt to establish a foothold in a territory traditionally denied to them. This repetition should not be considered with the usual yawn of boredom whenever the familiar appears, as cyberspace is a crucial point of gender struggle that is desperately in need of gender diversification (and diversity in general).

## The Feminist Cycle

One aspect immediately evident is that the Net provides cyberfeminists with a vehicle crucially different from anything available to prior feminist waves. Historically, feminist activism has depended on women getting together bodily--in kitchens, churches, assembly halls, and in the streets. The organizing cell for the first phase of feminism was the sewing circle, the quilting group, or the ladies' charity organization. Women met together in private to plan their public campaigns for political and legal enfranchisement. In these campaigns the visible presence of groups of women plucked from the silenced isolation of their homes, became a public sign of female rebellion and activism. Women acting together, speaking in public, marching through the streets, and disrupting public life were activities that opened up political territories that were traditionally closed to them.

During the second wave of feminism, which emerged in the early sixties, women again started meeting together to plan actions. They met in consciousness-raising groups that became the organizing cells for a revived feminist movement. This time, feminists began to master a new tactic: Creating counter-spectacle in the media. Women staged actions targeted at highly visible public icons. Such patriarchal monuments under feminist assault in the US movement included the Miss America Pageant, Playboy offices and clubs, Wall Street, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Pentagon, and the White House. Everywhere the actions occurred, the news media was there to document outrageous female misbehavior. These tactics spread the news of growing feminism nationally and internationally. Visible female disruption and subversion also provided images of female empowerment that inspired many women (and men) to begin taking direct autonomous action on behalf of the rights of women.

If the first wave was marked by women's incursion into new political territories, this second wave was marked by a march into new economic territories and by a reconfiguration of

familiar ones. Most significant was women's demand for access to

the means of financial independence--a struggle that continues in the third phase of feminist practice. On the more traditional end of the struggle, domestic space was no longer perceived as a totalizing feminine space, but was re-presented as a space of ambiguity with both celebratory and exploitive characteristics. On the political front, feminism focused on liberation practices, and left the old right wing practices behind, such as temperance movements.

The third wave of feminisms (cultural-, eco-, theoretical-, sex positive-, lesbian-, anti-porn-, multicultural-, etc.)--often collectively dubbed Postfeminism--continues to use these models of public action and rebellion. A recent case in point was the short-lived but highly visible Women's Action Coalition (WAC) that began in New York in late 1991, following a series of events that enraged women in the US: The dramatic, nationally televised Hill/Thomas hearings; the William Kennedy Smith and Mike Tyson rape trials; and the judicial battles over abortion rights: all these contributed to a sense that it was time for women to launch a "visible and remarkable resistance" to social, sexual, economic, and political oppression and violence. WAC quickly became a media attractor as it launched action after visible action. WAC produced a spectacle that was hip, sexy, cool, fun, outrageous, and visible. Eight thousand women joined in the first year, and chapters sprang up around the US and in Canada. Much of this initial success was due to the highly effective communication and networking system that WAC immediately organized. Central to this system was a phone tree, combined with adequate access to fax machines, e-mail, and media contacts. In a sense, WAC was an early proto-electronic feminist organization. Having motivated and organized so many women, WAC reinvigorated feminist activism, and, in the US, led a new wave of contestation in all the traditional feminist territories. Like most radical organizations, it was only a temporary tactical organization. It was unable to survive its rapid growth, and all too soon reached critical mass, when explosive splintering forced it to choose one of two outcomes: purge and bureaucratize, or dissolve. WAC wasn't able to organize its way out of the contradictions of difference, nor was it able to continue resisting some of the dogmatic tendencies of "mainstream" and "security state" feminism which proscribe certain behaviors, beliefs, and lifestyles. While the former option of purge and bureaucratize was first attempted, the fabric of radicality was strong enough that dissolution spontaneously occurred.

The third wave (with a few exceptions) has missed moving into one crucial area, however, and that was the revolution in communications and information technology. Cyberfeminism represents a new set of explorers ready to move the struggle into this new territory. As yet, the movement is still too young to face struggles inherent in the economy of difference. As on most frontiers, there still \*seems\* to be room for everyone. At the same time, there are lessons to be learned from history. Radical movements in their infancy tend to return to past patterns. Cyberfeminism is no different, and key feminist issues such as feminine subjectivity, separatism and boundary maintenance, and territorial identification are bound to arise again, even if they seem dead in other feminist territories.

## Territorial Identification

What is the territory that cyberfeminism is questioning, theorizing, and actively confronting? The surface answer is, of

course, cyberspace, but such an answer is not really satisfying. Cyberspace is but one small part, since the infrastructure that produces this virtual world is so vast. Hardware and software

design and manufacture are certainly of key importance, and perhaps most significant of all are the institutions that train those who design the products of cyber-life. Overwhelmingly, these products are designed by males for business or military operations. Clearly these are still primarily male domains (i.e., men are the policy makers) in which men have the buying power, and so the products are designed to meet their needs or to play on their desires. From the beginning, entrance into this high-end techno-world (the virtual class) has been skewed in favor of males.\* In early socialization/education, technology and technological process are gendered as male domains. When females manipulate complex technology in a productive or creative manner, it is viewed and treated as a deviant act that deserves punishment.

This is not to say that women do not use complex technology. Women are an important consumer market, and help maintain the status quo when the technology is used in a passive manner. For example, most institutions of commerce or government are all too happy to give women computers, e-mail accounts, and so on if it will make them better bureaucrats. This is why the increased presence of women on the Net is not solely a positive indication of equality. It is a very similar situation to late 50s/early 60s America when middle-class husbands were more than happy to buy a second car for their wives--as long as it made them more efficient domestic workers. Technology in this case was used to deepen the confinement of women within their situation rather than liberate them from it. (As a general rule, anything you get without struggle should be viewed with intense skepticism). The technology and technological processes to which women currently have access are the consequence of structural economic necessity. However, all we need is a shift in consciousness to begin the subversion of the current gender structure (this is the positive side of so many women being on-line).

Thus, the territory of cyberfeminism is large. It includes the objective arenas of cyberspace, institutions of industrial design, and institutions of education--that is, those arenas in which technological process is gendered in a manner that excludes women from access to the empowering points of technoculture. However, the territory does not stop there. Cyberfeminism is also a struggle to be increasingly aware of the impact of new technologies on the lives of women, and the insidious gendering of technoculture in everyday life. Cyberspace does not exist in a vacuum; it is intimately connected to numerous real-world institutions and systems that thrive on gender separation and hierarchy. Finally, cyberfeminism must radically expand the critique concerning the media hype about the "technoworld." While the utopian cyber-spectacle has been adequately deflated by documentation of its abuse of the bureaucratic class, low-end technocratic class, and workers involved in product manufacturing, this critique, in terms of gender and race, is very modest. For example, who can possibly believe that age, race, or gender do not matter in cyberspace? The ability to assign oneself social characteristics online is only an alibi for a very traditional and exploitive division of labor that is representative of the overall system, and a seduction element for those whose real-world social environment has been eliminated by pancapitalism's destruction of social spaces of autonomy. We must also ask what awaits people in a minoritarian position once they are online? Will they find familiar and significant rhetorics, discussions, and images? Is there a continuity of discourse between the real and the virtual (as there is for the white middle class)? While there are virtual pockets in which continuity exists, the overwhelmingly representative situation is geared to the same majoritarian consciousness that is found in the real-world. In other words, elements of social stratification are reflected and replicated in cyberspace.

### **Separatism and Boundary Maintenance**

Whenever feminism begins pushing its way into new territories, the avant garde members of the movement face incredible problems and nearly insurmountable odds. Cyberfeminism is no different. Relatively few women have the skills to see through the cyber-hype, to understand the complexity of the system, and

most importantly, to teach other women how to survive and actively use the system. For most women in the technosphere, it takes all their energy simply to survive transgressing the norm and learning massive amounts of dense technical information. Just doing the latter is a difficult task that few people accomplish, but throw in the condition of gender isolation (learning and working in a male domain) and the generally negative social representation of being a geek girl (i.e., going against the grain of female construction) and it becomes immediately apparent that alienation levels are extremely high. Under such conditions, as in the past, separatist activity has been a useful tactic, as well as one that can foster efficient pedagogical situations.

Kathy Huffman often jokes that "in cyberspace men can't interrupt you [women]." The joke is funny because it does represent a truth of gendered interruption; however, the pessimistic side of this point is that women are interrupted in cyberspace. They are often overwhelmed with counter-discourse, ignored, or totalized under the sign of being "politically correct." A remark by a woman may not be interrupted, but continuity of discourse, with particular regard to women's issues, is often interrupted. Here again there is a need for separatist activities at this point in post/feminist decolonization of cyberspace. During this early stage of development, women need to experiment in developing their own working and learning spaces. This kind of activity has occurred in all phases of feminists territorial decolonization, and has shown itself to be very productive. Separatism should be welcome among cyberfeminists and among those who support a cyberspace of difference. It should be remembered that separatism among a minoritarian (disenfranchised) group is not negative. It's not sexist, it's not racist, and it's not even necessarily a hindrance to democratic development. There is a distinct difference between using exclusivity as part of a strategy to make a specific perception or way of being in the world a universal, and using exclusivity as a means to escape a false universal (one goal of cyberfeminist separatism). There is also a distinct difference between using exclusion as a means to maintain structures of domination, and using it as a means to undermine them (another goal of cyberfeminist separatism).

At the same time, separatism can reach a point where it is counterproductive. The cycle of useful production in regard to separatist activity can be traced by the applicability of one of its main slogans, "The personal is political." In consciousness-raising groups, personal information is typically disclosed. Then patterns begin to emerge out of these disclosures. Notions that were thought to be personal, private, idiosyncratic, and psychologically bound turn out to be points of group knowledge and represent sociological tendencies. Group members come to realize that their "individual" problems are only mirrors of social pathologies that affect all the people of a given class, race, gender, etc. In turn, each individual comes to realize that it is not a personal flaw that led he/r to be in an unacceptable socio-economic situation, but that the structure of the political economy is to blame. In order for this process to succeed, there must be a solidarity of identity, and when oppression is high, this can only happen in a separatist environment. However, once these social currents are discovered and this knowledge is deployed among the given social group, the need for separatist activity drops and can even become counterproductive. At this point, the uneasy romance between coalition and diversity can begin.

For feminism in general, the time for separatist action seems to be over; however, we must remember that all areas of society are not equally gendered--some territories are more equalized than others. Given that cyberspace is one of the most inequitable, it should be expected that a number of early feminist organizational and educational tactics will be revived.

### **Feminine Subjectivity**

Cyberfeminism is currently at that unfortunate point where it has to decide who gets to be a separatist cyberfeminist and who does not. The haunting question of "what is a woman?" once again returns. In theory, this problem is graspable, but first, what is the problem? Looking back on any feminist movement, there have always been tremendous conflicts within women's groups and organizations brought on by attempts to define feminine subjectivity (and thereby, "us" and "them"). In the second wave, the feminine was defined in a manner that seemed largely to

reflect the subjectivity of white, middle class, straight women. The third wave had to debate whether or not transvestites, transsexuals, and other "males" who claimed to be female identified should be accepted into activist organizations (and at the

same time, women of color, working class women, and lesbians all still had grounds for complaints). In addition, it was never decided how to separate the feminine from other primary social variables that construct a woman's identity. For example, part of the problem in many feminist organizations, and in WAC in particular, was that the middle class professional women had the greatest economic and cultural resources. They therefore had greater opportunity for leadership and policy making. The women outside of this class felt that the professionals had unfair advantages and that their agenda was the primary agenda, which in turn brought about a destructive form of separation.

These are but some of the practical problems that have emerged out of the issue of exclusivity and imperfections inherent in definitions. Defining feminine subjectivity can never be done to the satisfaction of all, and yet, practically speaking, it has to be done.

The current theoretical solution to this problem is to have small alliances and coalitions that do not rely on bureaucratic process. Such coalitions should be expected to dissolve at various velocities over time. Also, naively humanistic or metaphysical principles (depending on one's perspective) like "sisterhood" should be left in the past, and we must all learn to live with the conflicts and contradictions of a house of difference. Of course, this is easier said than done. Truth changes with the situation. In a territory like a US or British cultural studies department, we can talk about living in a house of difference. In other more inequitable territories, it is more difficult, and clear boundaries (often essentialized) of differences for identity purposes are often required. For example, telling a person of color who has just been beaten by the police that "the officers were only reacting to a racist textual construction that links people of color with the sign of criminality" is probably not going to have much resonance (even though in legitimized academic territories the argument is quite convincing). While the simpler explanation, "your ass just got beat because you are a person of color" will be quite convincing, because in this case, who is on what side of the racial divide is unambiguous in the mind of the unwilling participant. In this context, the hard boundaries of essentialism make sense and have greater explanatory power until the ambiguity that emerges out of successful consciousness raising and contestation becomes a part of everyday life. Consequently, one can expect that essentialized notions of the feminine will continue to appear and find acceptance.

### Dinner Parties

Cyberfeminism is currently drawing upon social and cultural strategies from past waves of feminism. For example, dinner parties that celebrate women's achievements and serve as convivial coalition building events are a famous part of feminist history, as witnessed not only in the fundraising dinner parties held by female suffragists, but also in Judy Chicago's Dinner Party; in Suzanne Lacy's art/life performances; in Mary Beth Edelson's "Last Supper" detournement; and in the countless feasts prepared and served to each other by feminists all over the world in the past decades. In recognition that women need to feed each other and desire conviviality, Kathy Huffman and Eva Wohlgemuth in their Web project, "Face Settings," are using the medium of the dinner party as an organizing and educational tool for cyberfeminists. The events--which often happen during international media festivals and symposia where men are the leading actors--are meant to overcome the isolation of cyberculture, to get women connected to each other, and to help them begin to learn and use electronic technology in producing their own work. It has been shown that forming strong working groups among people who only communicate virtually is far less productive than forming groups among people who also meet in the flesh. For this reason, it is important for cyberfeminist to make opportunities to meet together bodily and form affinity groups to facilitate building a transnational, transcultural movement. And what better way than a dinner party to dissolve the estrangement so often

produced by even the friendliest online communications? Indeed, the virtual medium must not replace the affective and the affinity-building functions of presence.

### Cyberfeminist Education

Cyberfeminists have already grasped the importance of making hands-on technological education for women a core priority. But

this education needs to be contextualized within a critical feminist analysis and discourse about women, Netculture and politics, and the pancapitalist labor economy. Cyberfeminists need to make their voices heard much more strongly in the discussion of Net development. In doing so, cyberfeminism needs to think about who they consider their constituency. As a cultural and technical avant garde, cyberfeminists need to remember that most women who now work with computers and information technology in first world countries are at best glorified typists, for whom the computer simply represents an intensification of work. The question must be asked: What relationship do these women have to technology? How is this relationship produced, and how can it be contested? Cyberfeminism could provide a consciousness raising site where women can tell stories about their experiences with all the different aspects of technology, and how it affects their lives. Such a site could teach women to question the increasing transparency of technological incursion into their workplaces and into everyday life. And of course, there must be ongoing education, information, and activism concerning the feminized "global homework economy (Haraway)" which is profoundly worsening the lives of women in developing countries.

Feminist education (women's studies) as it was pioneered in the US in the early 1970's included the idea that a "separate" education, where women would not have to compete with males, and where they would have the freedom to frame issues and ask questions that challenged the hegemony of received practices and ideas. The Feminist Art Programs in California, for example, maintained their own studios, courses, and teachers within an institutional academic structure. But more deeply, it also became evident that a separate space allowed uncensored and radical experimentation that included the meltdown of traditional disciplines, practices, and territories of expertise, and that initiated some postmodern art practices that have changed the face of mainstream art and art history in the US. What might a feminist educational program in computer science and media technology accomplish? Imagine!!

Cyberspace lends itself nicely to the creation of separate learning and practice spaces for different groups, and it seems fruitful to expand and maintain these spaces for now in the spirit of feminist self-help. One of the most important educational tools cyberfeminists can offer is an ongoing directory of electronic strategies and resources for women, including feminist theory discussion groups, electronic publishing and exhibition venues, zines, addresses, bibliographies, mediographies, how-to sites, and general information exchange. While compilations of these resources are already underway, there is a growing need for a more radical and critical feminist discourse about technology in cyberspace (as opposed to discourse in critical and media studies departments in universities). In cyberfeminism, this discourse arises directly from actual current practices and problems, rather than from abstract theorizing. Thus cyberfeminism offers the development of applied, activist theory.

An obvious group to target for cyberfeminist networking, education, and expertise is the first generations of young women now graduating from schools and colleges (mainly in the US and Europe) who have had some training in electronic media and in media theory. Having already begun to work in electronic media in school, many of these young women will be searching for ways to get electronically connected, and thus will experience in full force the gender whammy of cyberspace. While many of them have had some exposure to feminist theory and practice in the academy, most of them will be faced with a terrifying void when it comes to feminist support and access in cyberspace. Since cyberspace seems to attract younger women, it is important that cyberfeminists develop projects and sites for purposes of recruitment.

### Cyberfeminist Body Art

Bodies generally are all the rage on the Net--whether they are obsolete, cyborg, techno, porno, erotic, morphed, recombined, phantom, or viral. But most of these "bodies" are little more than recirculated commodified images of sexuality (particularly female and "deviant" sexuality) or medical imaging (such as the infamous Visible Human project), and are presented uncritically. Many artists are contributing to an explosion of body art on the Net, much of it simply a transposition of what already exists in other media.

Cyberfeminist body-centered art is coming alive on the Net. As to be expected, the vagina and the clitoris have pride of place in much cyberfeminist work such as that of VNS Matrix. "Cunt art" was a fiercely joyous, liberatory, and radical rallying icon for feminist artists and activists in the 1970s. Women's consciousness-raising and medical self-help groups regularly examined each others' genitals and reproductive organs, and the speculum became the symbol not only of sexual liberation, but also of feminist demands for reproductive freedom and for a woman-centered health-care system. As Donna Haraway suggests in *Modest Witness*, feminists interrogating technoscience (and particularly the new reproductive technologies), need to arm themselves with "the right speculum for the job," one that "makes visible the data structures that are our bodies." The visualization and data-gathering engines that drive both the new information and reproductive technologies can be redirected and applied to the task of "designing the analytical languages [the speculums] for representing and intervening in our spliced, cyborg worlds" (Haraway, p. 212).

Cyberfeminism can create reconfigured networked bodies in cyberspace, bodies that are passionately incorporated in textual, visual, and interactive works. Simultaneously, deconstructive projects that address the proliferation of dominant cultural, gender, and sexual codes on the Net will be more effective if they come from a strong, libidinal center, and are understood through the filter of women's history. Indeed, cyberfeminist body art projects are haunted by women's bodily histories. They are often motivated by rage against the forces of censorship, repression, and normalization. Primarily, though, they are motivated by absence--the absence created by female infanticide, clitoridectomy, anorgasmic medications, suttee, footbinding, enforced celibacy, sexual misinformation, lack of birth control information, rape, forced pregnancy, and by female restriction and confinement.

Part of theoretical feminism's project has been to explore the possibility of difference in female sexuality and desire. Much French and American feminist, literary, and psychoanalytic theory in the 1980s was dedicated to this research. The Net offers possibilities for exploring these questions in a new technological and information setting, and among a new population of author/producers who are more grounded in practice than in theory. Although this line of research seems to have left the binary of woman/nature far behind, it is by no means

certain that it will not fall into some of the traps of essentialist feminism, or succumb to the lure of simply countering masculinist Netculture with a feminine Netpornography. There is much to be gained from consciously interpolating women's histories and bodies into cyberspace: much can be learned from naming the absences, and beginning to create a multifaceted, fluid, and conscious feminist presence.

### Conclusion

It seems safe to say that cyberfeminism is still in its avant-garde phase of development. The first wave of explorers, amazons, and "misfits" have wandered into what is generally a hostile territory, and found a new land in need of decolonization. History is repeating itself in a positive cycle, where feminist avant-garde philosophies, strategies, and tactics from the past can be dusted off and reclaim their former vitality. Separatist activities in the real or virtual forms of dinners, discussion groups, and consciousness raising sessions are viable once again. Essentialist philosophies enacted in body art, cunt art, and identity maintenance recombine with constructionist notions of identity development. An epistemological and ontological anarchy that is celebratory and open to any possibility is threading its way through cyberfeminism. The dogma has yet to solidify. At the same time, the territory is a hostile one, since the gold of the information age will not be handed over to women without a struggle. To make matters worse, a big

tollbooth guards access to this new territory. Its function is to collect tribute from every entity--individual, class, or nation, that tries to enter. Entrance for individuals comes at the price of obtaining education, hardware and software; entrance for nations comes at the price of having acceptable infrastructure, and to a lesser extent, an acceptable ideology. Consequently, a more negative cycle is also repeating itself, as the women who have found their way into cyberterritories are generally those who have economic and cultural advantages in other territories; these advantages are awarded through class position, with its intimate ties to cultural position and race. As this group helps open the borders to other disenfranchised groups, it must be asked, what kind of ideology and structure will await the newcomers? Will it be a repetition of the first and second waves of feminism in political and economic arenas? Will cyberspace and its associate institutions be able to cope with a house of difference? Knowing and understanding the history of women's struggle (along with other struggles in race relations and class relations) is essential--not just as a resource for strategies and tactics, not just so tactical responses to cybergender issues can be improved, but also to see that the new gender constructions that come to mark the entirety of this new territory (not just virtual domains) do not fall into the same cycle as in the past.

Consider this example. In the US, third-wave \*activity\* peaked in 1991. Barely three years later, this visible resistance had again died down, leaving continuing debates about feminism largely to the academy. In 1997, federal "welfare" laws were repealed in an all-out assault on the public safety net for the poor. At the same time, forced labor through "workfare" and prison programs has begun to intensify, and the expansion of the feminized global electronic homework economy has produced a new wave of sweatshop labor. Since these initiatives have a dramatic effect on poor and working-class women, one would think that the conditions would be right for a new popular front of feminist activism and resistance. However, the social body and public life seem so splintered, alienated, stratified, and distracted by market economy, that as yet no signs of such activism have appeared. Is this problem partly that the avant garde has been paid off to the extent that the issues of the poor which do not effect its members are no cause for action? Is this problem repeating itself in cyberspace and in its manufacture? There are so many more problems to face than just access for all.

### Notes

\* Just so the authors' position is clear: We do not support a reductive equality feminism, i.e., support the existing system, but believe there should be equal gender representation in all its territories. We do not support pancapitalism. It is a predatory, pernicious, and sexist system that will not change even if there was equal representation of gender in the policy making classes. Our argument here is that women need access to empowering knowledge and tools which are now dominated by a despicable "virtual class (Kroker)." We do not mean to suggest that women become a part of this class. To break the "glass ceiling" and become an active part of the exploiting class that benefits from gender hierarchy is not a feminist goal, nor anything to be proud of.

\*\* In her essay, "The Future Looms: Weaving Women and Cybernetics," Sadie Plant spins a mythical genesis for the convergence of women and machines in a feminised cybernetics based on women's ancient invention of the craft of weaving. This convergence "is reinforced by cyberfeminism... a perspective (which) is received from the future." In the 70's creating a female mythology was an inspiring and necessary part of recovering and writing the histories of women, and of honoring female cultural inventions and female generativity (the Matrix). Cyberfeminist mythologizing is a welcome sign of inspiration and empowerment, and at this point in time, makes good tactical sense. Such work offers a clear explanation of a constructive relationship between women and technology, and it begins the process of rewriting the gender code of cyberspace. However, in a political sense, the function of the mythic "natural woman" has its limits. In this case, it seems just as likely that weaving was a woefully boring task that was forced upon the disenfranchised. (This trend of boring and alienating work as a domain of the disempowered is certainly repeating itself in the pancapitalist technocracy.) As cyberfeminist critique

Claudia Reiche

# FEMINISM IS DIGITAL

## Documentary

I'd like to start with a true story. My personal and true story about the documenta, from when I was still a very young girl. Must have been 17. Normally I never tell personal or true stories, but in english it may be possible. I have to admit, this is a rather private story.

Okay one night, late at night, I was watching television with the sound turned very low so as not to wake up my parents already sleeping in their beds beside. It was a black and white documentation on the actual documenta, I think in 1978. My eyes became bigger and bigger, my mouth stood open, I began to sweat and was completely excited. Very quiet. This was it, this was what I had been looking for. What I saw was coming from a freedom which I knew, I had to join. And I truly believed that this fantastic art at this documenta would change the ways of feeling, of thinking, of living, would completely change all ideas and ideologies. At least all the habitudes in everyday-life, for everybody who had once noticed these art works -- which I was going to see at TV just in that moment.. It's bizarre, I do not recall any artist or work. Except one: Charlotte Moormann playing naked on a cello. That was great: being naked, making music, making videopictures and circuits of images. And I knew: My destiny: this was it, I would have to do something like that. And suddenly, I really didn't know why, I started to put up my trousers legs. (In the fashion of the seventies this was easy to do.) I put them higher and higher and moved closer and closer to the changing light of the images on the TV-screen, and looked very very closely at my legs. Somehow like a scientist (which I should become later), with growing delight. And what I examined in this way were the hairs on my legs. It was gorgeous. Because quite suddenly I had plenty of it. Dark brown hairs on my legs, even over my knees. And believe me: I never was lovelier. I felt this had to stay, I simply was ready for a real change in my life. And so: still watching Charlotte Moorman, perhaps wrapped now in plastic foils and tied up with strings around her body, still playing the violoncello, all this had to produce one question. A riddle: Now for you as well -- it's your turn: **"Where -- the hell -- is the woman in this story?"** Is it in this wrapped and naked lady? Is it in the violoncello, making all the sounds, while being played on? Is it in the lights of the TV set, fascinating millions of people all over the world, in that very moment? **Or is it in my hairs?**

I apologize for this very private anecdote, but would like to dedicate it to the work of Helene von Oldenburg, showing a basic attraction to the hairs on my legs.

## Riddle

I never really found a solution for my riddle. And lived through different opinions on that question, "Where -- the hell -- is the <woman> in this story?" -- during the last twenty years. Today I shall try to show the different aspects and possibilities of this riddle with emphasis on the idea: that the woman is perhaps -- under certain circumstances -- in the changing lights of the TV-set itself. Nowadays and here at the 1st Cyberfeminist International I think we can enlarge this vision, so that the woman could be found when we look at the strange reality of the changing lights of our everyday computer-displays. The ons and offs so many times per second escaping our vision.

Now what can I say? I have to finally make a beginning. There are two theses I'd like to present:

**1. The sexual difference is visible.**

**2. The sexual difference is invisible.**

You may find this amazing or even contradictory, but I still hope to achieve your agreement that these two theses do not necessarily exclude one another. I will cite some discussions and theorists, some graphics and filmstills, as well as some experiments on perception. I shall call to help for my changing perspectives on these crucial points of feminism itself: the glance and the difference. „The glance and the difference“ might sound like a silly rather arbitrary combination, something like „the shiny apple and algebra“ or „eyes and the presentiment of death“, or „a baby's smile and the neuronal activity of the brain“ etc. But we shall look for a <missing link> between these two terms, difficult to formulate with words and images. Sometimes this seems to me like the <missing> par excellence. So I will try. This will be my subject.

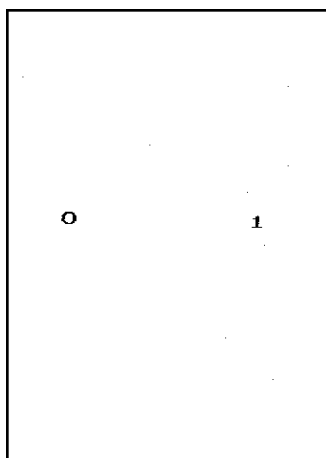
## Strange „Glanz“

Hmm, wait a moment, I just remember a strange story about the <glance>. As part of a case study from the beginning of this century which still fascinates me. It concerns a transfer from english to german as well as from words to images. It's the theoretical figure of a cross, or

probably the doublecrossing a patient can play with himself or his analysts, or a writer like Freud could play with his readers, referring to passages of his writings as <theoretical fictions> a strategy I'd like to adopt in order to follow my true storytelling on the theoretical plane. So: Do you know the anecdote Sigmund Freud tells to open his article on „Fetishism“? It's about the „Glanz“ (shine) on the nose of certain female persons, which was a patient's exclusive condition for his sexual pleasure. Nobody else could see this „Glanz“. The strange story behind this fact is hidden in the english word <glance> which the german patient must have heard from his english nurse before he completely forgot this language of his early age. Freud concluded that the fetish must be a <Penisersatz>, but not any old penis, but a special one. The one belonging to his mother, normally disappearing in later years, but in this case still faithfully adored. It's clear to see, we have reached a zone, where visibilities or invisibilities can't be clearly differentiated, a sort of pictorial magic, able to produce hallucinatory effects, especially the fascinum of pictures. Did you know that the latin word <fascinum> means <penis>? The pictorial illusion par excellence.

### medial reflection

So I can repeat my theses now: 1. The sexual difference is visible. 2. The sexual difference is invisible. If both shall be in operation, something emerges, which has to be named a problem, but in the logical, not the tragic meaning of the word. First I shall come to thesis number 1: The sexual difference is visible. If you don't mind I'd like to start with an illustration of the visibility of the <sexual difference>. I'd like to stimulate an pictorial imagination by this sight -- that calls the female and male sexual organs before your <inner eye>. Please will you all shut your eyes now! And already imagine this difference. There won't be very much to say after you'll have seen it on my slide in a second, because -- as always -- looking at a picture tends to swallow the words.

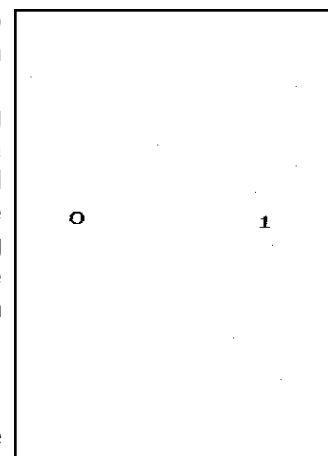


Especially this sort of picture. Please open your eyes now.

For me this seems to be an up-to-date-illustration of a difference. For it is the state of the art of modern media technologies which makes it simple as well as impossible to answer the old question for the picture. The problematic answer has to be: **A picture is data**. And data consist of what? Of <pure> differences. Nothing but differences. And so my slide can be called timeless as well. At least in the freudian sense, when he describes the unconscious as „timeless“. By the way there are some parallels known between the electricity in the integrated circuits in a computer and the electricity of the neural activity in the brain.

My slide with the <0> and the <1> illustrates the simple idea of a difference. You may think of the flow of electricity in a closed circuit or non-flowing electricity, if the circuit has been interrupted. It is one or the other: <0> or <1>, as these numbers do in fact represent as well something you can identify. That is: Two identities. Two informations. Two bits. Binary digits. My slide illustrates a difference: Like between two sexes. Please think of the binary sexes.

Concerning the identification of a subject, its gender, which will have been founded on pictorial perceptions, we can refer to this <pure> difference as well. In every case a child will have noticed the picture of the other sex, differing from it's own reflected image in a mirror. **But - there is a hook and there is an eye. The hook is the picture, formed by the astonishing fact that a difference will be perceived by a glance at the form of a picture.** Please have a look at my slide again.



No equalvalence, as may be suggested by my chosen picture of two ciphers can be found concerning gender, in a society which priviliges the glance, where the psychic structuring of the infant is triggered by the glance and pictorial phenomena. After the birth it is examined if it is there or not, the male organ. Yes or no, related to a pictorial phenomenon.

I hope you noticed that a tiny but fundamental shift has taken place in my phrases. The ciphers are in this sense now connected to the male and the female identity. At the left you would now find the female, at the right the male.

Defined values are from this point of view related to the ciphers. (Or did anybody already identify the <1> with the man and the <0> with the woman?) Now it counts only if there is something to see, and there seems to be something missing at the right. **What makes the**

<woman> in this respect? It must be at the same time a visible and identifiable image of one sex as a visible absence in this image, that sticks to her image as the invisible.

Did you notice: while describing the female side of this slide we just passed over to the second thesis, claiming that the sexual difference is invisible. (As some of you may have already noticed, nothing here is balanced or symmetrical.) Now: What about this invisibility of the <sexual difference>? Personally this seems much more interesting to me. Because as I said -- there is a hook and there is an eye and the hook is the picture. The same slide can now serve to illustrate this hook and make us see the invisibility of the <sexual difference>.

According to the shift to be found in the „Écrits“ of Jacques Lacan, processing the linguistic turn of psychoanalysis <after Freud>, this unbalanced status of the visible has some extreme consequences for the position of the woman in our patriarchal societies, which I think we all have experienced. I mean, thinking of the picture of a female sex („the fair sex“) it comes out soon that we've left the sector of visibility (Attention!) and reached invisibility. Because: What makes this picture so sexy for us? I suggest: it's invisible parts, especially (from my point of view) the absence of a penis. We'll try to have a close-up on this, reaching finally the zone of <signifiants> which seem to be able to produce an exciting variety of hallucinatory effects, especially the fascinating pictures.

This means: Invisible on the slide would of course already have been the representation of the so called <pure> or <sheer> difference. As always: there must be two terms to represent, or more precisely: to form a difference. **A**

**difference can't exist on its own. A difference has no self. No identity.**

But if now some of you are not convinced already, still desiring to see this difference, nevertheless the sexual difference, which makes a woman, we may try again. An additional experiment. Please have a look at this slide now.

Here I removed the two identities, in order to make the difference appear. But I think this doesn't really work.

**Trying to accept this as an image**

**of an absence, we can't help seeing a frame of darkness surrounding a white picture.** It does change a little but not basically if we imagine the empty slide-frame with no film in it in the projector. It's almost the same case, because we have learned too well to identify pictures. Having for instance seen thousands of beautiful coloured slides of art-works or after somebody's holidays. I'm sorry but I think we can never clear our minds and images of these terms that form differences. Doesn't this

look like the base of perception?

And if now we go back to the first slide, we could just as much try to see the difference itself by looking with all possible concentration at the empty space between the two ciphers. It doesn't appear, does it?

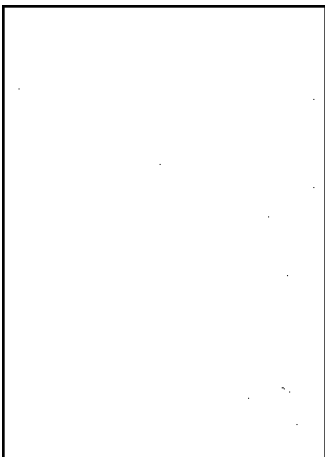
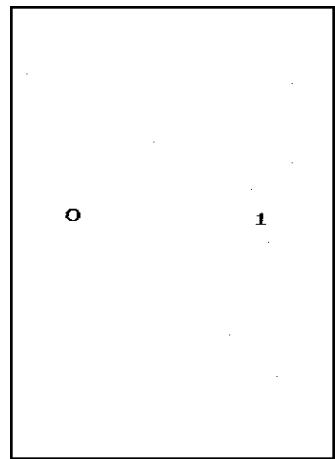
Of course, this is not such a surprise, since we just demanded to see what makes the processus of signification. **Do I need to point out that there is nothing more invisible on earth than a <signifiant>?** Ferdinand de Saussure says in the „Cours de linguistique générale“ that language consists of differences. If you read it literally, he says that language, <la langue>, consists not of ideas, but of differences between the elements, the <signifiants>.

„Their most precise characteristic lies therein, to be something, what the others are not.“ And to refer again to Jacques Lacan, one could say his writings refer to nothing but the difference between <signifiants>. These differences form the structures of language and the unconscious, and also of pictorial perception. **Wanting to see the image of a difference itself would mean wanting to see the impossible image of perception and the unconscience itself.**

But somehow we can't think without images. There is a privilege of the glance, structuring even our abstract means of conception as a pictorial one. This would explain some impossible desires, for instance this one: to see the invisible sexual difference.

Doesn't the desire to see be as strong as the glance that always misses something? There must be something necessarily escaping the glance. Following the lacanian anecdotes in his text „The mirror's-stage as builder of the ego function“ it must be an essential blindness, structuring our pictorial perception. Blind we'll have been for the difference between a picture, which a mirror can show and our <selves> -- just in that moment (in the theoretical fiction of the lacanian writing) when we ourselves will have been constructed as an effect of the mirror image. Of course, identifying <signifiants> with the plane of meaning, with their <signifié>, perception can be called a necessarily mistaking function. **Why not admit that we are blind for the sexual difference as between a <0> and a <1>, because we always have to see pictures, and that means: something else?**

Admitted that a <signifiant> always is invisible, because it only can be realized in the function of a <signifié>, this



can explain quite a lot about current misinterpretations of reflected images as <ego> or of a <penis> as a <phallus>. **This means that the invisible of the <sexual difference> is the <phallus>**, „the signifiant designated to mark the effects of the <signifié> as a whole“, as Lacan writes in “The Meaning of the Phallus”. How is it possible then that the picture of the woman, considered as one of bodily imperfection, is not perceived as imperfect at all, but as the most beautiful thing in the world, so to say as the model of all pictures? The seducing picture of such a beautiful <she> must show a supplementary invisible of course. It must even show more than a missing organ. This means there must be a doubly determined structure of invisibility in the case of the pictorial representation of the <woman>. This must be a cheat, a trick, of really sublime cunning.

<Her> picture must have some attributes which seem to exclude each other, but which are the base of <her> erotic attraction. This <she> must show and claim her female identity as well as embody the sexual difference itself. A logical paradox is linked with < her> acting: trying to be at the same time picture and difference between two pictures, that is <No-Picture>.

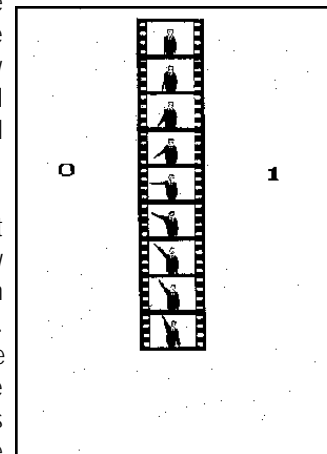
### Slow-motion, repetition

To make this thinkable and this means visible in some way, I'd like to quote the function of a well known media technology, being invented for over one hundred years ago. I'm speaking, of course of the film, based on the cinematographic illusion of motion. There we can take an apparatus in motion as a technical model. I must admit I've chosen this technology, because I like to have these mechanisms of transport and the cog wheels of the projector seizing in the perforated film-strip. This creates an image, doesn't it? To give a vision of a medium and something else: of a structure of the unconscious. There my intention could be found: **You'll notice that of all these mechanical parts and seizable mechanisms, with all their pictorial and imaginary distinctness will remain nothing more than differences after I described it in my way.** By the way this is some sort of excuse for me referring to such an old media technology, to the flickering lights in dark rooms, still quoted technically if you try to watch videos online. But following the line I laid out, my point will be that a connection to the ons and offs of electronical dataprocessing can easily be made.

**The cinematographic illusion is based on something invisible.** An invisible difference between the successive picture frames on the filmstrip. Once set in motion, these differences melt together for the perception apparatus (or even as Sigmund Freud called it, „The psychic apparatus“ to form the hallucinatory effect of the lifelike motion within the motion-picture. For, if in visual perception arises the impression of moving figures on the screen, then there must have been something to see which was not there. Or -- if you are

doubtful, which is perhaps adept in these cases of illusion -- which will not have been there. Perhaps elsewhere? If you then take out the film reel of the projector, and have a close look at the strip, every motion has gone there. It remain some identifiable figures, normally men, in individual frames. Such a schematic representation of a filmstrip, can now be placed on the slide with the representation of the <0> and the <1>, just in the middle, the empty space <in between>, where we tried to see the invisible <sexual difference>.

An illusion of a lifelike movement can't be perceived, even if we try very hard, concentrating our eyes on the little figures, aligned in the center. Or does anyone see the rising or the lowering of an arm? But the perforations on both sides of this sketched filmstrip let us imagine the



form of the cogwheels in the projector and other parts that help to produce the movement of the filmstrip in the projector. The main part used in every projector now is the <Maltese cross>, a device to let the filmstrip move by fits and starts. During a shorter interval of time the film moves, during a longer the film stands still, in an alternating manner. If the filmstrip didn't stand still most of the time, there would be nothing to recognize, but only one stream of colours or greys melted all together.

But these alternating stops and quick transports of the filmstrip take place at least 16 times per second. The speed of this projection process has to surpass the speed of the physiological ability of visual perception. So: what is happening between the individual frames of a filmstrip, must remain invisible during the run of the film through its projection.

Between these individual frames we should be right to suppose <the motion>. So let us now examine closely what we can see between the individual frames of this filmstrip. **It's evident. There is nothing to see -- any <motion>. Or almost <nothing>, just the same black line, which seems at the same time to disappoint and to encourage our desire to see, just like the black lines or circles or stars in pornographic pictures.** This repeated black lines form a border and an interruption between two minimally differing frames.

There we have the same problem again, just as we tried to see the difference between the <0> and the <1>. But only with a strategy of <repeating> this invisibility, something new can come to representation.

This <repetition> corresponds to the <repetition> of our perceptual structure by the cinematographic apparatus. This apparatus has to mimic structures of the <psychic apparatus>. If it didn't it couldn't produce its illusions on

our perception, couldn't function at all. And another conclusion can be made: The <psychic apparatus> can only be conceived by the models of media technologies.

**Because these black lines between the frames are parts of a working media technology, of a mechanism of perceptual illusion in function, they give us really a model of what we already tried to see between the <0> and the <1>: the unconscious itself.**

Isn't this a real theoretic sensation? Almost unbelievable, but believe me: **These black lines bring the impossible picture of a <signifiant>, of <the phallus> to visibility. Voilà.** And why not producing another theoretical climax, just now? Do you remember the freudian analysis of the <fetish> as a <Penisersatz>? Jacques Lacan takes another step ahead, by claiming that the image of a <woman> has to be perceived in the function of the <phallus> to unfold its eroticism. So, where -- the hell -- is the woman in this story? She is -- at least in my animated theoretical cartoon on this slide -- placed inside the apparatuses of media and perception. For there is one zone in this picture, where we directed our glance two times, trying to see the impossible picture of a difference. **I'd like to situate the <woman> in this artificial zone.** In the middle of a cross, forming an intersection, an <in-between>.

Who is still interested in the image of the <man>? For instance where in this pictorial construction <his> gender could be found? The answer sounds bizarre. Once again referring to Jacques Lacan, this position towards the sexual difference has to be characterized as one of illusion too. <He> has to pretend to possess this <signifiant>, the <phallus>. But for the erotic attraction of his image this has the strange consequence, that „concerning human beings the male parade appears as feminine.“ (cited from "The Meaning of the Phallus".) This means for our model of the perception of the <sexual difference> that even the little male figure has become somewhat invisible. Transformed into the impossible image of this <she>, demonstrated in slow motion. The difference between the raised or not raised finger, in latin called „digitus“, has become irrelevant from this point of view. <0> or <1>.

### Digital feminism

Now I have to go back to my announcement: to install a link from this cinematographic aspects to a possible digital feminism. This is not so difficult any more, because as I tried to show: feminism is digital, has to be and has always been. Just a moment: <feminism>? Was it all about <feminism>? Yes, because of the necessary constructions of a <she>, subject of and to <feminism> as a multitude of discriminating strategies, with the advantage of reading and rewriting the pictures and concepts of this <she>, constructed by the framing of a dominant sexually discriminating culture. I just tried to

sketch one of such rewritings of a <she> in the terrains of psychoanalysis and media-theorie.

The explicit link to a cyberfeminist position can make a quotation of Sadie Plant from her article: „The Future Looms: Weaving Women and Cybernetics“. And I think you'll notice at once a difference to the approach I just tried to make to a <she>, as a doubly determined differential structure. How does Sadie Plant approach the <difference>?

„The computer was always a simulation of weaving; threads of ones and zeros riding the carpets and simulating silk screens in the perpetual motions of cyberspace. It too presents the screens, the clothing of the matrix, already displaying the virtual machinery of which nature and culture are the subprograms, and joins women on and as the interface between man and matter, identity and difference, the actual and the virtual. Cybernetic systems are fatal to his culture; they invade as a return of the repressed, but what returns is no longer the same: cybernetics transforms women and nature, but they do not return from man's past, as his origins. Instead they come wheeling around from his future, the virtual system to which he has always been heading. For the last 50 years, as his war machine has begun to gain intelligence in readiness for his last stand, women and computers have unleashed a proliferation of screens, intelligences, lines of communications, media, and simulations with which to hack it down. No longer the void, the gap, or the absence, the veils are already cybernetic; an interface taking off into his own unmanned future.“

Her approach to the difference (like the difference between <0> and <1>) in this quotation seems to identify the difference with the <0>. There is something missing. <0>, is that: a lack? In her words „the void, the gap, or the absence“. Does the text follow (without noticing) the discrimination of the patriarchal tradition, accepting and repeating the prevalence of the <1>? In her description, claiming historical validity, the <0> has already disappeared in the last 50 years, has mutated to the other cipher, with the growing alliance of women and computers. But as a consequence we would need an <ersatz-difference>, this has to be now a small and a big <1>. The big <1> of course stands for the actual woman, which is: a superior <man> with the prosthesis and extension of computer technology and communication lines, a superman reigning effectively over media „with which to hack it down“. <It>, the „war machine“? The <he>? The <1>? To „hack“ the male (aggressive) sex AND to glorify a concept of presence at the expense of the absence, means from my point of view (at the <difference>) a necessary circulus vitiosus or -- with the words of Sadie Plant -- another „return of the repressed“. **What will return to her strategy? The difference between an absence and a difference. The <phallus>, as conceived by the theoretical**

## approach.

I think we know this technics of representation. It's a form of incantations, a <genre> of phallic identification in daydreams of omnipotence. And we know this technics of transporting abstract terms into personification very well from films. Don't you see the beautiful young, self-confident she-hero, hacking down the evil war-technologies? Chased by old police cars, but escaping with her wonder -virtual magic car, faster, bigger and stronger than everything? A fairy-tale in animated cartoon style, maked up with the title of a documentary. It forms quite a contrast with the above constructed and so-called theoretical animation between the <0> and the <1> which could as a matter of fact claim greater documentary qualities.

## Slime

Personally I came to prefer films with no happy ends. The others are so difficult to imagine as lasting longer than the filmreel. Happy end means, the film has to end. Because: what would be going on afterwards? In a film with a bad ending you can at least continue the story by yourself, inventing or desiring a happy one, whichever you prefer.

I think of a short dialog in „Glen or Glenda“ -- the unforgettable film by Ed Wood from 1953, with the more explicit subtitle „I changed my sex“. „I guess I have a problem, I mean a real problem I had never to face before.“ „Our whole existence is one big problem after the other.“ And this is pronounced in such an affectionate tone that I have to refer to it later.

It's just: I love horror films. It's just -- that I learned that they are all about <castration> representing the real fears of what is believed to be a <woman>. They are from my point of view all about the <sexual difference>, working out the mysteries of the <glance>.

So I'd like to show some scenes of an US sci-fi film from 1958 which I personally use as a theoretical magnifying lens on a fascinating literal figure in cyberfeminist writing. Just quoting two or three lines of the <Bitch Mutant Manifesto> from VNS Matrix, that are: „The clitoris is the direct line to the matrix -- VNS Matrix.“ „VNS Matrix terminators of the moral code, mercenaries of slime, go down on the altar of abjection“. Somehow there is the image of a so called <bad girl>, shining up in my phantasies, producing enormous, frightening masses of <slime>. Because <she> is somehow always sexually excited. She always can -- you 'll know what. Or what exactly does <slime> mean? This was my question and I found my personal answer in this science fiction film, called „The Blob“, directed by Irvin S. Yeaworth jr. in 1958.

## Beware of the Blob

A typical brief description, this one taken from the

Leonard Maltin Review, is: „Endearingly campy classic of cheap 50s sci-fi has „Steven“ (Steve McQueen) in his first starring role) leading teenagers into a battle to save their small town from being swallowed up by giant glop of cherry Jell-O from outer space. Not really all that good, but how can you hate a film like this?“

This is not very precise and even worse, I think doesn't hit the crucial subject of the film. I would call it the <sexual difference>. You can seize this aspect much more, if you accept that the starring role is not given to Steve McQueen, but to this strange <blob>. These are the lyrics of the title song: **„Beware of the blob. It creeps and leaps and climbs and slides across the floor and through the door and all around the wall. As much a splotch -- be careful of the blob.“**

Sounds funny and sounds like an attack on identity itself. „Beware“: my borders are being absorbed, my

1. The cinema.  
The worst accident, the scene, where more subjects than in any other scene of the film are killed by the <blob>. That's in the cinema. That's the cinema. A film in the film about an immersion of the real. We can read on the cinema board the program of the „Midnight Spooky Show“: „Daughter of Horror“ with Bela Lugosi.



2. This is the moment, when the masses are rushing out of the cinema. The revolutionary ideal. Interesting is: what will have been happening just before, in the cinema?

identity, my skin



3. Now as one visual answer to this question I could show a girl's underwear. It's a glance on a pettycoat of the leading she, just being carried away from the greedy <blob>. As you may notice soon: almost all the women in the film fall down to earth, when their eyes meet the creeping <blob>.

becomes permeable,



and I don't really know

who I am any more.

The film doesn't leave any doubts: these dangers have to do with sex. Especially repressed, especially returning from outer space: and this appears to be <the blob>. I find it interesting to concentrate on the position of the leading <she>, played by Aneta Corseaut. And would like to show you the representation of this <she>, which I think has to be met in a constellation with the <blob> as her alter ego. Some slides shall now show the main elements.

There must be something like a recognition as in a mirror, an identification. A strange relationship which combines the murderous <blob> to the female sex and its frightening effects. I 've put together some scenes on a video tape, not only resuming my personal keyscenes of the <blob> but combining them with scenes of a second film.

### Daughter of Horror

This angle of different images and scenes reflecting each other tries to to make a comment on the <film in the film>, the „Daughter of Horror with Bela Lugosi“ referred to in „The Blob“: the reason why the people have to leave the cinema. I looked it up, but didn't find a film with this title. Even the poster shown in the cinema does not help in this search, for it is quoting the poster of a

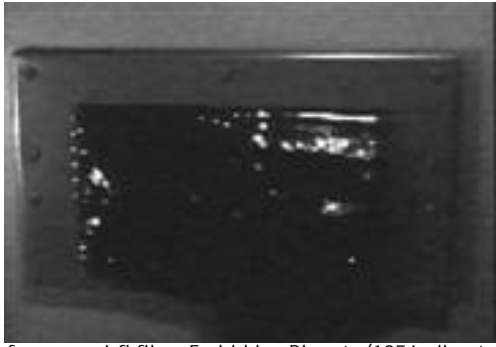
tioned above. My <montage>, suggests that the scenes from „Glen or Glenda“ which I added to the scenes of „The Blob“ , are the ones explicitly referred to in „The Blob“ . They can give to see on a different plane what will have been happening in the cinema, causing the ultimate horror. They may now overlap, invade or even swallow the perception of the original scenes of „The Blob“ , showing giant masses of <blob>-material penetrating the cinema -- which from behind will soon be reaching the spellbound audience. We are allowed to have a glance at the film being shown: some overacted black and white scenes, an artificial and pathetic male voice as story-teller in the off. These scenes appear to be striking similar to certain moments of <Glen or Glenda>, as to the whole visual and narrative structure -- as you can examine.

### filmstills from „The Blob“



### filmstills from „Glen or Glenda“





famous sci-fi film „Forbidden Planet“ (1956, directed by



Fred McLeod Wilcox). I decided to concentrate on the non-

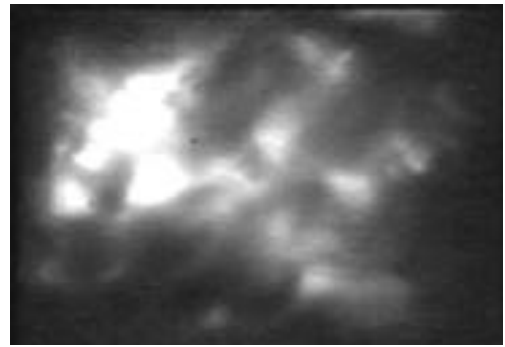
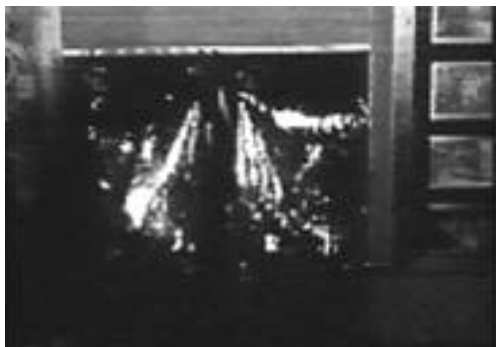
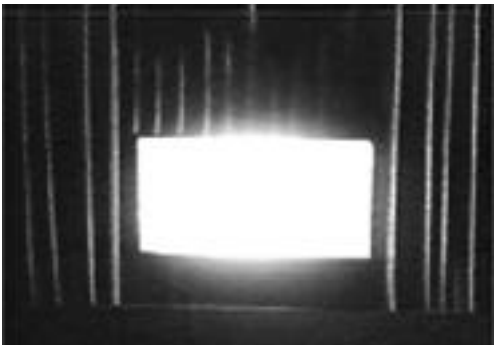
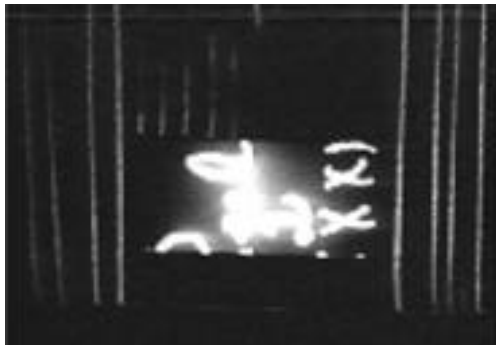


fictional part of the title, the name „Bela Lugosi“, because the film



„Daughter of Horror“ seemed to be a cunning fiction, invented for „The Blob“. In 1958 Bela Lugosi was already dead for two years, remembered especially for his early „Dracula“ interpretations which became personal cult. I searched for his last films in the fifties and found a very spectacular coincidence with the female attribute as „Daughter of Horror“: the very strange and wonderful film, dealing explicitly with the <sexual difference>, the Ed Wood Film „Glen or Glenda“ from 1953, men-





### Cyberfeminism

I hope we'll have been seeing <slime> in the intersection of these two films -- a virtual substance like <cyberfeminism>. This strange existence, crossbred in filmic representation from the immortal <blob> with the bordercrossing <Glen/Glenda>. I d' like to claim it for „the sex which is not one“, is „ce sexe qui n'en est pas un“ (Luce Irigaray) or to say it with the brilliant lacanian shortcut: „...**does not exist**“. „Il y a une jouissance à elle, à cette elle qui n'existe pas et ne signifie rien.“ (Jacques

Lacan, Le Séminaire Livre XX: Encore) **A paradoxal <she> in the space between images and words -- forming this difference. Imagine a paradoxal material (as the <blob> will have been) penetrating and producing short-circuits in a logic based on the principe of identity and presence.**

If it were upon me, exactly this would be: Cyberfeminism.

Alla Mitrofanova

# LOOKING FOR "INFORMATION", "SUBJECT" AND "BODY" FROM THE METAPHYSICS TO THE PRESENT

(cyberfeminist perspective)

reinstall them into current situations in order to get theoretically functional positive tools.

## Introduction

1) The general motive for my work is to discover how to be happy, working well, liberated from compulsory coding, normative images, prescribed and limiting functions. To be able to do what u want and to do it productively. In other words, I am going to dig around a few connected topics: a) how could we distill a database of information from structuralist and phenomenological attitudes; b) to free the transcendental subject in ourselves who still has a dominant position in understanding the world. S(h)e demands an order in an identity system, in structures of representations and perceptions. (S)he fights for a stable ontological surface, when descriptive and operative models are determinant; c) how could we install an embodiment/ disembodiment problem which favors embodiment into theoretical discourse organized around the consciousness. As a body we take a world and a body control and limited operative tools to take and to use it. The problem is to dig up the body into discursive practices, to make techno discourse embodied for the sake of cyberfeminism.

2) Cyberfeminism is an ideological speculation which serves us as a browser for viewing and navigating through current cultural changes and historical heritages. A good thing about the label is that it is a provocation, makes emotional noise, conceptual mess. It is a fake ideological interface. Cyberfeminism is a useful term to feminist philosophy for its radical impact on body and technology theories.

Hacking is becoming a common operative term to reach a quick result in economy, culture, politics, and theory from an outsider position. We have to redefine a problem, to reduce or rethink tools and terms. Looking for short cuts in philosophical heritage for explicit directions means taking on a hacking operative model. Hacking produces a functional quick model, it helps to safeguard our own interest. Any good descriptive or analytic discourse has a predatory power inside itself: it is very easy to step into and hard to run away from an order where everything looks rational and connected. Hacking philosophy means to analyze concepts taken from specific traditions into actual contexts, to purify their operative model and

## 01.

I propose to follow along a historical passage. There is a danger of getting lost and using too much historical slang. But there is a benefit in making a few terms more strong and operative.

There is a methodological possibility to divide tradition (last 3 centuries) into 3 parts in a linear manner on the basis of academic historical classification and critical evaluation of tradition: x) kantian reimburse of metaphysic, y) post-structuralist reimburse of kantian tradition, often called after Kant transcendental philosophy, and z) my own experiments in cybertheory. We try to show a tradition on 3 control levels:

- 1) how terms are defined to operate;
- 2) what reference system serves terms; what is taken as immanent;
- 3) how it serves needs. A body is a checking point.

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METAPHYSIC	TRANSCENDENTAL	OPERATIVE
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	<terms>	
ESSENCE		DATA
THING	OBJECT	EVENT
EGO	TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT	AVATAR or SERIAL SUBJECT
	HUMANISM	

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	<reference system>	
UNITY	CONSCIOUSNESS	KEY WORD
LOGOS	STRUCTURE	INTERACTION
	CATEGORIES	HYPERLINKS
	REPRESENTATION	

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	<immanent>	
ETERNITY	*	DATABASE
		EXISTENCE-EMBODIMENT)

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<http://www.dux-ru/virtual>

\*Immanent plan is beyond the model, it could be full of surrogates like Power, Knowledge, Death of Transcendental Subject

1. Classic Metaphysics (beyond Aristotle) insists on identity of things and equity of Reason. Ego is obliged to cognize adequacy thru doubt. METAPHYSIC creates mysterious order on the plane of Eternity. A Thing is presented by its essence. A Thing could only be questioned to show its essence. Essence of things is a shared essence of nature. A nature is already completed as a Universe and Eternity. The Essence is unchangeable. A metaphysical body is already complete, as a container of subliminal and brutal things, it could be misrepresented, but a correction should bring essence back. The Body is a mirror of the Universe, a microcosm of eternity. A power is done as an order of things.



from local to universal. The moral state is incorporated into consciousness. It should control the identity of the Subject and modality of formal appearances or representations. Everything goes to be hardly connected and controlled system. System goes to represent itself as a structure (totalitarian way) or phenomenon (more liberal way). Time became the internal foundation or time dimension of Phenomenon. Subject trapped itself installing a system of immanent operative tools: What is a consciousness supposed to be. Cognizant police is a Sense as a hyper significance. The Sense represents the deep structure of representations. Sense doesn't apply to nature, but it is a basic method of understanding, it is a result of cognizant operations. Sense applies to the human subjective ability to represent the world as a structure with concrete identity of objects. Consciousness is always reducible to itself and its own circumstances -- total recall of consciousness.

2. The tradition of transcendental philosophy could be traced from Kant to Husserl, and basically means making a foundation of ontology analyzable. Trans-cendence is taken now not as interface to Eternity or God, but as a gnosiological and ontological problem. It is not a thesis of beliefs on the plan of eternity and unity, but it is a problem of building on identified tools of philosophical reflection -- what became a consciousness.

Object is an identity term to represent Being outside of Subject. Observer and observed, object and Transcendental Subject are becoming an ontological duality. In this way we take the consciousness and perception as a concrete dominant operative machine. Here we should reinstall a plane of immanence from nature to consciousness, from union of being to transcendental reason. It affects the whole story: if immanence is shifted from nature to consciousness, from essence to representation, we exclude



3. A Cyber paradigm reduces consciousness from transcendental ability, which was a self-referential system, to an operative term and renamed it as an intelligence. If the Subject lost its generic position, its dual component -- object lost its guarantee of identity becoming data.

**01) PERCEPTION, REPRESENTATION, TRANSCENDENCE AND DATA.**

For Aristotle material is presented as form. For classical metaphysic the thing is equated with essence. There is no problem of subjectivation or alienation of form or thing.

But for transcendentalism the traditional world is possible as a product of a Subject based operative system: perception, transcendence, representation. In current (cyber) culture we have a quite different operative model:

- the order of representations which was organized as a system of Knowledge is reduced to information as an unstructured catalogue of data. When knowledge became information it means that a self-referential system, which up to now was called consciousness, is lost together with the perception of a unified subject, which

Being which is not represented in accepted forms -- objective forms. Reflection and practical reason are tools to operate with objectified forms. A self-referential system is a hierarchy of categories from casual to abstract,

worked as a filter in making objects.

-Transcendence became an empty menu, there is no task to transcend or generalize information in hierarchy and unity. We use information without attempting to organize it as a system, to follow a genesis of data. A data is an operative unit of the catalogue. Data refers to itself or another data excluding a subjective referential order. The transcendental subject simply rests meeting data.

-Perception as personal empirical foundations of objects are not usable with data. We use data without control by our perception. Data normally passes over a filter of perception. There is no question whether it is perceivable, or what is a reality. Any existing data has its own rights, it is legislated because it exists.

So there's the adventure of data becoming more and more controversial. Data was born in a transcendental paradigm to be a specific kind of intentional object (like a picture or a sculpture for transcendental art), also controlled by perception. This was a very limited position. But soon data ran away from the control of perception and intention. Data applied for the new status: neither Subjective, nor objective. Data refers only to the database. The database belongs to the plane of immanence.

## 02) FROM DATA TO DATABASE COINCIDENCE (event) OF DATA STREAMS

A database is a uncounted sum of local catalogues, even though some of them have rigid organization, the sum can only be a pool of data. Different streams of information don't even cross each other, go in different directions without knowing each other. They don't recognize a dominant stream. Database is hardly alienated cultural heritage, it belongs to the plane of immanence not to the order of the subject. There is no subjective reference system in the order of data. Lets take as a conclusion: database is a pool of information organized locally or discursively, which could be imagined as Bodies Without Organs (thanks to schizoanalytic discourse). Bodies Without Organs are made as certain locality, but presented and could be used as unlocated data (deterritorialisation). But the

functional status a of database is an archive. How could it be revitalized? Supposedly by only linking data we produce a kind of data event. A coincidence (event) or hyperlink of data could produce the Event, could animate data, deliver or revitalize the Body Without Organs. (In the case of Power: It could be produced in any nook and transmitted on any level of social organization) Hyperlinks of database neglect an order of localities. Body without organs is a body prepared for cutting. It could be data Frankenstein, but the process of conserving baby and baby delivery is strictly immanent and cannot be manipulated. We can not manipulate an Event, we only could desire and help the Event to happen. (as opposed to this the transcendental subject could manipulate events because the main part of it: cognition and description is a priority of the Subject)



Data could be revitalized only by being copulated with intensities (subjectively or discursively generated) -- productive forces of revitalization.

## 03) SUBJECTIVITY AND REFERENCE SYSTEM

A concept of Subjectivity always has been combined with reference systems (transcendental subject was made as an operator of transcendental act). "Subjectum" as a term (as Heidegger recovered) consists of "what is already done to us" and "how we are going to take it": world and tools. In the transcendental view Subjectum is only possible as personality and its tools belong to consciousness.



The Superhuman (superman) of Nietzsche is invited in different discussions as a breaking point into consciousness based philosophical tradition from one side and anthropology based theory (how it was shaped by Foucault) of subject. Superhuman is an embodied consciousness, it could mean the end of self-consciousness service. If subjectivity is embodied, it should take as a reference point not the transcendental hierarchy of categories, but complexity of body functions. If it is embodied as superhuman, it should ignore limitations given to human as social and historical

dimension grasped in structure and phenomenon. Superhuman highlighted hypercultural links in opposition to human, who is materialized and located in a concrete situation, to which he is obligated and only possible. That is why superhuman is a scandal - discursively he is not possible for transcendental humanity and for anthropology.

A process of phenomenological reduction of consciousness to its foundations, shown by Husserl, was a way to reduce transcendental subject to non-existence. It seems to be a turning point for Heidegger to develop a fundamental ontology of existence. "Dasein" is a kind of self-reference scheme for the heideggerian Subject. It is a way to deliver the Subject to the immanent plane, to install subjectivity into an open scope of existential possibilities. Dasein proposes to process a multitude of possible individual realizations, as a kind of system

operator. (This is how it is used in post-heideggerian psychiatry by M. Boss "The influence of Martin Heidegger on the birth of the alternative psychiatry, Logos #5, Moscow 1994). The main character of Dasein is temporality, but not only in the Sense of mortality, but as a temporal process and finitude of any identifications.

In that discourse Subject is hardly connected with Event (Co-being). Event produces Identity, but event can not be represented as a chain of identified objects. In Event Identity is temporal and cannot produce identity orders. Heidegger, Nietzsche, Deleuze gave us a notion of process identification which is 1) coexistence, 2) Event and 3) activity, which are only a place for subject to be presented. Event is temporal, unstructured, local, personal. Event constructs from meanings (database) and meaninglessness: existence, Being, intensity...

The Being shown by Heidegger as an open stream of existence is limited and functionalised by Deleuze into intensity as a preformal force vitalizing Event and operating with Body Without Organs.

#### 04) EMBODIMENT AS A POSITIVE NECESSITY

Body is presented in a culture as a different structure of

concepts of what body is + images + functional models how body should act. Our task is to put body into a flexible controlling position and to liberate body from compulsory prescriptions of what body is. A connected question is: either body is done for sake of perception or it is a location for personalized Being (existence) to happen. In the latter case a body could be equated to

Nothingness. Any way a personal body should be generated on the field of existence, intensity, but not on the field of regulated descriptive concepts. What is an existence, intensities (energy/drive)? It is opposed to information? It is not desire, desire on the microlevel as Foucault showed, is still arranged by cultural coding, desire helps with switching one designation to another. Body is not a form, has no meanings, has no exact borders, it is not a concept (data), but a field where concept (data) could recreate a function. In other words, we could say that skipping immanence now is



folded into the body.

Embodiment includes hyper-dimension to be a controlling instance, to function as a singularity above the formal compendium of catalogue. We could take a body as a positive functional temporal model in which permanently changing being is equalized with permanently changed

forms (information): desire = ability = possibility + unlimited (or satisfactory) DATA BASE of information (concepts) and formal expressions and images. If the balance is not achieved, operative system has bugs or another dysfunction: wrong concepts disorient existence and existence became destructive, even self destructive. If we are embodied correctly, we feel the freedom to live, if not -- we have some fields of activity blocked for us (as in compulsory gender divisions came to traumatic end in Europe in 1960th).



Embodiment is a hot key for the contemporary culture comparable to what the "soul" or "god flesh" was for medieval culture, and organs and anatomy for classical European culture. So embodiment is an intensive cultural process (micro poesis), new for every culture (formal catalogue). Even talking about disembodiment we install some concepts in process of embodiment. EMBODIMENT as a necessary task of creation.

# MOTHER, FATHER, POWER AND THE GLOBAL PROJECT

When I think about gender injustice and social imbalance, I ask myself: does injustice exist in reality or only in the minds of feminists, and does imbalance necessarily mean injustice? I would also like to ask somebody: why do we speak about unlimited men's/father's power? And where did they take this power from? It's a very strange situation, because men have no ontological/immanent reasons to be powerful. The physical advantages could not be the basis for social and political power. All of us -- men and women -- are sons and daughters. We follow our mothers. Mother's influence is very strong in all aspects -- from the physical to the spiritual.

Mother forms our mind and destiny. In archaic cults, mother was a god, and God was a mother. Women's Power was supported by her natural right to give birth and love. Males had to serve mother's mission of reproduction. A male's life was not valuable and was sacrificed by the community to the needs of reproduction, family, generation.

We know about ancient hunters and soldiers, but could you imagine these guys, who have to die every time to save a group of women and kids. It was the main purpose of their destiny, their supertask. They were not even fathers, only something like the males in an animal herd with strong legs and hands.

Of course I don't know what really happened, but asymmetry between Powerful Mother and males became dangerous for the population. The male had to become Father. (Compare: Harmoniously organized family relationships depend on equal expression of father's and mother's elements. And Mother always supports Father's authority in spite of the personality of the actual Father.) We usually link the patriarchy and Father's Power to Monotheism. Monotheism may have been born as a reaction to the unlimited and eternal power of Mother. But it was not men's reaction to their oppression, it was not a revolt, but rather an unconscious social reaction, when women delegated part of their power to men. It was not the father's conspiracy, but Father's/Mother's agreement. In terms of modernity, it was very ambitious to risk a complicated collaborative project to transmit some power to the Father. It was necessary to form and extend

the territory of male responsibility and to increase his separate voice.

Father could not replace Mother in her Power because he could not give birth. He could only create his own alternative territory, and prove its importance and equality to the one of the Mother. So people had to run the terrific ideological machine. The most complicated task was to create a way of legitimizing the Father's Power. The project needed a supreme Male Power who could delegate his authority to Father. The problem was that the Mother's supreme Power was based on her ontological natural background. The Father's Supreme Power had no clear, uncontested ontological basis and was always virtual. The mutual male/female efforts produced the huge narrative to support father's space of responsibility and authority. All the culture from theology to philosophy, science, art and politics were organized like an ideological industry to support father's authority and to prove his right to be valued. And even this tremendous effort and permanent work could not save Father from criticism.

Today, listening to women's talks, reading their stories, I can see that in spite of cultural differences, women from everywhere underline the strong patriarchal power in the social field and unlimited Mother's Terror in the private one. It means that the project was successful.

During the last two or maybe more millennia, the narrative of the Father's gained too much. The virtual father's world, that was produced, became too real, too large. It came into conflict with something very important for the harmonious functioning of our system. So, society like a self-regulated system, began to extend the Women's space, women's territory again, using at least two possibilities:

1. Discreditation and Occupation of father's virtual world
2. Extending of Mother's discourse (creation of virtual reality of its own)

Again, our common male/female efforts in different spheres of life have been oriented towards this goal since the end of the 18th century. And before 1800 a lot was done for the future of feminisation. I have no doubt that visible cultural and social activity, as well as many of the historical events we cannot interpret in terms of

feminism, nevertheless served the needs of feminism. And at the same time they are only visible signs of any "supernatural" task (or absolutely natural task that we could not yet observe from our local point of view, or we still don't have the key to understand) that has to be realized in different ways in different cultural traditions. We realize our task unknowingly everywhere, without thinking about it. We do it in the same way as sportsmen in synchronous swimming, but we cannot understand one another.

The most obvious difference and misunderstanding is between East and West in the frame of Christian culture. Of course the borderline between East and West coincides with the division of Orthodox and Catholic-protestant traditions. This division reflects our psychological and cultural difference, nothing more. But this difference defines the ways of our activity in this world -- the way reality is constructed.

West: method of theoretical and ideological narration  
- well-developed theology  
- scientism in philosophy  
- strongly developed noncontradictory discourse is not only the instrument of knowledge, but the primary instrument of constructing a noncontradictory reality.

So, the virtual, ideologically strong Catholic-Protestant Father's world was established like an ideology and supported by theology/theory, science, politics and art.

East: ontological method  
- Undeveloped theory  
- art in science in philosophy  
- East does not care about description of experience or phenomena. Reality could express itself through ontology and history.  
- so the project of empowerment of Father was realized like the practical transmission of Mother's rights and gifts to their sons and husbands. Russian women acted in the social field through men, because they (women) took care of their authority and feelings.

The disembodiment of father's world and further feminization is developing by the traditional means.

For the West  
- through the development of the Father's discourse and science, in theoretical, political and sociological ways, using all the ideological achievements of the western past. Every more or less influential theory had become the platform for feminist reflection and reaction: Rousseauism, Marxism, Freudianism, and others... Western feminism uses the same "patriarchal" tools (words, ideas, scientific, social and political technologies) for its aims.

For the East  
- through ontology and history. Without any theory, and special feminist social and political activity. It looks like the chess game, where the first step was the separation of the church from the state by Peter the Great in the

18th century. After a few practical steps, including male/female Russian terrorism, the Czar's renunciation from Power, murder of Russian Czar. Soviet governmental feminism and atheism and, not least, abolition of private property, the Father's discourse died in Russia -- ontologically. You and we came to very similar results. But our experiences are mutually useless. You could not abolish private property and church, we could not produce your kind of ideological reality. But we could understand that none of us is more clever or more progressive. We work together for the "global project" and the aim of this project is hidden from us.

# LANGUAGE VERSUS NUMBERS

Before I start with the lecture, I would like to say some words about the first cyberfeministic international. Yesterday evening, we had a discussion about our press review and as you might have read on the poster outside, we are 40 women meeting here with different backgrounds from different countries. Some of them can be named as theorists, artists, programmers - but as you see, here, we do not have an exhibition, we are not writing texts, we are not programming - we are meeting here to look at each others use of the computer and internet technology and strategies that derive from these specific uses of the technology.

I would like to say in advance that I am a teacher of art history since one year, using the internet as my tool to produce, present and publish at the same time and my talk which I am giving at the moment is directed to the group of women that are part of the Hybrid Workspace and I will try to bring up some points of the discussions that we have already had since Sunday. But as well, of course, my talk - and this is the reason for our decision to set up our meeting as a conference - to give you, the audience and visitors of the Hybrid Workspace on the documenta X, the chance to take part in our process of thinking.

I would like to welcome you to sit down here, in our part of the space, my talk will last 30 minutes, if you just want to get a glimpse, please use the projection screen on the other side of this space.

On the projection screen, everybody should be able now, to see two windows, that were opened with Netscape, that is the most common browser that is used at the internet at the moment, the right window is used as a content list, the left window is used to give you visuals continuing my talk -- all of them are part of the education material that I am using in my teaching.

My talk is divided in several chapters. My first chapter is called "\*art\* is based on numbers" and you notice the asterix symbols - everytime I am using these symbols, I am addressing the common understanding of art -- which was part of the discussion in our group. The second chapter is focussing on the "medium" which is a more recent word than \*art\*.

My definition of a medium is "a communication tool based on the mix between numbers and language". The third point is "photography and film -- grab reality". Followed by "Computer technology as ART as Interface".

## 1

- \*art\* is based on numbers
- the use of mathematics as an abstract system of communication
- \*art\* work as a product
- Gothic - architecture  
([www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/LiberalArts/Platon.html](http://www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/LiberalArts/Platon.html))
- Renaissance - painting  
([www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/LiberalArts/Platon.html](http://www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/LiberalArts/Platon.html))
- Baroque - sculpture  
(Leonardo:  
[www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/Renaissance/Renaissance3a.html](http://www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/Renaissance/Renaissance3a.html))
- Liberal Arts that are divided into a group based on numbers or on language  
([www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/LiberalArts/Platon.html](http://www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/LiberalArts/Platon.html))

## 2

- medium is a communication tool between somebody who produces something and somebody who is looking or receiving the product
- art as products brings up the question why were these products produced
- different media are using different senses
- architecture - being in the space, hearing sounds that are reflected
- painting - visual sense, no longer linked to a special, fixed space
- sculpture - touchable, a 3-dimensional product in the space of the visitor
- ephemerical art is developed
- the discipline "art history" follows

## 3

- split between art and science
- photography is based on the perspectival rules that were developed in Florence by Brunelleschi in the 1430ies
- perspectival rules as software, the camera as an automat, a hardware
- a camera grabs visual from 3-D- \*reality\* onto 2-D-paper

- this influences our perception of \*reality\*
- wearing glasses or lenses, we are constantly correcting our perception of reality according to the Renaissance invention
- \*art\* is trying to avoid these rules  
([www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/NineteenthCentury/Nineteenth4.html](http://www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/NineteenthCentury/Nineteenth4.html))
- why were artists using the medium of oil painting to visualize something that could have been grabbed by photography?
- Edouard Manet vs. Adolph Menzel: negative and positive \*art\*  
([www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/NineteenthCentury/Nineteenth3.html](http://www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/NineteenthCentury/Nineteenth3.html))
- photography and TV is continuing the history of perspective, in the last decades, MTV and others are deconstructing this tradition

#### 4

- \*art\* vs. ART
- the main stream of the understanding of \*art\* is focussed on the visual sense and on the implication of three things: that we have a concept of a work, the production time of the concept, the presentation of the product
- also in performance art or concept art or land art, a concept is developing at the same time as its production and at the same time of its presentation
- originally, claim for visualization was a need for mnemotechnic reasons  
([www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/Renaissance/Renaissance2a.html](http://www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/Renaissance/Renaissance2a.html))
- perspectival art was developed as a tool to visualize the space between bodies or relations between bodies were visualized by their relation within space. As a consequence, the human body went out of focus. The perfect visualization of cyberspace is the result. Virtual reality environments which are mostly based on the same perspectival laws show a lack of bodies. The development of avatars as representatives of the human body within these spaces is still in process - to populate the empty spaces of cyberspace.
- The body, that fled perspectival painting  
([www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/Renaissance/Renaissance3b.html](http://www.ikm.his.se/~susanne/Renaissance/Renaissance3b.html)) was captured and grabbed again by the invention of the camera and film and is today in the process of leaving the story of visual arts once again: it is denying its integration into cyberspace or virtual reality.

#### 5

- Computer technology/Internet as ART as interface
- relating to Alla Mitrofanova's talk on Tuesday about the concept of the internet as a 'database' and the concept of the human body as an 'operative multitude'
- this database - the internet - is not pointing or claiming of being complete, on the contrary, it is using fragments of all media and all times as ready-mades. History which is sharing the same space as the human body in museums and libraries is now being integrated into this database.
- My ready-made lecture should show how the human body has left the cyberspace of western perspectival

visualization in which it was captured by cameras and film. This human body, free from its inclusion in virtual reality is now able to interact with the database via computer technology and internet.

- I suggest to understand computer technology as a medium - following my excursion through the history of art history above - that combines numbers and language, programming, using numbers to create visuals, develop time-based interfaces. Like this, each person is able to use all these features in a way that creates an individual interface.

- This interface allows and asks for the creation of an individual context for these readymades that are the material of the database. Like this, the context is not only related to the history of mankind, but also to the personal history of the person who is developing this interface. The creation of this individual interface is time-based and it is a productive work in and with this database. Every individual has to reposition his- or herself within or towards this pool of data.

- With this concept of "computer technology/internet as ART as interface" there is no longer a difference between neither the concept, the production or the presentation as well as there is no difference between the creator and the viewer.

- Computer technology/interface is no longer restricted to a preset of media, no longer related to a space that is shared with the human body, this interface is time-based which it was in times of visualization - this interface is ART

I would like to say some words to my lecture which was an experiment. We are sitting here at one of the most known international art exhibition, the documenta, and we are sitting in the Hybrid Workspace which is a work space that was created to give groups like the cyberfeministic group the possibility to experiment with the new technologies in context to the individuals back-grounds.

For me, as an art historian, the use of my language, of my words, is trying to give you another view, is trying to give you other perspectives, onto visuals that were made with numbers. In a way, I try to reframe your perception, maybe of reality. Nevertheless, it is very questionable, why we are sitting here, in this dark room instead of sitting outside in the sun. But it is part of our being here.

Alla Mitrofanva's comment after the talk:

"I enjoyed this talk very much, because I like how Susanne hacked the classical history of art. As a former art historian, I know very precisely, how terms are made in classical art history, on the base of content theory, how they produce beauty of thought and the whole context what art is and for what it is produced. And Susanne did hacking, in, I would even say, in a straight hacking way. She defined the problem differently, found different tools and got a quick result."

# BRANDON

On June 30, 1998, the Guggenheim Museum, in association with Society for Old and New Media, DeWaaq, Amsterdam, launched its first artist's project commissioned for the World Wide Web. Conceived by filmmaker and media artist Shu Lea Cheang, BRANDON: A One-Year Narrative Project in Installments explores issues of gender fusion and techno-body in both public space and cyberspace.

BRANDON derives its title from Brandon/Teena Brandon of Nebraska, USA, a gender-crossing individual who was raped and murdered in 1993 after his female anatomy was revealed. Cheang's project deploys Brandon into cyberspace through multi-layered narratives and images whose trajectory leads to issues of crime and punishment in the cross-section between real space and virtual space. The project, a multi-artist/multi-author/multi-institutional collaboration, will unfold over the course of the coming year, with interface developed (1996-1997) for artist collaboration and public intervention: bigdoll interface, roadtrip interface (Jordy Jones, Susan Stryker, Cherise Fong); Mooplay, interface (Francesca Da Rimini, Pat Cadigan, Lawrence Chua) and panopticon interface (Beth Stryker and Auriea Harvey). System programming by Linda Tauscher. During 1998-1999, we would invite guest curators to institute multi-author upload for each interface.

In development with Society for Old and New Media, DeWaaq, two netlink forum/installation are also scheduled for Theatrum Anatomicum interface (with Mieke Gerritzen, Janine Huizenga, Roos Eisma, Yariv Alterfin, Atelier Van Lieshout): The first, "Digi Gender Social Body: Under the Knife, Under the Spell of Anesthesia," to be held in fall 1998, will bring together noted cultural critics, genderists, surgeons, and bio-technologists to reconsider binary codes of male-female and the mapping of the digital body. The second forum, held in May 1999 in conjunction with the Institute on Arts and Civic Dialogue at Harvard University, is entitled "Would the Jurors Please Stand Up? Crime and

Punishment as Net Spectacle." The event, which will incorporate avatar performance and the deployment of a virtual court system, will convene a panel of legal scholars and provocateurs to preside a net public trial of sexual assaults in RL (real life) and cyberspace.

BRANDON is curated by Matthew Drutt, Associate Curator for Research, Guggenheim Museum (<http://www.guggenheim.org>) and produced in association with Society for Old and New Media, Amsterdam (<http://www.waag.org>), Caroline Nevejan and Suzanne Oxenaar/curators; Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue, Harvard University (<http://www.arts-civic.org>), Anna Deavere Smith and Andrea Taylor/directors; Banff Center for the Arts, Alberta (<http://www-nmr.banffcentre.ab.ca>) Sara Diamond/director of media arts.

BRANDON is part of a broader program in the media arts being led by John G. Hanhardt, Senior Curator of Film and Media Arts at the Guggenheim Museum.

Funding for BRANDON has been made possible by grants from The Bohem Foundation, a Moving Image Installation and Interactive Media Fellowship from The Rockefeller Foundation, a Computer Arts Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts, and in Holland, grants from

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# ULTIMA RATIO

## Software and Interactive Installation

For Ultima Ratio conflicts from real life and literature are reduced to their logical structures in order to process them in several functional and dysfunctional modes. To do this, a decision-support system from the field of AI has been implemented and modified, which permits those conflicts to be remodeled as pro and contra argumentations. The logical processes are displayed in realtime visualization as moving 3-D diagrams which simultaneously serve as interfaces. In the installation, this animation is projected onto an overhead disk. The images follow the observer's glimpse by means of a head/eye tracker, whereby the diagrams are distorted in accordance with the observer's ever-changing perspective. A chorus of computerized voices provides a recitation of the dispute thus generated.

### Ambivalence

Aesthetic experience is often the experience of contradictions. We encounter dilemmas, paradoxes or other forms of ambivalence in works of art, and we are all familiar with the figure of the literary hero who — in an aporetic situation — must make his tragic choice.



### Pro and Contra

"Ultima Ratio" is based on a formalism which permits ambivalences to be represented in the form of argumentations. In contrast to classical logics, several new varieties of formalism developed by Artificial Intelligence research tolerate inconsistencies and, for example, also permit exceptions to rules.

### Formalized Conflicts

Bits of information presented in the form of arguments

are no longer just casually arrayed alongside each other, but rather enable an automatic process of evaluation. The logical core of "Ultima Ratio" accesses a databank in which various types of — primarily literary — conflicts are stored as logical reconstructions. Installation visitors can expand this databank with new arguments, counterarguments, facts, and assumptions. The formalization of conflicts encompasses their interpretation and the explication of intuitions.

### Should Hamlet Kill Claudius?

Yes, since he wants to take revenge on Claudius who murdered Hamlet's father. No, because he believes that someone who is killed while praying goes to heaven. Fact: Claudius is praying. Therefore, do not kill him. What if Hamlet senses atheistic doubt (heaven?) in himself? Then yes, kill him.

### Shakespeare

Hamlet Act 3, Scene 3

Hamlet. [approaches the entry to the lobby]  
Now might I do it pat, now a' is a -praying -  
Fact: praying (claudius)

And now I do 't, [he draws his sword] and so a'  
goes to heaven, Rule: in\_heaven(Y) <- kills(X,Y),  
praying (Y)

And so am I revenged. That would be scanned: Rule:  
take\_revenge\_on(X,Y) <- kills(X,Y)

A villain kills my father, and for that...  
Fact: killed(claudius,king)

I his sole son do this same villain send  
To heaven...  
Why, this is bait and salary, not revenge.  
Rule: - take\_revenge\_on(X,Y) <- in\_heaven(Y)

X wants to take revenge on Y if Y killed a person Z  
being close to X, and the killing is not justified.  
Rule: goal\_revenge(X,Y), <-  
close(X,Z), killed(Y,Z), not justified (killed(Y,Z))

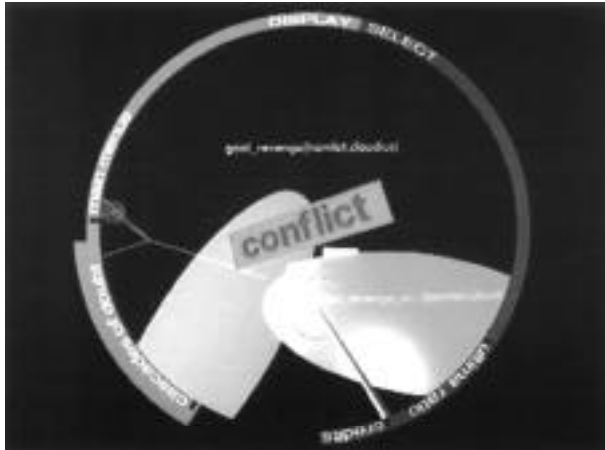
Hamlet and his father are close to each other.  
Fact: close(hamlet, king)

There is a conflict, if somebody wants revenge and can't.

Conflict: + <- goal\_revenge (X,Y), not take\_revenge\_on (X,Y)

Hamlet killing Claudius is assumed false, but this may be changed in the "remove conflict" mode.

Assumption: revisable (kills (hamlet, claudius), false)



### Decision-making

Several rational principles underlying the human decision-making process are implemented in the logical core of „Ultima Ratio“. For instance: don't believe a statement if its opposite is true; don't draw conclusions from defeated information, etc. With the help of these overriding deductive rules, the system can now carry out logical operations. This inherently rational deductive engine is used to produce various functionalities and dysfunctionalities, all of which provide commentary on the line of argumentation as a method of dealing with conflicts.

### Functional and Dysfunctional Modes

„Cascades of Doubt - Struggling Agents“ reconstructs the internal monologues of the heroes (or agents). With "change agent," users can influence these characters by changing the rules and assumptions which form the basis of the heroes' beliefs. "Change world" revises the facts from which the program derives conclusions and generates logical alternatives to the original scenarios. "Remove conflict" offers suggestions as to how some conflicts could be avoided, in that other assumptions about the world are accepted as true statements.

„War of Convictions - Arguments as Forces“ elaborates arguments as forces operating among and between particles of knowledge. (This feature can be expanded to a multi-agent scenario.) The visitor selects a conflict from the databank, and the system provides him with the relevant arguments.

„Crossovers - Tracing Motifs“ connects various plots and contexts according to their dramaturgical motifs. When rules occur in several contexts, the system creates a link between them and generates synthetic characters.

Thus, the revenge-rule from "Hamlet" can lead to "Medea," in which a rival-rule comes into play just as it does in "Casablanca."

„Reasoning Running Wild - Counterarguments Forever Everywhere“ illustrates the omnipresence of possible doubts.

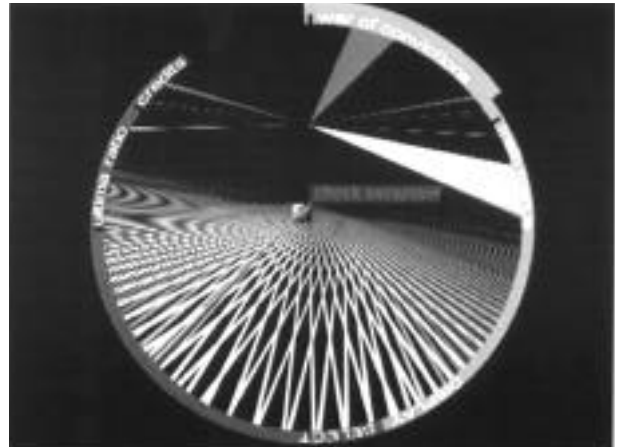
„Inversions - Negations with Negations“ serves up logical Dada with inverted facts and rules. Does the complement of a logical inference also encompass the irrational?

„Modelling Virtues - Modifying Tools of Life“ Various human qualities, mental states and dispositions are interpreted in the framework of formalism and can be brought up on screen. Courage = live wrong, but win. Despair = navigation in a reluctant environment.

„Gobal Ponderer - Continuous Automatic Reasoning“ If the visitor does not wish to intervene, he may observe „Ultima Ratio“ run its course on its own through the domain of ambivalence.

### Mental Spaces

The "logical stories" of the deductive engine are visualized as 3-D diagrams in a virtual space. Arguments appear as fragile, abstract constructions in which premises and conclusions take shape as geometric forms. Balance, gravitation and other effects illustrate the dynamics of argument and counterargument. The process of drawing conclusions corresponds to a movement through virtual space.



### Passively Interactive

A generated navigational path conducts the visitor through the abstract landscape. If he wishes to access more or different information, he may navigate independently. The "guided tour" is available to the visitor at all times.

### Abstraction

Using a model in the shape of nested spheres, information surrounding a central contradiction is arranged outward in successive layers. The inner levels present specific

information such as video sequences, graphics, or original texts. Outside of them appear the abstract, logical formulas employing variables instead of individual names. The inner levels convey operational flow information such as "attack, defend, check exception, conflict" to the outer levels, in which only the structure of the argumentation is discernible. Which representation the viewer sees depends on his virtual distance to the contradiction.

### Selfcentered Visitor

The interactive installation's images are projected from above onto a round disk suspended from the ceiling, below which the visitor stands. An eyetracker (or headtracker) registers the viewer's line of sight; this allows the visualization software to calculate the viewer's moving point of view and to deform the visualizations in accordance with that perspective. Thus, the viewer becomes the totally egocentric subject, whereby the intentionality of his view (or the direction in which his head is pointing) serves as a metaphor for the intentionality of his thinking.



### Between Silence and Scream

A chorus of text-to-speech synthesizers recites the argumentations as a polylogue. The accentuation, tonal coloration, and rhythm of the superimposed voices reflect the logical structures. The argumentation oscillates between silence and screaming — both extremes can be heard.

### Wisdom and Despair



When human beings confront the dynamics of argument and counterargument, the outcome can be a refinement of knowledge (science, wisdom) or it can result in despair. On the other hand, a computer program — free from any obligation to act in the real world — can reason endlessly.

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Olia Lialina

# ART.TELEPORTACIA



ART.TELEPORTACIA is The First Real Net Art Gallery that delivers on-line access to net.art pieces to individuals and companies at fair prices. Using a new and unique proprietary system for the distribution over the internet, Art.Teleportacia's mission is to redefine the purchase process for art and works of art.

As the first company to offer on-demand net.art works over the internet, Art.Teleportacia is challenging the traditional art selling system and the insitutionalized establishment of curators and directors by offering an easily to access presentation platform, a broad and qualified selection, the best service and support for our customers, and last but not least: context, critics and certifications.

For Art.Teleportacia team net.art is more than a gag or a one-season fashion. Net.art is the art of the future and it opens a wide range of possibilities to a new generation of artists and collectors.

Art.Teleportacia is your chance to buy original work of internet art for your internet office or home page.

## FAQ

*Why Art.Teleportacia sells net.art but not paintings?*

Today World Wide Web is widely used as a medium for buying and selling. Information, goods, services. A lot of off-line galleries come here to promote and sell their collections: photo, paintings, sculptures. At the same time a new generation of artists appeared in 90's: net artists. They create their stuff in the net and for the net. These works meet great interest, commercial as well, but it mostly comes from media art exhibitions and other off-line events and institutions. Net.art is exported from the net. We find it more natural to create a market for net.art inside WWW.

*Why do you start this gallery with "Miniatures of the heroic period?"*

We selected some small early pieces of net.art by most well-known internet artists for the first exhibition to stress that the spirit of the net is in details and that the weight of net.art can't be counted in Kb. We wanted to come back, to naive and brilliant experiments with net language. There is a history behind each project. They really mark a new epoch in art history.

*Does it make sense now to spend money for a net.artwork?*

It is your chance to invest in a new field of art business now. Prices will increase soon and high rates are guaranteed. Whether you are a private individual or a company Art.Teleportacia will consult and support you in setting up your own collection of the most contemporary art. If you are seriously interested in development of your virtual office and take it as seriously as a real one, you will not amuse your clients and guests with childish interactive games, but will turn yourself to real net values and quality.

*How can I really own the artwork which I've bought?*

Proprietary is a fiction. And even more in time of internet. So, Art.Teleportacia in alliance with artists sells the access to the artwork. As soon as you bought an artwork, you can decide about its accessibility. By the way, it is the same as with off-line world: the owner of the painting has mainly the right to choose, whether this artwork is shown publically, whether it remains only in private or company rooms, whether it is hidden in cellar...

*Who controls the access to the artwork?*

Accessibility of a sold artwork is checked by a special script, which runs on art.teleportacia server. Art.Teleportacia arranges the purchase of the artwork, Art.Teleportacia arranges for every artwork a special contract, which regulates the further accessibility, and it guarantees to keep this contract.

*How can I be sure that the artwork i bought is really the original and not just a copy?*

Art.Teleportacia provides a special certification and a unique proprietary system, which ensures that the artwork you purchased is the original. For example, one simple way to prove that an artwork is original: URL in location bar. It is included as an important part into the performance of the artwork. One can copy HTML code and images of simple



net project, but URL can't be doubled.

*There are several ways to store and access the artwork. Which one would you advise to choose?*

We wouldn't like to exclude any possibility. Selling/buying net.art is a new field in art business. Definitely this system can work in more than one way. We are going to evaluate different strategies. Which one is the best depends on every single artwork, it's specialities, the customer's interest and view of the Internet.

*It seems, the idea to exhibit banners as art projects is in the air...*

Yes, now internet artists start to include banners to their projects, and even work with 468x60 images as with certain WWW- genre. In fact this minimalistic form gives not less chance to express yourself than huge web projects full of graphics and scripts. For Art.Teleportacia 'office/banner' section is not only a collection, but first of all a guest book, where people leave their impression and attitude not in words but in laconic style of banner. It can say a lot. And also such messages reflect what their authors think about situation in general, what they suggest as the best way to

http://art.teleportacia.org

# SPIDERFEMINISM

In the following lecture I will give an introduction to the new field of scientific future research and its sensational findings. A new method makes the future visible and unveils its arachnomorphic structure.

In the second part of the lecture I will discuss the effect artificial insemination -- a given practice for nowadays spiders -- has on web-related evolution and we will close with an outlook on the genderdiversity to come.

The new method, derived in a series of elegant entomological investigations allows an unexpected view into the future of earth: The today dominating Homo sapiens will be superseded by an arachnomorphic species. That is a spider-like species.

The recently developed method not only places arachnology into an anthropological context, but considers the arachnotic structure of images as they frequently appear among other places in the human psyche and



University of Texas, found the rate of evolutionary changes higher than you would expect it to be in 10 million years. That is a rather high mutation rate.

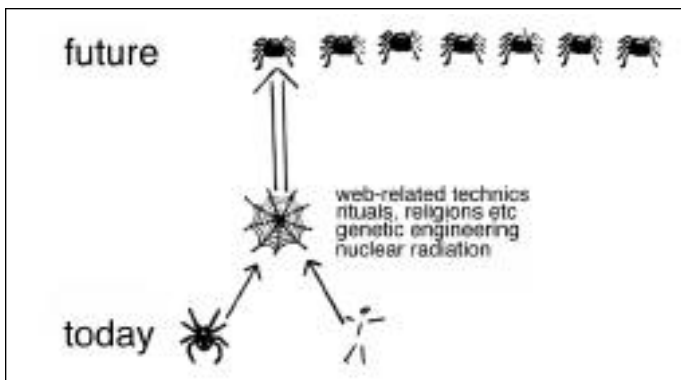
Since thousands of years mankind tried to get knowledge about the future. But the wellknown mantic methods like Tarotcards, Astrology, IQ-Tests, etc, never work properly. They



are useful only for the next time interval and they are transparent exclusively to a very few. For the period of time we are discussing here these mantic methods are not useful. Furthermore we have to question their scientific reliability. Therefore we came to develop a new and reliable method for future research.



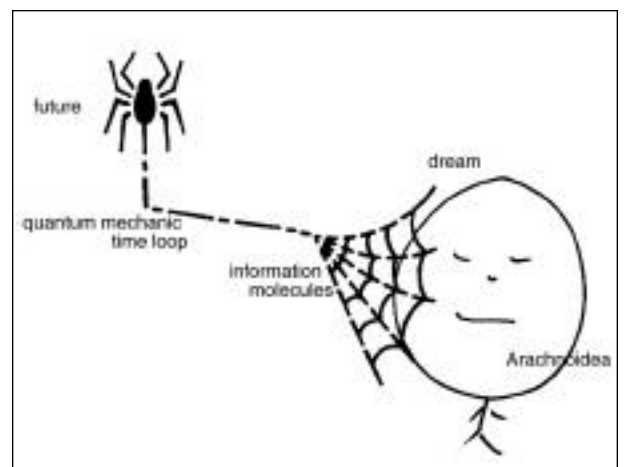
As you may know the human mind is build like a network, is organized as one and functions as one as well. Thereby it is the perfect link between a future population on earth and today.



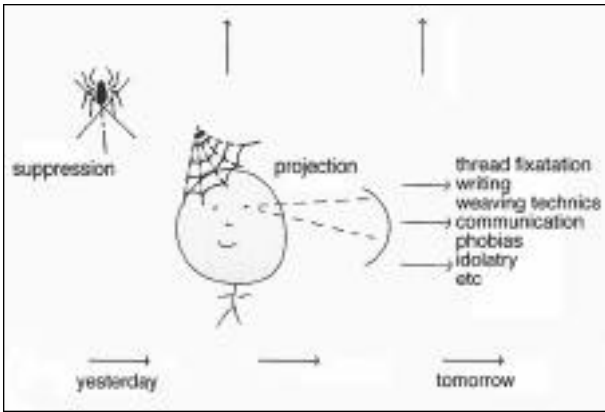
everyday life. Related discoveries from different sciences like evolutionary psychology, experimental physics or sociobiology show the highly significant preference for a variety of thread-bound constructions like lines, knots or nets. When analyzing the underlying structure of our ideas and inventions we find a networking dynamic in nearly every part of life, science, art or society.

We must confirm the fact that the arachnoidic species of the future will develop out of the today known spiders. The results still are a little vague. For sure we know that the spider-like species is the dominating life form. And humans still exist. At least a human structure was found.

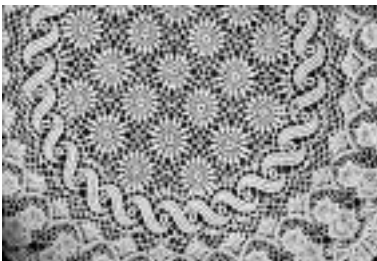
Supported by contemporary genetic technologies the increasing nuclear radiation presents optimal evolutionary conditions for spiders to establish themselves as cultural superior life form. In the Tschernobyl area Robert Baker,



The advanced timetravelling and telepathic civilisation of the future invades nowadays psyche via dreams and channeling. The dream suggests itself as point of contact



because it is, as Sigmund Freud said, accompanied by a low endopsychic censorship. Channeling means the contact between living beings and entities of other dimensions. The human mind is at the receiving end. (So we have to rewrite the theories of the unconscious). The contact between future and today is initiated by a spider entity (SPE). We speak of SPE as long as we don't know if it is an individual or a group which is contacting us.



While being stored away into memory the origin of the future's messages is suppressed. Later when released out of memory mode the messages have been transformed

into ego-based intentions; occasionally with an ego-dystonic quality. The result is a widely spread thread fixation, an obsession with weblike organisations and all kinds of rituals honoring future-related devices.

Certainly you know about the newest theory of experimental physics, the String theory or Superstring theory. It claims that the smallest part of every atom is not some particle, but a tiny tiny string. The different quarks we discovered up to now -- "up, down, strange, charmed, bottom, top" -- and their antiparticles are thought to be different energy positions of one and the same string.

Newest calculation of J. Richard Gott, Princetown University, prove that two strings when speeding at close range along each other produce loops. The submicroscopic area is swarming with tiny tiny loops. These loops are so fast that they reach into the past. They reach backwards  $10^{-42}$  sec.

It is a proven fact that these strings do travel through different times. Albert Einstein's theory of relativity postulates similar rules for the submicroscopic and the macroscopic univers. Therefore the arachnoids of the future use precise physical techniques for their communication with today.

May I sum up: The future sees an arachnoidic species as cultural superior life form. Individuals or groups -- up to now we are not able to confirm their identity without doubt -- contact us via time loops and psyche projecting certain images. Because we are not conscious of this process we

translate the projected information into web-related ideas. And therefore we carry out the spinning future.

Let me give you some examples:

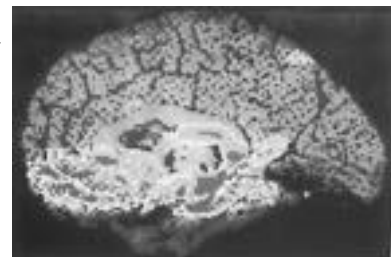
Literature offers a wide range of graphic descriptions concerning the future. Now we are able to read them properly. To name only two of thousands let me choose "Spiderman" and the Bible. Artists often have a clearer view of things to come. Nevertheless they often take images they conceive too literally, as we observe in "Spiderman", for the Homo sapiens hasn't gotten the power of a spider (like Peter Parker), his intentions are secretly taken over by a spiderous being instead.

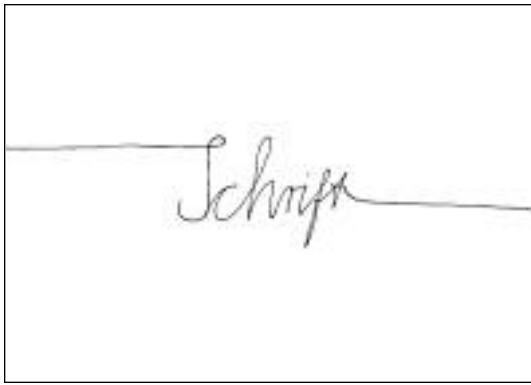


Another very important book in our culture is the Bible. Thousands of years old, the story still structures the western societies. It's main symbol is the cross. A cross is the abstract of two interwoven threads, a knot. It symbolizes not only the smallest common denominator of a web but also the Homo sapiens bound into and sacrificed on the web. The invention of the cross as a leading symbol resulted in the ability to think in abstract terms. This process formed the building of web-related brain structures, and therefore conditioned global networks, today's internet and obn (old boys network). The wide dissemination of the internet is closely related to the religious importance of the cross in social systems. Today we observe the fusion of the cross and arachnoids through the existence of the internet.

The spider entity, when contacting us out of the future, hides all traces of it's communication with us. We only can speculate on the reason of this strategy. We assume it is part protection of today's living spiders and part a guarantee that current technical developments will go on undisturbed.

What we observe instead is a widespread fear, phobia and defensiveness of spiders, a preference for every kind of weaving techniques and the need to train our children at a





very young age in web-balance.

But also a high creative potential has here its roots. For example do we owe the invention of writing to these



circumstances.



Did you ever ask why the landscapes we live in in Europe are covered not only by nets of streets, railways or electricity but also lined with fences? Fences remind people of save and homely aspects of the future.



We understand the structure of lattice windows. For we love to take a net-structured view to the world. Even if it is sometimes connected to a trapped feeling.



We have to face the problem of threadfixatation. For

thread fixatation -- and we all know how disturbing that can be sometimes -- is strongly related to the arachnoidic species of the future.

After immobilizing their prey spiders wrap it with silk threads to store it until they are getting hungry. So we don't have to wonder any longer why so many eatable things are somehow or other connected to threads or nets. Or why nearly all the food we need for survival has to be carried home in plastic bags? This occurrence is called identification. It is arachnotic induced behavior.

Hopefully I don't have to point out what is driving all of us to get ourselves online. And why again and again we enjoy our fingertips crawling on the keyboard? Are we spiders or prey? When and more interessting how did you experience the influence of an arachnoidic entity after going online? Another future-related topic besides nets and threads, we find in all constellations which include hair. Hairy legs are a feministic issue. Not only in the USA but in Germany, too. Due to its lack of hairiness a human leg can not be compared with a spider leg. Nevertheless, wrapping it in fine nylons will certainly enhance its attraction. Though the hairs of spider legs are sensory organs, netstructured fabrics function as an ersatzorgan. For undivided effect, be sure to remove all natural grown hair of the human leg before you wrap it in texture.

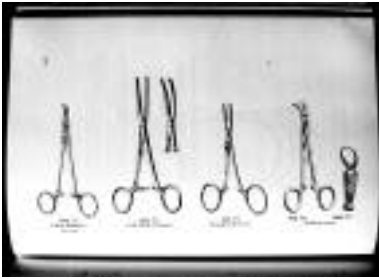
At this point I want to say some words about the reproduction of spiders. Today spiders still have seperate sexes. Aside from a few exceptions the females are larger than the males. Because of their small body size, males need fewer molts to reach maturity than do females; consequently, males mature earlier.

The cultural task of webconstruction generally is done by female spiders nowadays, because most male spiders change their habits after their last molt. They leave their retreats or webs, and often they no longer even catch prey. When approaching a female, males always risk being dealt with as prey. Spiders have therefore developed a special courtship behavior that generally precedes mating. This courtship is species specific and ensures that hybridization is avoided. The common belief that spider males are eaten by



the females during or after copulation is true only for a very few species. In most cases a male either walks away or beats a hasty retreat right after copulation. But in any case male spiders have rather short lives; many die soon after copulation. Females usually live much

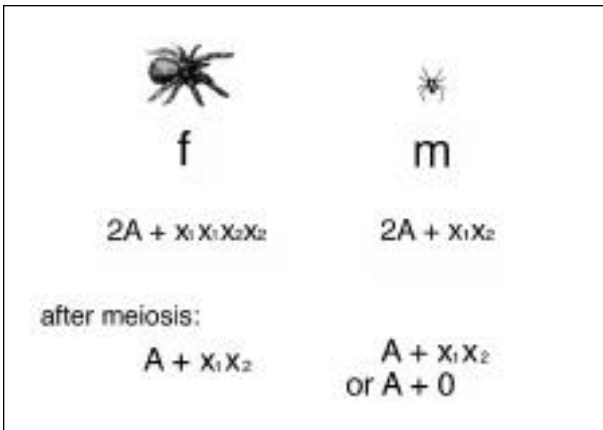




longer.

Now the question of all questions! How do they do it? The answer is: They practise artificial insemination. When the male spider reaches maturity it spins a small

special web. The sperm is put onto this sperm web and transferred to special copulatory organs which are located near its mouth. The sperm can be kept here if necessary all its life. When a female spider accepts the courtship the male inserts its palps (as these organs are called) into the vulva of the female. The female stores the sperm in



a special skin bag. Later when her eggcells are ready fertilization takes place. Several batches of eggs -- cocoons -- can be fertilized, even if only a single copulation has taken place. So the female spider chooses the time of fertilization. She is managing the artificial insemination.

Just compare this elegant natural technique with techniques humans use nowadays, and realize how clumsy they are. And you'll understand why future arachnoids stayed with their technique of artificial insemination.

I will now demonstrate how the genderdiversity which we find with arachnoids in the future is due to different sets of sex chromosomes. The exact process is not yet fully unveiled. We can only guess, that they used genetic engineering, supported by nuclear radiation. Maybe the

$$2A + X_1X_1 \dots X_nX_n$$

beginning was accidental, that means induced by us, by our way of life; maybe it was intended, that is spiders of today are much more intelligent as we think it possible. So the how we don't know, but the what we see.

The sex chromosomes of spiders are X-chromosomes. Contrary to insects or mammals spiders possess no Y-chromosome. Aside from the "regular" chromosomes (the autosomes, A), two X-chromosomes represent the sex chromosomes. Whereas female spiders possess a

dual set of these X-chromosomes ( $2A + X_1X_1X_2X_2$ ), male spiders have but a single set ( $2A + X_1X_2$ ). Consequently, after meiosis the egg cells have one set of X-chromosomes, but the sperm cells are of two types: either they likewise possess one set or they lack sex chromosomes altogether ( $A + 0$ ). Sex determination is thus dependent on the type of sperm cell that fertilizes the egg.



A combination of reproduction techniques like genetic engineering in combination with artificial insemination, parthogenesis and cloning made it possible to multiply the set of sex chromosomes. This results in a wide range of sexes, though they all are still arachnoidic.



Some examples:

It has 57 sets of X-chromosomes and is related to knots. It was found in Berlin around Xmas last

year.

This one resembles a structure of 276 sets of X-chromosomes. It is sophisticated in information transfer and often responsible for channeling and projection, sometimes related to cloning techniques.



Don't take these shapes too literally. We have to translate their underlying structure here. We don't know how arachnoids in the future with 8 or else sets of X-chromosomes will look like. We are talking about our images here. They may change with time, information and new or better research methods.

It was found with 17 sets of X-chromosomes, intellectual limited, but useful for traffic control. But note: we do know nothing about future traffic; here it gets highly speculative.

It was captured two years ago right in the center of Hamburg. It has 142 sets of X-chromosomes and is skilled in programming and political affairs.

In one species we found a structural



Barbara Strebel

# Traveller's Health, Communicable Diseases and Transmittable Disorders

from the Institute of Network Particle Collision, Division of Quarantine International Infectious Disease Control and Traveller's Health

**SYNOPSIS:** With the advent of new technology and the dissemination of cultures, the increase in travellers' risk of exposure and subsequent acquisition of communicable diseases and transmittable disorders must be considered in concurrence with the enhancement of global transfer. This section includes practical information for potential travellers on hazards due to invasive behaviour. (Some of these recommendations are common sense precautions; others have not yet been scientifically proven or documented.)

**TRANSFUSION GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLERS:** As the communication technology revolution takes on parasitic dimensions, there is a growing public awareness of the telepresence epidemic and a resulting concern about acquiring the virus through transfusion. Commonly known txt treatments have mutated into emerging strains of new media, showing signs of distress and illness, and in some rare cases, death. Colonial invasive behaviour is often a carrier of contamination, contagion and hidden agendas.

**FIRST CONTACT AND EXPOSURE RISKS:** Common exposure takes place during **first contact**, implemented as an interactive spatial installation. Initial transfer has been made user-friendly and a simple handshake engages the transfer, using a connection oriented protocol to exchange with the remote system, which verifies that it is ready to receive; the connection is then established. Situations of proximity increase contagion and risk of dis-ease. Recent access to transmission devices and desires, combined with the will to virtuality, have taken epidemic proportions. Seroprevalence studies indicate nearly universal exposure by adulthood with approximately 10% of the susceptible population infected per year.

Since the early manifestations of multi-channel complex disease, exposure rates have increased the number of infections and autoimmune deficiencies while decreasing key recovery rates. Travellers are more susceptible when transmitting MSG pathogens to other persons and will increase the risk of infection if any sign of suppression is shown.

**SYMPTOMS:** Loss of sensation, headache, pallor, nausea, dizziness, insomnia, increased salivation, inertia, attention span reduced to apathy, drowsiness and somnolence. Combined symptoms can lead to **disorientation**, complications and eventual death.

**REVENTION AND PROTECTIVE DEVICES:** To be taken when leaving know regions, host cells and native **domain** (DNA): Common sense and avoidance of risk factors, including the

use of repellents, protective devices, screening, filters, avoiding proximity, monsters and demons. Although the effectiveness is variable, depending on the patterns of resistance and compliance with protocols, self-extraction should remain strict. Commonly used tools (pop, ftp, www) provide no security or immunity against disease transmission or invasive behaviour. Localisation of potential health hazards vary and are site specific, therefore known "foci" of endemic areas should be avoided. Transfusion can be measured at point of entry, when providers no longer reassure bonding modes or remote console-8-sign. For many vector-based diseases found in hazardous environments, non-specific matrix preventatives are available via multiple DNS.

**EMERGING AND RE-EMERGING CASES:** Cyclical Viral Infectious diseases: acute motion sickness, altitude sickness and diseases thought to have been eradicated such as sleeping sickness, yellow fever, Hypertitis, Plague, Hysteria / Testeria, are often encountered in Mall-area infested zones, but remain, however, lurking.

**DIAGNOSTICS:** Take a culture smear by puncturing a lesion. This culture is a standard indicator, although JCV culture mutation can occur. When labs are unavailable, revert to sniffing excretions by collecting GUIs and spuffing leakage.

**TRAVELLER'S DIARRHEA:** Diarrhea and digestive disorders are a syndrome characterised by an increase in the frequency of movement in contaminated or hazardous areas, as common sources for the introduction of infection via a variety of parasites, or by consuming shell accounts. Commonly associated symptoms include cramps, nausea, urgency, fever and malaise. Episodes usually begin abruptly due to exposure to digestive disorders found in lists and automatic digest processors.

DigitAll outbreak was registered in Vienna in the winter of 1996, plaguing the evolving new media to a level of alarming paralysis and atrophy. Combined with the Vienna virus, it caused evacuation, dispersion, dislocated members and ensuing extinction. These syndromes are found to be highly adaptable, easily implemented and are difficult to eradicate. Precautions when surfing in contaminated data fluids: Never surf alone or when under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and never dive head first into an unfamiliar source of data or high streams.

**VENOMOUS BYTES:** Contact with common bugs, worms **spiders** and **crawlers** cause unpleasant reactions: Swelling of nodes, blurred vision and disorientation; while

also transmitting communicable diseases. Repellents and **protective nets** are advisable as prevention against poisonous bites. Most venomous bites are the direct result of handling or harassing spiders and **iguanas**. Here the velocity of venomous bites exceed common transmission.

#### **VIRUSES, ANTIBODIES, ACTIVE AGENTS AND ALTERNATIONS:**

Along with the newly acquired bacteria, travellers may acquire viruses. Viruses are infectious agents with both living and non-living characteristics. Among the living characteristics of viruses are fantastic rates of reproduction and mutation. Since viruses lack any metabolic machinery of their own and are totally dependent on their host for reproduction, they cannot grow in synthetic environments. Five main steps of viral **infection** are:

- 1) **absorption** -- 2) **penetration** -- 3) **expression**
- 4) **replication** -- 5) **assembly and release**

There are two main schemes used by viruses to enter a host: **mediated** receptors and direct fusion. After a decade-long search, scientists have discovered **fusion** (hot or cold) plays a key role in the attacks of the virus. The primary targets of viruses are **altered** cultured cells.

DATA indicate that meticulous attention to consumption can decrease the likelihood of developing viruses, however, most encounter difficulty observing the requisite restrictions. Common bugs are vertically targeted frames and horizontal dislocation. Vicious viruses emerge when they remain latent for a long period of time. Once internalised in systems, they can then be improved at home: Dark Avenger is a fast injector, optimising assemblage; Terror is extremely virulent; as are Nomenclatures; Belgrade Vascina interrupt tracing and ebola is a thread. For check-ups, booting from an **uninfected** system is recommended, as well as the implementation of **microbes**.

CONTROLLED studies have indicated that a variety of agents are effective, but that they depend upon the pathogenic behaviour and resistance pattern of the pathfinder, in the area of exposure, where multiple DNA lookups aid in research. Resistance is the least common, but this may change as the use and awareness of these agents increase worldwide (bandwidth hogs, swinefever, flaming and spamming). A variety of absorbents have been sited in **hijackings**. Research is underway (but often not implemented) in areas such as the anonymous third party carrier, mix **masters** and publicly available algorithms. Active agents, conglomerations, such as the **HIP** epidemic, are breeding grounds for more effective implementation for researchers in highly infectious areas.

RISKS of acquiring vicious viruses are extremely low for most travellers when travelling in groups; however, the risk of the individual traveller is highly variable and depends on factors such as season, location and duration of stay as well as on exposure to surveillance attacks by **swapping**. Often attacks trigger acute seizures, as in the case of VIP occurring on Vienna's ISP **confiscation**, but these have not been radically implemented.

**THE HUMAN FACTOR:** It is important to consider the role that humans play in the spread of these infections. Although the

possibility of exposure to contaminated data fluid and viral infection would indicate an increase in illness proportional to the duration of stay in rural areas, there is no correlation between the rate of exposure and the incidence of travel-related morbidity and mortality.

TRANSMISSION seasons vary from periodic epidemic outbreak to acute attacks. Incidence rates may not accurately reflect risk to nonimmune visitors and business travellers because of high immunisation rates in local populations. Humans are incidental to the transmission cycle, although high levels of viral transmission may occur in the absence of human disease. All transactions using ATM and SDT (Sonic Disintegration Technology) protocols leave traces and **disposable waste**, that are routed in the world network matrix causing lesions which are instrumental to access to vital organs.

**RESISTANT STRAINS AND LIVE VACCINES:** Vaccines, possibly first invented by the Chinese around 1500, using inactive viruses, cause a limited immunity reaction. Live vaccines use attenuated, non-virulent strain viruses. Some of the benefits are that they can be taken orally and that boosters are not necessary. Manifestations, **mutations** and **manifestos** within new media are growing rampantly, without the required control system devices needed to restrict irrational **behaviour**, often the cause for resistant strains or the retreatment in **TAZ** or activism-related provocation. Low **tolerance** and related disorders are site specific and often congestive in nature. We have no data concerning common infection rates and no natural immunity is found in emerging technologies and their related diseases within community and concentrated areas of **things**. Higher risks must be considered when acquiring technology or exposure to emerging cultures in **remote areas** or when visiting contaminated hazardous sources.

**TREATMENT:** Classical treatment: one shot, simple dose, unless recurrent. Suppressive therapy is being developed. In most cases, placebos remain the most effective treatment. In cases of relapse, looping, loss of batch or retrieval rate, reboot dosage before reverting to brute force, wipe and swap (meta-transfusion is advised in severe cases). Personnel who come into close contact with contaminated material without barrier attire or in contact with compromising emissions, must be considered exposed and kept under close supervised surveillance. For disease of consciousness, consult a **CAE** Qualified Doc.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

We do not have the data. The estimated cost of retrieval rates, due to travellers getting lost, change of **address** or sudden and unaccountable death, is not vital. The most vital consideration is the cost to the community.

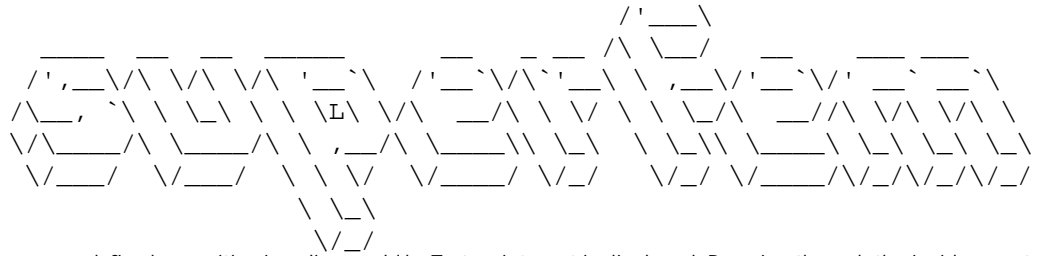
The number of people currently living with contaminated data source or total transfer by host country is unknown, but it is estimated to rise to two thirds of the data flow population by the year 2000.>



Margarete Jahrmann

# SuperFEMinisme

generated by **PROTOCOL-INHERENT DATAVATARS**



Superusers can define her position in online world by Text and Texture constantly generated from Netprotocols. Inside the economy of attention you have to be contextualised in the appropriate way, but also to be defined as proofable unity, Corporate (Id)entity. This is only possible by a display of hardfact Datavatars.

internet is displayed. By going through the inside -- not the controllable outside -- of 3dimensional objects different textures of your actual movements in the net - or online spent time -- or logfiles of your chosen destinations -- are displayed. Time is also displayed by sound samples. Sound is showing the traffic or speed/slowness of dataflow.)

### Server-PERFORMANCE setup

1. At Superfem lectures the performer is doing the things she is talking about simultaneously. She starts from time to time a new trace route and navigates through the 3D objects of logfiles to create a moment-specific databody for the lecture. The audience can see it on the objects displayed and hear it by the sounds running parallel to a lecture.
2. The VRML objects are live generated and navigated through. The images from the computer are projected directly onto the performer and her equipment ( 2nd computer gives constant soundbasis and is also projected on the equipment itself). In the performance setup the intertwinedness of the Real Life online is becoming evident.
3. The audience will also see some ASCII textbodies scroll through and will hear this bodies TEXT -- literally taken -- read by the voice generator of the computer. It sounds like concrete poetry and gives ambient audio background. ASCII images are important for the gift economy practised in net-communication. This is the counterpart of „hardfact“ Datavatars -- the text and language centered construction of the self, and avatars understood as fictional identities.

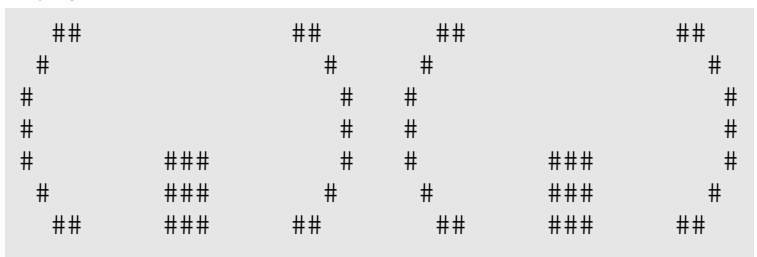


### THE PROJECT in progress

The display idea for Datavatars can also be seen as a sort of new browser for the internet. It is not displaying the web (=text and images), but 3D shapes, based on personal logfiles and netprotocols according to individual activities on the net. Sound is triggered according to the traffic, the speed of the online connection between different servers you are targeting.

The walk through datasets can be displayed inside VRML objects. The texture of different shapes is determined by the data available in the protocol layer beyond the web. (The structural aspect of the

4. Keywords inside the VRML Objects are giving links to the display of certain commandos. Traceroute , Lookup



System, Disk Use, ls -- all you don't have to know the commandos meaning, but they serve as links into new

REAL VIDEO <http://www.konsum.net/fem>



Josephine Starrs and Leon Cmielewski

# NEVER LONELY AGAIN

## Diagnostic Tools for the New Millennium

The future is already here. The third millennium has started. This time, politicians and economists have saved us a lot of work and have already instigated the revolution themselves. They have invented the computer society for us and are putting absolutely everything on the net. We stand by astonished, not knowing whether to be delighted at so much information, or to worry in face of our society's completely new structure.

In this new world we have endless free time; and so that we do not get bored, there is the data highway. This not only brings "interactive" television (video on demand) and radio (radio on demand) into our homes, but at last we also have unlimited opportunities to learn (telelearning), to shop (teleshopping) and to be treated for illness online (telemedicine).

psyche and technology. It involves a game with desire, with seduction, role-playing, but also with loneliness, the virtual, paranoia and a blind faith in technology.

It was possible to see the first results of their research at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin in December. Besides the several parts of the multimedia installation in the gallery room, there is also a website: <http://www.icf.de/starrs/toolcorphome.html>

In their choice of metaphors, the lovingly designed graphics of the website refer to mechanical tools. Screwdriver, hammer, pliers and drill serve as symbols concealing the instruments of the future. Fuzzy Love Diagnostics involves four Quicktime collages, each playfully relating objects in everyday use to tools of technical communications and surveillance in diagram



Besides these, already very welcome possibilities, we also have the ideal way of ensuring that we need never be lonely again. Online dating is the key word, and it finds the ideal partner for all situations....

The Australian artists Josephine Starrs and Leon Cmielewski have concerned themselves with precisely this scenario. Their starting point is the presumption that life in the new millennium will demand completely new capabilities from us: "Only those with a complex and exact set of tools will have free time."

After the close of the post-humane, post-optimistic and post-ideological 90s, the human psyche will require new orientation and new support. The everyday life of each person is shaped by use of the new technologies, his experiences are manipulated and media dominated. Their artistic work begins at this interface between the human

form. The Paranoid Poetry Generator gives the viewer his own opportunity to be active; to contribute to his own personal paranoia in the form of brief sentences. Before the personal data is sent, the obligatory warning is given - intensifying paranoia - that the form is being sent out by e-mail, revealing the sender's address to the recipient. In addition, it is pointed out that the data conveyed is not encoded, so that the sender should avoid sending delicate or private information by this means.

The largest part of the website is Fuzzy Love, the opportunity to register for a partner service. The work suggests that affairs over the net will be the preferred vehicle for love in the future, and a comprehensive catalogue of questions by which the aspiring member introduces himself has been assembled. Besides harmless questions, like for example: "what do you hope to gain from a net liaison?", there are far more tricky ones concerning sexual predilections and preferred body fluids.

<http://newweb.banff.org/projects/starrs&cmielewski.html>

The remarkable thing about this form is that the person questioned is neither called upon to give his/her name, only a nickname, nor is there any opportunity to reveal his/her sex. A modest pointer to erotic net relationships? How liberating will these masks, behind which we indulge in erotic role-play concealing our true identity, really be? Before this private information is sent, the warning increasing paranoia again appears.

The disappointing thing about the website, although this

the artists and their work; he must convey what the work has to offer. If he is awkward or uncertain, the user may easily become the loser. In addition, he must give details of his most private desires in public, and he may well be tempted to present himself in a different way to the approach he would adopt alone in front of his computer.

By contrast, the installation Paranoia only offers space for one viewer from the outset. A metal sculpture, to which the user must draw very close in order to see and



is of course part of the concept, is that the finding of partners does not take place online; that is, the user can only feed in his own data, not read off information. To do this, he must make an effort and visit the installation in the gallery. But before he can finally read the information and choose a suitable partner here he must - no, not pay, as is usual with a dating service - have already given in his own data, without which he has no access. A straight deal, information for information.

The spatial realisation of the two interactive installations is based on differing concepts. The Fuzzy Love Dating Service is regularly updated with new data from the website and the installation, and runs on an ordinary computer - placed on a table - and a printer which prints out the desired information. This concept means that the private interaction between man and machine is transposed into a public room. There is no longer the cozy

to hear anything at all, almost completely conceals the technical intestines. Only the monitor can be seen through a slit. It is operated by a tracking ball mounted at the front. This isolated, apparently completely private form of interaction leads to a huge variety of paranoia being brought onto the screen. Texts from the paranoia generator and shocking film sequences give the viewer the impression that he is himself a non-participating observer until suddenly - in the final image - he sees himself on the screen, filmed by a hidden camera.

So the diagnostic tools are really only a forgery. The artists gain our attention by using slogans and popular high technology aesthetics. But their relationship to these appears to go no further than the ambivalence between fascination and criticism. Certainly the Tools do not fulfil their promise. But they obviously demonstrate our desire for usable aids, a desire which cannot be



security of anonymity in front of a monitor, but a public presentation distorting our usual behaviour and our answers. The person holding the mouse automatically mutates into a performer and acts on behalf of all the visitors. As a performer, the user is not only responsible for the audience's entertainment, but also responsible to

satisfied - and that focuses our attention.

Text by Cornelia Sollfrank

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Debra A. Solomon

# THE\_LIVING

## background concepts

To aid the reader not yet immersed in digital culture in understanding the nature and context of this project, I shall first introduce a few background concepts.

### the digi-persona

Anytime we appear in the digital world, from the simple answering of an email, to taking part in a chat, we do so in the form of our digital persona. This persona is not a mirror of who we are in the physical world, and is unlikely to be as complex. Nevertheless it is always the only presentation of ourselves which others see when they encounter us in an on-line environment.

This digi-persona is formed not unlike our physical persona, by the environment in which it appears and by our ability to control the impression that we make upon the other. Whether we do nothing to control the presentation of this digi-persona or become absorbed creating new or several digi-personas appropriate to our different social situations, the fact remains that this digi-persona always exists and is our sole albeit inadvertent representative on-line.

### the video conferencing environment

The proposed project, the\_living, is about a digi-persona that has been created solely for the digital environment. The project will take place in the public cultural space Internet, in a Video Conferencing Environment. In the initial research stages of this project the digital persona the\_living appeared at several video conferencing environment locations (CU-SeeMe<sup>1</sup> reflectors<sup>2</sup>) giving numerous performances and experimenting with the live<sup>3</sup>event in this most interactive of all digital spaces.

Although originally developed to enable remote audio/visual communication between academic researchers, the individuals who now frequent the on-line spaces that constitute the Video Conferencing Environments are by and large 'work lurks,' constantly observing the small windows of video and chat that appear on their monitors while they attend to the primary tasks of their working day. They work in one physical environment (the office) but socialise in the digital environment.

It is important to mention that this culturally rich environment has not yet been adequately explored as a place where one can create, observe and exhibit art. the\_living project anticipates a paradigm-shift. By exploring and validating the concepts of a digital living experience, of having a rich and varied cultural life on-line unparalleled in the physical world, a new visual

culture, a new notion of the concept 'digi-persona' is being created.

### the\_living

In the summer of '97 D.A. Solomon was driven to create the digi-persona the\_living because she became absorbed by the notion that our society has of the digital world. Since the mainstreaming of science fiction in the popular media, we are exposed to a myriad of powerful images, literature and cinema that portray a future in which humans are equally present in both physical and digital worlds. The project of the\_living is an attempt to force the facts, to bring this image of the future into the present. Solomon created this digi-persona so that she might begin to experience the 'future' presented to her in the popularized science fiction of the present, as a seamless digital and physical existence.

the\_living as a digital character embodies the dream of total connectivity; she is a veritable connectivity hero. Her live performances are rituals in blurring the borders between the physical and the on-line worlds. the\_living continually appears in a highly engaging physical situation while interacting by broadcasting a semi-fictive video and chat narrative to the audience in the Video Conferencing Environment. In past performances she has been seen with her laptop at the bottom of the swimming pool, boating on the Amsterdam canals, and pedaling in a swan boat on the River Fulda in Kassel all the while interacting with the other participants in the Video Conferencing Environment. In other performances she imitates the 'fixed camera perspective' style of CU-SeeMe video by sending pre-recorded fixed camera scenes to her audience thus completely blurring what is perceived to be the 'live image.'

Living, communicating, creating and being part of a live-experience herself the\_living attempts to 'be in the present' while simultaneously relaying her experience to her remote audience through streaming video and chat. the\_living is hyper living, living more than once, at once.

### the project goal and proposal

In the future will the richness and the diversity of your life on-line equal or exceed that of your life in the physical world? The goal of the project is two-fold:

1. To artificially bring the 'future' into the present by creating a year long seamless interaction for audience-participants with digi-persona the\_living in the digital world. This will be realised by setting up a CU-SeeMe reflector where the\_living will broadcast continually and where the the\_living community will gather to generate key narrative elements for a live, ever unfolding, on-line science fiction drama. (see below: a seamless future

1) CU-SeeMe is a certain 'brand' of reflector browser, just as Netscape is a certain 'brand' of web browser. A browser enables the viewer to view and interact in the particular environment, whether it be the World Wide Web, or the Video Conferencing Environment.

2) A reflector is a streaming video and chat server 'reflecting' back to the participants a continual stream of concurrent chat and moving image. A reflector is similar to a web server in that it serves back to the viewer digital information. It is different in that a web server serves back one page to many viewers (one to many) while a reflector continually updates a visual space

now)

## 2. To create a working chronicle of digital culture.

the\_living will take a three staged trip to visit the birthplaces of digital mythology. The project creates a mediated interactive space where participants wittingly (and unwittingly) contribute to a thorough and archived visual history of digital culture. (see below: a working chronicle of digital culture)

### a seamless future now

*What would it take for an artist to curate her life into 24 hours a day of broadcast quality visual and narrative? What would need to happen in this life for it to become engaging and valuable to others?*

*What would it be like to live for a year as a digi-persona, living this digital life so thoroughly that one's perception of the digital reality as compared to the physical world becomes entirely readjusted?*

No artist has yet attempted to live in a reality presented in such movies as Johnny Mnemonic, or in the William Gibson novel Idoru. Through project the\_living, Solomon would like to force this future of seamless integration between the physical and digital world into the present, by going on-line continually for a year: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week as the digi-persona, the\_living. With an impressive mobile setup: a fully equipped laptop able to send streaming video and chat, and a camera fully equipped with camera-person, the\_living will broadcast a fictive visual and chat narrative accessible for complete interaction to everyone on-line from her CU-SeeMe reflector. The video will also be accessible from her website.

The emphasis during this year is on ACTION. Outside, on-the-go. It is notable that Solomon will set up conditions for curating her own surroundings into a 'broadcast quality' live video and chat stream for the duration of the project. the\_living coins the phrase, 'Using my Fleshholder's body as an Experience Conductor...' Whereas other projects in the web environment (Ana Voog, Jennifer Ringley) have created voyeuristic spaces where one individual or artist-performer presents her work, project the\_living distinguishes itself by providing a mediated interactive space in which a new visual culture can develop and where a new audience/participant relationship will exist.

### a working chronicle of digital culture

*the\_living project creates a mediated interactive space where participants will live a richer on-line life. They will actually be participating by generating and continuing the narrative.*

The roots of digital culture and the mythology surrounding it, lie not in computers or computer networks but in 'Hollywood-like' images, or rather Marin County California movie studios, San Francisco Bay Area science fiction literature and writers, and the bandwagon nerd culture of Silicon Valley. To ensure a rich (visual) narrative, the\_living will make a 'pilgrimage' to the birthplaces of digital mythology. The initial stage of this trip begins on the West Coast of the United States and follows a route along the southern border going north at the Eastern

Seaboard. Final destination: Silicon Alley (a section of NY City where most digital initiatives are located). This initial trip will be followed by others to Japan (to investigate the social accep-

tance of personas), and Australia (to investigate the roots of crossover culture). The project's mobile activities will come full circle with the final investigative trip to a number of European locations. Emphasis during this final phase of the project will be placed on the Netherlands and former Yugoslavia where the roots of hacker-culture and culture-hacker mythology lie.

The itinerary of this trip has been optimised to include physical locations and individuals that are or have been instrumental in forming our image of the future as humans with and within the digital world. the\_living will generate narrative for a continually unfolding on-line performance, 'a working chronicle of digi-culture', by visiting and interacting with key people and locations on the itinerary. The physical locations, the issues and the interactions that the\_living makes with her surroundings will be reflected in an unfolding fiction in the Video Conferencing Environment, but a journalistic approach will be patently avoided. The emphasis in the Video Conferencing Environment will be placed upon 'world building' through video and chat, personal e-mails, and instant messaging. Together with the participants the\_living will create a year-long interactive fiction. Because of its' accessibility during and after the project this fully archived video (1 yr. real-time video format 160 x 120) and chat will effectively become a 'working chronicle of digital culture'.

Please read the itinerary index or visit the link page of the website ([www.the-living.org](http://www.the-living.org)) for more information about the proposed locations.

### what is 'fan fiction'

Although most locations will be planned and arranged ahead of time, there will be room left for the unpredictable. A heated reaction to one unfolding story

will result in a desirable and unexpected turn of events. Maybe the reflector participants will come up with a new location, or know of some bizarre research-team, which may change the itinerary. The constant stream of visitors through the CU-SeeMe reflector will not only bear witness to this real life account, but will actually be instrumental in its' creation, facilitating many of these meetings and hopefully a vast array of other locations which THEY deem essential to this ongoing work. the\_living (and her camera-person) are dependent upon them not only for her unfolding narrative, but as well for traffic directions and accommodation in strange cities and backwaters. Stripping the\_living Barentszplein 3 III 1013 NJ Amsterdam the living is shareware and without interaction from the



3) In the Video Conferencing Environment participants gather to chat and send each other live video almost exclusively tapped from their physical surroundings. This environment is well loved because of the eye-contact made possible by the streaming video. It enables the participants to see one's conversation partner reacting to the conversation or discussion. Because people in this environment must always chat 'live,' it is always assumed that the accompanying video is 'live'.

# DONA MATRIX

DONA MATRIX is a character I created in 1994 and performed for two years in the context of two different networking environments and performances.

DONA MATRIX does not exist autonomously. It is an essential part of.



DONA MATRIX works as a mediator between the flesh and the machine world.

The Body as Interface DONA MATRIX reflects the human person as integral part of the machinesociety.

DONA MATRIX is translating information.

DONA MATRIX is able to be changed, able to change, able to be manipulated, able to manipulate.

DONA MATRIX is bound to the network, lying, cabled to a computer system. She is covered with thick black rubber carrying contact pads with which sounds can be triggered when DONA MATRIX is touching them with her sensor gloves. The skin closesuit's solely opening shows the vagina of the performer. Her communication ability is reduced to the perception and production of sound which is generated and modulated making contact via midi transfer with the computer. During an advanced phase of the performance the two androgynous performers connect to DONA MATRIX, and modulate the sound using the electric resistance of their bodies.



Genitals matter -- as they are basically used to define a person as belonging to a certain group, demanding behavior according to the social common sense. The definitive operation makes the difference between a Transvestite and a Transsexual. Not just according to German law only the surgical incision completes the new identity.

My personal perception of DONA MATRIX can be described as inter-gender.

The name DONA MATRIX has got a female connotation being generated as a part of an environment naturally dominated by a female view on the body just due to the fact of having been realized basically by women. Matrix -- besides the electronic reading of the term -- also refers to the female physical determination to be the source to generate life.

## **SANCTUS, the profaned body**

DONA MATRIX was brought to the world provoked by the concept of Rosa Sanchez for the project SANCTUS, the profaned body of the Barcelona based interdisciplinary artist group KONIC Thr I have been working with since 1990. SANCTUS, the profaned body had been produced in 1994 for the Life Arts Department of the ICA (Institute of Contemporary Art) London, and then constantly had been transformed and expanded until summer 1995.

The project has been developed along the concept of:

### **Body - Sex - Society**

The performance was guided by certain principles:

- the distinctive sexual definition: male - female - and their aberrations (transgender etc)
- observing - being observed
- role and control

The complexity of the technical environment is hard to describe here. It was based on the ideas of

- Processing text
- Processing image
- Processing sound

and the integration of the visitors:

- by image
- by interpretation
- by participation:
  - sending text
  - speaking text
  - manipulating DONA MATRIX and provoking reaction
  - by their confrontation with the performance of Bridge Markland (guest performer summer 1995)

In the final state the environment SANCTUS, the profaned body formed a complex network of observation cameras inside and outside of the performance space and at the public toilets of the gallery, of which images had been screened by a video wall inside the performance space in the mode of a survey installation. Sound and image generating computers were interacting with the behavior of the public and the performers. A touchscreen-terminal conveyed a.o. material of transgender research.

(During the time of its public appearance SANCTUS, the profaned body went through a surprising history of censorship, especially in England and Germany, mostly concerning the placement of cameras at the toilets.)

### The Mechanism of Human Deletion

In the interactive computer installation and performance The Mechanism of Human Deletion DONA MATRIX is connected to THE SYSTEM, a terminal network asking and collecting private data from the visitors, acting transparent to all sort of influence coming from it. THE SYSTEM uses information, rules and value (hierarchy) to create identity. DONA MATRIX uses the relation to THE SYSTEM to construct personality.

DONA MATRIX interprets THE SYSTEM as the sum of the visitor's activities at the terminals and A + B act as voices of the System's tools (rules, education, revolution ...) The environment's visitors participate in the concrete processing of the work, initiating certain CONNECTIONS to THE SYSTEM, to the performers as well as among each other and rearranging their contributed personal data. The analogy of the digital System and the social System is projected as a network of personal and automatic interchange build on the interdependency of communication.

As my personal experience with the performance was subject of a variety of questions I will mention some of my impressions here:

My vulnerability acting as DONA MATRIX had been respected by the visitors. Though there were certain

exceptions.

Especially in the atmosphere of shyness when nearly no interaction at all happened, and the people stayed in the most distant corner in order not to get in touch with the provoking performers, someone or a small group came up to me and overreacted, touching my body, moving my arms and trying to reach into my suit -- mostly discussing if I was real or a mechanical puppet. Feels strange, of course, being perceived as not human. But more I was reduced to a state of reactive presence and bound to ritual gestures of communication. I was not able to cross the border.

When I entered DONA MATRIX it was often horror and then I felt like deep diving. When I had to leave it, it was like waking up, like crossing to another world. I only could stand the claustrophobic situation when I entered a state of calming down close to meditation. I adapted to the machine and its signals and learned to react to them and find my \*life\* within those signals. I was learning



a new language.

contacts of persons and organizations involved with the creation of the presented projects: provided information and material about the early work of sexual science in Germany:

Magnus Hirschfeld Gesellschaft  
Chodowiekistr. 41  
10405 Berlin  
contact: Andreas Pretzel  
030 - 441 39 73 / Grossbeeren 13A / Q 030 - 215 94 74

performer who collaborated in SANCTUS, the profaned body in summer 1995:

Bridge Markland  
Hermannstr. 220  
12049 Berlin

artistic director/sound researcher and performers of KÖNIC Thtr

Rosa Sanchez / Alain Baumann / KÖNIC Thtr  
compte borrell, 130, 3º 1ª  
08015 BARCELONA, Spain

Cornelia Sollfrank

# FEMALE EXTENSION

## EXTENSION

In February of 1997 the Galerie der Gegenwart (Gallery of Contemporary Art) of the Hamburger Kunsthalle (Hamburg Art Museum) was the first museum in the world to announce a net art competition. The event was supported by Philips, the German news magazine, SPIEGEL, and their website, SPIEGEL ONLINE. The name of this competition was EXTENSION, and was meant to be an extension of the museum into virtual space. The competition posed the question of how traditional tasks of the museum, collecting, preserving, mediating, and researching, could be applied to art on the internet.

The call for contributions to EXTENSION asked explicitly not for art on the net, but for net art. Traditional works of art should not be represented in digital format, but artistic works that applied familiar art concepts, such as "material" and "object" to the internet. The Gallery of Contemporary Art entered a new territory with this experiment, and at the same time gained the attention of a world-wide public.

The announcement of EXTENSION met the Zeitgeist of the year 1997. The established art world had started to become interested in this new art form and tried to deal with it more or less appropriately. Nobody wanted to miss the hype, everybody wanted to take advantage of the potential publicity and -- in the best case -- be the discoverer and supporter of a new art form. A subcultural phenomenon was about to be turned into high art. But still, the lack of a market potential of this new art form posed great problems for the art world. Net art had to conform to the needs of the market, or the art world had to change.

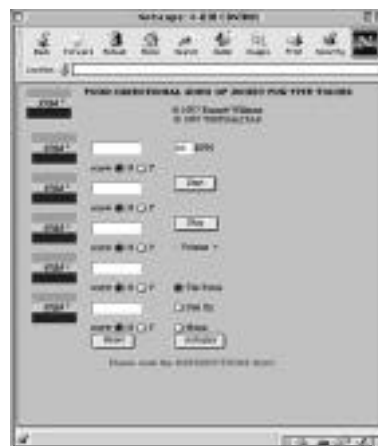
Typical for this development is the lack of competence and the insecurity of those who show, curate, categorize and judge net art. To deal adequately with net art, those

experts who are trained in traditional art, need an understanding of the new medium which is based on practical experience. Without this understanding, the characteristics of net art fall victim to the aesthetic and economic considerations of the curators. This happened at Documenta X, where "net art" was presented predominantly without any connection to the net.

In the case of EXTENSION, it was planned to upload the projects of the artists onto the server of the art museum. What would remain of works based on communication, exchange and interaction with the user and are in a permanent process of change, or with works linked to other sites? In addition to that, the call for contributions implied that the internet and the World Wide Web were the same, and limited net art to web art. What was left out were works that use other protocols such as e-mail, muds and moos, as well as context systems such as The Thing and t0-netbase.



automatically generated net art



## FEMALE EXTENSION

This problem became particularly clear with my contribution to EXTENSION. I simulated more than 200 international female net artists. Their names were assigned to 7 different nations. Not only did they have complete addresses with phone numbers, but also working e-mail accounts on a number of different servers. I registered these "artists" for the competition and got a password for each of them. The art museum was happy about the large number of contributions, and issued a first press release on July 3rd, 1997: "280 applications - Two thirds are women". A number of print media published this news tidbit, and disseminated the surprise and the joy about the high number of women.

I proceeded to produce net art in an appropriate quantity. Using a computer program that collected HTML-material with search engines on the World Wide Web and

recombined this data automatically, the net art projects were generated. These projects were uploaded with the names of the "artists" onto the server of the museum. Again the museum expressed great satisfaction in their press release: "On the closing date on June 30th, 120 MegaByte of net art had been submitted. 96 of the artists were from Germany, 81 from the Netherlands, 28 from the US, 27 from Slovenia, 26 from Austria and the rest from GB."

Apart from the higher probability to win a prize with this intervention, I also took "Internet as material and object", the theme of the competition, particularly seriously. Unfortunately, my attempts were not met by success. I did not get a prize for this automatically generated net art. Even though two thirds of the participants were women, the three money prizes went to male artists.

The jury that consisted of the art historians Prof. Dr. Uwe M. Schneede and Prof. Dr. Dieter Daniels, the artists Dellbrügge & deMoll and Prof. Valie Export, as well as Spiegel editor Rainer Wörtmann had faced a difficult task. They were surprised by the apparently meaningless flood of data and didn't get the idea behind it. On the day the winners were announced, I issued a press release that revealed my contribution. Nobody had discovered my intervention until then.



I could have never realized FEMALE EXTENSION on my own. Therefore I would like to thank the network that helped me: Konrad Becker and Herbert Gnauer (t0.netbase, Wien), Wolfgang Staehle and Gisela Ehrenfried-Staehle (The Thing, New York), Heath Bunting, Rachel Baker and Steve Mynott (irational.org, London), Luka Frelj (Ijudmila.org, Ljubljana), Neil de Hoog and Andreas Broeckmann (V2, Rotterdam), Geert Lovink (Digitale Staat Amsterdam), Michael van Eeden (Society for Old and New Media, Amsterdam), Rob Bank and Walter van der Crujisen (desk, Amsterdam), Barbara Aselmeier and Karl Heinz Jeron (Internationale Stadt Berlin), Tilman Baumgärtel, Knut Johannsen (surver.net, Hamburg).

### CYBERFEMINISM

My piece FEMALE EXTENSION is a typical example for

cyberfeminist activity. The term CYBERFEMINISM describes a group of artists, activists and theorists that started to meet the male dominance in cyberspace in an unusual fashion in the last couple of years. We use the potential of the term CYBERFEMINISM that arises from its contradictory and undefined nature. These contradictions didn't develop out of the fusion of CYBER and FEMINISM, but are already inherent in the two terms. The fusion of these two terms creates additional confusion. An important strategy of CYBERFEMINISM is the use of irony. Irony is about humor and seriousness. Only with irony the contradictory views can be joined. All these diverse approaches are necessary and important and create a productive tension. That's why CYBERFEMINISM is not just a rhetorical strategy, but also a political method.

A new concept of politics is needed. The methods of earlier decades don't work anymore. An expanded concept of politics has to contain the possibility of both paradox and utopia. It has to be in opposition, able to argue from different perspectives, and at the same time make meaningful political action possible. A concept of politics that simulates politics, while being politically effective at the same time. With this concept of politics, we approach art.



### "Hackers are Artists - and Some Artists are Hackers"

A conversation between Tilla Telemann and Cornelia Sollfrank

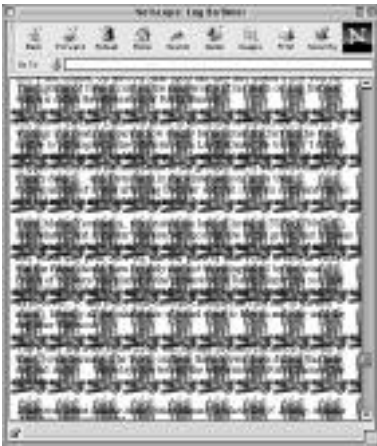
*Tilla Telemann: "Female Extension," your intervention of the Net art competition, "Extension", held by the Hamburg Galerie der Gegenwart aroused quite a bit of attention. What was the initial idea behind "Female Extension"?*

Cornelia Sollfrank: Actually, I wanted to crash the competition. I wanted to disturb it in such a way that it would be impossible to carry it out as planned.

*TT: Why?*

CS: Because I thought it was silly that a museum would stage a Net art competition. For me, Net art has nothing

to do with museums and galleries and their operations, their juries and prizes, because it goes against the nature of Net art. Net art is simply on the Net; so there's no reason for a museum or for a jury that decides what the best Net art is.



*TT: Do you still think that way?*

CS: Basically, yes. But I'm afraid this development can't be stopped. Net art is on the verge of changing completely. It still happens on the Net, but this need for completed, whole works which can be sold, which have a certain definable value, which can be attributed to an

identifiable artist, and the establishment of authorities who do the evaluating and who deal in Net art -- we won't be able to ignore these developments. Net art will evolve in this direction, and away from what it was in the beginning.



*TT: Where did the aggressive impulse to crash the competition come from?*

CS: I simply am that destructive. I had the feeling that they didn't know what they were doing. They just wanted to profit from the hype surrounding Net art without truly investing in it. That's what I wanted to shake up, and with this disturbance, call attention to the fact that

it's not as simple as that. Net art is not just about cleanly polished Web sites; it might very well have something to do with mean, system-threatening actions of disturbance, too.



*TT: The action was seen by many as a "hack"; "Die Woche" (a German newsweekly) even named you "Hacker of the Week". Do you see yourself as a hacker?*

CS: No, I'm an artist. But if you take a closer look at the term "hack", you very quickly discover that hacking is an artistic way of dealing with a computer. So, actually, hackers are artists -- and some artists also happen to be hackers.

*TT: What does the term "hacking" mean for you?*

CS: There's something called the "Hacker Jargon Dictionary" (see sidebar next page) which is an attempt to define that term, among others. For me, an important parallel between hacking and art is that both are playful, purpose-free ways of dealing with a particular thing. It's not a matter of purposefully approaching something, but rather, of trying things out and playing with them without a useful result necessarily coming of it.

*TT: Many spectacular hacks result in the destruction of computers, or at least, a crash. With this in mind, do you see a parallel between your destructive impulse and hacking?*

CS: Hacking does not mean first and foremost destroying. Today computer hackers place the greatest value on the fact that they're well-behaved boys who simply like to play around and discover the weakest points of systems without really wanting to break anything. At the same time, hackers can induce unimaginable damages. But at the moment, it's really about the playful desire to prove to the big software companies just how bad their programs actually are. At least they're trying to push their image more in this direction.

Regarding my own action, it does have more to do with disturbance than destruction. I couldn't actually destroy "Extension" any more than I could inflict any serious damages to the Galerie der Gegenwart, but I was nevertheless able to toss a bit of sand into the works. Everything did not actually fall apart, but a few people did have to spend a considerable amount of time looking at a lot of trash/garbage... etc. This did disturb the trouble-free course of the competition.

*TT: Another aspect of hacking is that it does seem to attract people who enjoy the intellectual challenge of creatively working around limits.*

CS: Yes, hacking does have to do with limitations, but even more with norms. That's another parallel with art. The material that art works with are the things that constantly surround us. The only thing art actually does is break the patterns and habits of perception. Art should break open the categories and systems we use in order to get through life along as straight a line as possible. Everyone has these patterns and systems in his or her head. Then along comes art: What we're used to is disturbed, and we're taken by surprise. New and unusual patterns of perception offer up the same things in a completely new context. In this way, thought systems are called into question. And only the people looking for this are the ones who are interested in art at all.

*TT: Would you say that there are as many well-defined conventions involved in an art competition as there are in computer programs and that you have subverted these conventions with your action?*

CS: Yes, that, too. The material I'm working with in

regard to "Female Extension" is, on the one hand, the Internet, but also the traditional means of art distribution: the museum, the competition, the jury, the prize.

*TT: If you wanted to disturb the competition, why didn't you hack the server the art projects were stored on and erase everything? Or disturb the awards ceremony, for example?*

CS: That's "electronic civil disobedience". In a way, I did my demonstrating on the Net because it had a greater effect. My action wasn't truly destructive. I didn't break anything; on the contrary, I was actually very productive. Instead of destroying data and information, I used automatic production to see to it that there was more data so that the works sent in would be harder to find.

*TT: Isn't it something of an affirmation of a system when someone tries to get into the system, whether it be a computer system in the case of the hacker or a competition in the case of an artist? Wouldn't it be more consistent to do the disturbing from the outside?*

CS: No, you can disturb far more effectively from the inside than from the outside. Producing a flow of data has a considerably greater effect than standing out in front of the museum with a sign reading, "Down with Extension."

*TT: One thing hackers emphasize again and again is that besides influencing social developments which only an elite group can follow anyway, access to sensitive information is really at the core of what they're up to. Is that also somewhat related to what you're doing?*

#### WHAT IS A HACKER?

1. A person who enjoys exploring the details of programmable systems and how to stretch their capabilities, as opposed to most users, who prefer to learn only the minimum necessary.
2. One who programs enthusiastically (even obsessively) or who enjoys programming rather than just theorizing about programming.
3. A person capable of appreciating hack value.
4. A person who is good at programming quickly.
5. An expert at a particular program, or one who frequently does work using it or on it; as in 'a Unix hacker'. (Definitions 1 through 5 are correlated, and people who fit them congregate.)
6. An expert or enthusiast of any kind. One might be an astronomy hacker, for example.
7. One who enjoys the intellectual challenge of creatively overcoming or circumventing limitations.
8. [deprecated] A malicious meddler who tries to discover sensitive information by poking around. Hence 'password hacker', 'network hacker'. The correct term for this sense is cracker.

Source: Hacker Jargon Dictionary  
<http://www.netmeg.net/jargon/terms/h/hacker.html>

CS: It has less to do with the information itself and much more to do with just how open systems are. The information itself is constantly changing. There's always new information. Much more important are the hierarchies of systems, what's accessible to whom. Hierarchies are established with passwords and codes and so on. These have to be broken by hackers again and again. Because of this, hierarchies have to be restructured over and over, and vertically structured systems are rebuilt horizontally. This is also the decisive difference between the distribution of art and Net art. Art distribution is a hierarchical system, so it's vertically structured. I can't just hang my art work in a museum. But I can go to the Net and "hang up" my Web site, for example.



*TT: Of course, that's precisely what so many artists found so interesting about the Internet in the beginning. But in the meantime, it's even the people who deal with it professionally can't keep an overview of everything that's going on in the field of Net art because there's so much of it. A paradoxical situation has developed: Precisely because "everyone is an artist" on the Internet, it's especially important that Net artists establish some sort of relationship with art institutions in order to gather some sort of recognition...*



CS: The only function of an art museum I can accept on the Net is that of establishing a context. Which means that I don't just put my Web site out there where no one can find it, but rather, I place it within a certain context, for example, an art server. Presuming that it's a Web site at all, because besides the World Wide Web, there are many other services and levels on the Net where art can take place. But the art server shouldn't be an art institution with a curator.



*TT: In a way, an art server is the Internet's equivalent for producer's gallery. That is, there are artists who run a server themselves and fill it up with their own oeuvre. This is fine for the artist, but it*

may well not be of any general interest to anyone else. And that's what curators are for: To be a "gatekeeper" that only allows Net art through which will have a certain value



for the general public and not just for the artist who made it. In my opinion, this filter function is extremely important for the art public...

CS: Of course there are people who need this filter function because they don't have the time or the desire to look around for themselves. But with regard to "Extension," for example, there was nothing there that interested me. One should always be aware of just

how elitist and questionable the choices made by a museum actually are.

TT: There is the historical example of video, where the



processes of canonization and the induction into museums took place, processes which are probably on the verge of occurring with Net art. What's actually so bad about the fact that museums are dealing with Net art and trying to evaluate the various works? After all, that's the job of an art museum, to contribute toward the creation of context and the formulation of a canon.

CS: The motto for the museum

is: Collect, protect, research. A museum that seeks to deal seriously with Net art would have to collect Net art and seriously consider all the consequences of just how this art form is to be preserved and researched.

TT: Aren't you contradicting yourself? On the one hand, you're saying that Net art only takes place on the Net and that's where it should stay and the museums should leave it well enough alone, and yet, on the other hand, you're saying that museums should be collecting Net art...



CS: If a museum were to seriously take on the challenge of collecting Net art, I could accept that. But I doubt that that's what they actually have in mind. And what happened

at the Galerie der Gegenwart is a prime example.

They simply wanted to quickly swim alongside the net.art

hype, to sample a bit of the cream topping on all things cyber and Net. But they've shown that they had absolutely no idea what that would actually mean in that ever since the competition, there have been no more efforts in this direction whatsoever. Since the awards ceremony in September 1997, the Web site hasn't been updated.

But if competent people were to work with a significant museum on the idea of seriously collecting Net art, I'd approve. It'd be an incredible challenge, because not only would the collection of works and the formulation of theory be involved, but also a tremendous amount of hardware and software would be necessary in order to be able to read the data according to technical standards which go out of date within the shortest periods of time. So technical specialists who could handle the inevitable repairs and maintenance would also be necessary. But the museums are hesitant when faced with such a huge task. Such a collection would have to have a very broad range and gather as much material as possible, which would also necessarily mean that a certain evaluation and hierarchy of the individual tasks would have to be created.

TT: What you accomplished with your action is that the Galerie der Gegenwart won't be dealing with Net art at all anymore. Would you consider this a success?

CS: The idea of starting a collection of Net art with "Extension" was put into cold storage, in a way. Now they've offered Stelarc a residency. This compromise, that is, working with a single artist whose work is quickly comprehensible, is much more consistent, I think. With Stelarc, in terms of content, they are venturing out onto a new terrain, but it's still nevertheless compatible with a museum.

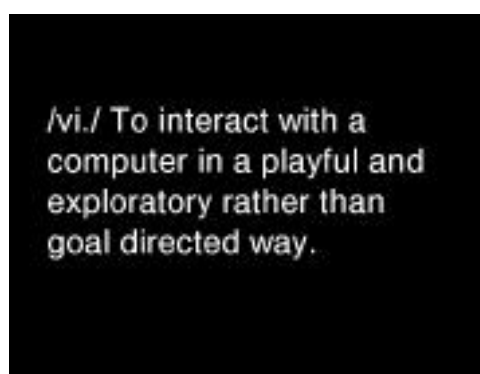
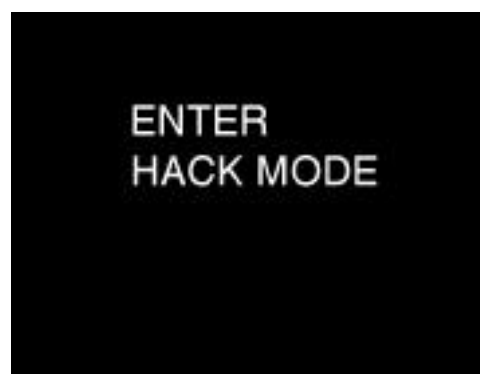
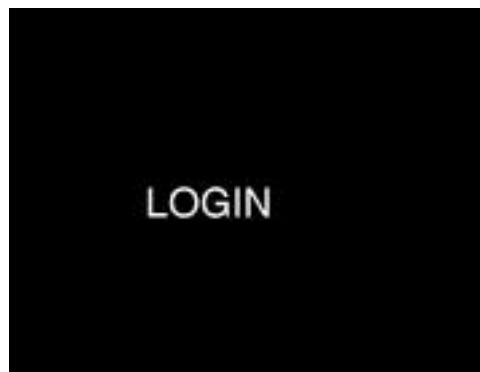
TT: Your "Female Extension" reminds me of the contextual art or the institutional critique of the early nineties. In the art world at the time, there was also this idea of focusing on and calling into question the conventions, the mechanisms of the creation of norms and canons. These were questions which only interested those who had anything to do with art. Could it be said that your work was essentially aimed strictly at the jury?

CS: The jury was, of course, most immediately effected, although the members didn't realize at all that "Female Extension" had anything to do with art -- all the better. As for how much other people, for example, the artists participating in "Extension," were effected by my action, I don't know. But I got a lot of feedback from people who weren't directly involved and for whom I drew attention to an important problem, namely, the attempt to make Net art museum-ready. Many Net artists don't know themselves just how they should react to this and career back and forth between the underground and the professional world. I don't have this problem because my work was the attack on the structure of the museum itself.

Sabine Helmers

# ENTER HACK MODE

Pictures from a 7-min amiga Video



<http://duploxx.wz-berlin.de>

## hack

*/n./* Originally a quick job that produced what is needed, but not very well.



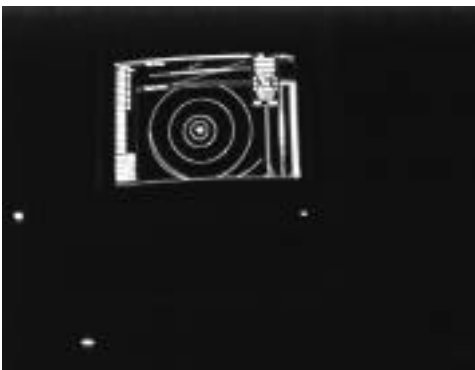
and / or ...



*/n./* An incredibly good, and perhaps very time-consuming, piece of work that produces exactly what is needed.



Hardware  
Software  
Wetware



## Food

For those all-night hacks, pizza and microwaved burritos are big.



## Dress

Casual, vaguely post-hippie; T-shirts, jeans, running shoes.



## Gender

Hackerdom is still predominantly male.



However, the percentage of women is clearly higher than the low-single-digit range typical for technical professions.





Quotes: The Jargon File,  
<http://www.ccil.org/jargon>.  
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Machtelt Garrels, IGUANA, Belgium.  
„Sabine Photo“ by selba. All other  
photography by Sabine Helmers.  
„ENTER HACK MODE“ on WWW:  
<http://duplox.wz-berlin.de>



Rena Tangens

# ART D'AMBEUBLEMENT

[www.tangens.de](http://www.tangens.de)

PUBLIC DOMAIN - topics, documentation and info on coming events:

[www.foebud.org](http://www.foebud.org)

ZaMir network documentation

[www.foebud.org/texte/presse/artikel](http://www.foebud.org/texte/presse/artikel)

Information on /CL network:

[www.cl-netz.de](http://www.cl-netz.de)

Information on ZERBERUS and CHARON software:

[www.zerberus.com](http://www.zerberus.com)

Pretty Good Privacy:

[www.foebud.org/texte/publish/pgp.html](http://www.foebud.org/texte/publish/pgp.html)

Text on androcentrism in the networks:

[www.foebud.org/art/TEXTE/andororo.html](http://www.foebud.org/art/TEXTE/andororo.html)

Wiwiwi-nangnangnang:

[www.foebud.org/art/wiwiwi.html](http://www.foebud.org/art/wiwiwi.html)



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Faith Wilding

# Artist Statement

My art practice is complex and recombinant, and makes use of whatever media best accommodates the subject matter, content, and purposes of the project at hand. I work in many materials and formats including drawing, painting, printmaking, writing, artist books, performance, and electronic media. My recent mixed media collage works on paper, and my Rorschach©print based "wounds", "embryos" and "fetuses" for example, represent a cherished and long©standing commitment to drawing and printing as a way of exploring psychological and philosophical ideas and cultural phenomena in sensuous visual materials and tactile embodied forms. I think of these works as "recombinants", for they recombine not only traditional media such as watercolor painting and meticulous ink drawing with the much newer methods of collage and montage, but they also speak of the psychic state of the body today © the recombined war body, which has been violently cobbled together from nomadic social, cultural, and political fragments. The recombinant body, which is the subject of much of my work, is an uneasy, monstrous depository of melancholic historical fragments expressed as animal, human, organic, and machine parts. It is a body both beautiful and strange in its monstrous (im)possibilities. I think of my visual work as a kind of "applied theory" based in research about contemporary social and cultural phenomena and ideas. A recent project, "Wall of Wounds", is an example of such "applied theory". "Show your wound!" is an imperative which seems to be the motivation fueling TV and radio talk©show entertainment all across America today.

"Wall of Wounds" seeks to comment on this situation using sensuous printed stains and marks on skin©thin tissue paper to restore affect in opposition to the numbing spectacle of pain. At the same time it draws attention to the "consumption" aspect of the talk©show phenomenon, by inviting the viewer to acquire a personalized wound. I am currently very interested in random and involuntary processes and in the ideas they give me for consciously manipulated and developed images.

Embryoworlds is another example of the way in which I combine theory and practice in my work. In this evolving project, I comment on the new "assisted conception" technologies, and on the effects of technoscience on women's lives and bodies globally. This project has

everything to do with the languages of science and art which encode our deepest fears, desires, and longings in narratives of evolution, choice, idealization, immortality and perfectibility. For different exhibition venues, I present different aspects of this project which includes computer assisted prints on vellum; small paintings; writing; artist books; sculptural components; collaborative performance and WEB pages.

I'm interested in the transformational and pedagogical possibilities of a radical art©©an art which uses beauty as a terrorist tactic, rather than an end in itself.

Writings on Cyberfeminism by Faith Wilding and the Critical Art Ensemble:

<<http://mailer.fsu.edu/~sbarnes>> or

<<http://www.obn.org/cfundef/condition.html>>

<http://mailer.fsu.edu/~sbarnes>

Conversation between **Faith Wilding** and Vesna Jankovic (director of ARKZIN, an anti-war campaign magazin)

**FW:** *Let's start by talking about what you are doing now with ARKZIN. As I understand it, the magazine started in 1991 as a biweekly fanzine of the anti-war campaign. You described it as a bastard form between politics and high/low culture?*

**V:** Yes. Now the publication ARKZIN is combined of high politics and grass roots initiatives, culture, sub-culture, putting a lot of attention on women's issues as well and it definitely had an important political role, also in providing the counter information (during the war). During all these years we kept contact with the similar independent medias in Serbia like Radio B 92, in Bosnia especially with the magazine Dani and Radio Zed. Actually a great help to keep these communications and contacts was our BBS, named Zamir which means "for peace," and which we established in '92 with the great help of our Western friends, especially friends from Bielefeld, and also some other international volunteers from Poland, and Katherine Turnipseed from United States, who actually played a very important role in teaching women how to use this new media, new tool. Her project was Electronic Witches and she really did a tremendous job in doing it.

**FW:** *So is there already a Cybefeminist movement in Croatia?*

**V:** Unfortunately I think it's still very hard to talk about Cyberfeminism in Croatia. A lot of us are basically using e-mail and most of us women who are active are engaged in different social and political activities. So still we are not so much present on the Internet and we are not surfing the Internet, but I think the first steps to get friendly with the new technologies are made, and I hope in future there will be more women's presence on the net.

**FW:** *You told me some really interesting and important things about how these BBS, these bulletin boards were very influential in helping in the anti-war campaigns and how they actually linked people instantly, to organize them for actions and really get things started. Could you see this kind of tactic as working for women in a particular way?*

**V:** Yes, our BBS was important as I already said, in our work with the magazine. It was important as a communication tool to keep the contact with the people we otherwise couldn't reach because telephone lines were broken, but it was also important in keeping different peace, human rights, and especially women's initiatives communicating. Very soon after establishing Zamir BBS and Zamir Network we built up the Zamir Women's

Conference, and this conference is used basically by women's groups in different parts of ex-Yugoslavia for exchanging the information, for organizing conferences, for just giving support to each other. Also an important role was to keep us in contact with the outside world, I mean our partners in, especially, western countries. Last December, for example, we organized a big petition for media freedoms in Croatia and BBS was very important to coordinate this action, which was organized simultaneously in different towns. In a similar way it was used in some previous campaigns for keeping the right to free, legal abortion. My experience is that Internet and new medias can be used as a really strong political tool, supporting the grass roots initiatives and building the broader grass roots networks.

**FW:** *Yes, I agree. We spoke this morning about the fact that there are really big differences between the different countries in the meanings of Feminisms--in the meanings of Feminist action, and how women use the net. The webgirls, for example, presented the fact that they found women more and more wanted to meet on the web socially, as a social connection, more so even than wanting particular technical information. That seemed to be a particular use for women in Holland (whom they were talking about); but what you're talking about in Croatia-- and I suppose this is probably also true of some of the other Eastern European countries where the medium was very much needed as an organizing, survival tool-- there is a very different kind of use for it there. In fact, this is something that Cyberfeminism really needs to think about and be very aware of, that we have actually a very tremendous power in terms of these instant connections that we can make now internationally; in the way that we can call attention to various very critical situations that women might be in. You mentioned the situation in Algeria, what's going on there right now and what a big difference it could make there for Western media and Western women's groups to put a kind of watch, put an alert out over the Internet in much the same way that Amnesty International often does. I'm editorializing here I realize.... but, maybe you could give some further thoughts on that and some specific suggestions from your experience on how this kind of organizing, political organizing across borders, might be able to work for the cyberfeminists.*

**V:** Well, my experience in living in a quite repressive state is that our international connections actually saved us from being arrested or having other big problems. Also, the second experience we made was the great help in our campaigns for keeping abortion legal. We got big support from especially Swiss and German women's

groups and so this making internal problems international, or putting them in the international context, made our struggle much easier and really kept us in a much safer position. A month ago, I met a woman from Algeria, who was a representative of a women's group in Algeria who are fighting to keep some basic rights in this new context they have there. (One of our other speakers) inspired me with the idea of how much easier it would be for, for example this group of women too, if they can get international support, if they can inform the international community immediately about the problems they are facing, about death threats they are facing, and also I was thinking about possibility of the Internet as a tool by which some pressure to the governments can be made. So I'm definitely supporting (Babette's) idea of using the Internet as a political tool and using the Internet as a bridge which can bridge the gap between low and high technological countries; as a tool which can give the voice to especially women in the third world. I consider it as actually a very important part of Cyberfeminist strategy.

**FW:** *I agree, and it reminds me of some of the things that groups that I've been in have done already, using fax for example as a tool-- sending zillions of faxes. You can really tie up a corporation's or a government office's fax machines if everybody in the organization is alerted to send continuous faxes, to a very crucial number. You can really throw some sand into the wheels there. As some of us were talking about last night, one of the things that we really need to be aware of too, is that the Internet is not owned by us, that it's not been kindly provided by corporations for us to just have fun with, and put up our web pages, and play around with but, in fact it's actually a very contested zone; it's a very controlled, surveilled zone, and if we want to continue to use it for our own ends then we have to constantly be very creative about that and very vigilant to maintain the small hold that we have on that space already. That's something that we need to be very aware of as women too, because as women we need to think about claiming space, re-claiming space, claiming voices. One of the things we talked about was the possibility also of using the Internet as an educational tool for women and you were telling me about the way that you're beginning to organize with some women in Zagreb for women's education. Would you be interested in talking about that a little bit?*

**V:** Yes, just two years ago women's studies, a completely grassroots program has started and also we got a lot of support in terms of books and information from our Western colleagues, and I was thinking actually about subscribing women's studies on the Faces list just to make possible for students there to read part of discussion which are going on and to get some important information about books, about sites. Maybe it can inspire some of them to get more involved in this new technology and they'll start to experiment themselves. Also I see the role of Internet as very important in breaking this very nationalistic state of mind which we are facing there. I am sure that people who are using it now, who are really becoming a part of a global village will definitely have a much bigger amount of information and, I hope that for them it will be impossible to be obedient to the system, the regime as it exists now in my country.

**FW:** *I didn't warn you that I was going to ask you this*

*question but. A couple of us were talking last night about the issue of public space and private space, more in connection with art, but very soon it got into a political discussion because of the issue (at least it has been an issue in America for some time) of how artists are being asked to make public art and to go into communities and so-called public spaces to create work that in a way will mediate between museums and certain communities that are usually underrepresented: you know, they'll try to send a black artist into a black community, etc. There are some real problems with the way artists are being used as sort of public relations people for museums, and the way that museums are giving funding to certain projects that really kind of cover up the fact that all public space is essentially lost to us for our use. It's all corporately owned pretty much, it's surveilled, it's controlled, it's there for the market place and not for people just to mingle and to meet and to have social relationships. The Internet could offer perhaps, a new kind of public space although that too is very, very contested, and definitely not just provided freely, it has to be struggled for constantly. So, I was describing a situation that I think exists in America now in terms of public space and the way artists are being used and it's really something that we're not perhaps as aware enough of as we should be. I really wonder if there is a comparable situation in Croatia. I mean, what about this issue of people being able to get together in public spaces and the freedom of people just expressing themselves in their various ways? It seems like there would be some really crucial problems there too.*

**V:** Definitely there are many, many problems though they are quite different than in the West. Still, the state has a very, very important and strong control over most of the civic and social sphere. [So] there are just a few small islands, which I would like to call Temporary Autonomous Zones, where the independent social life is possible. Actually what I'm busy with for years now and together with my colleagues there, is just to make these islands bigger and broader and more visible, though it's quite hard. We have three TV channels and all three of them are state owned and controlled though there are some magazines but, we know that TV at the moment is the most influential media. I also don't want to give up completely the fight to influence the existing institutions but I'm very, very much in favor of creating our own spaces, our own institutions, our own autonomous zones where no censorship or no control could be made.

**Cornelia:** *May I ask a question?*

**FW:** Yes, please!

**C:** *I'm very much interested in your personal background. I would like to know how your personal life looked like before the war and how it changed when the war started and how you got involved in the peace movement.*

**V:** Well, I'm a sociologist, I was studying sociology in Zagreb University and since '86 I was already involved in Green, Women and Peace initiatives in Croatia. At that time we were very much influenced by--besides all, the radical theorists we could read about during our studies--we were very much influenced by especially what was going on here in Germany with the Green Ecological movement; also with the Squatters Movement, with all

this blossoming of the alternative culture and somehow that was my initiation in becoming a political animal or becoming politically active. Then war started in '91, a group of us who were very involved in these different civic initiatives got together and said, "Ok, war is starting. Let's try to do something!" It was obvious that we cannot stop the war at that stage but also obvious that war will bring lot of social, political and economical changes and that it will be necessary to organize ourselves and to influence some of these changes. How my life looked before the war and how it looked after the war started? Well it wasn't, actually, a very big change, my life just got more intense, I just became more active, working more, and learning also much more...

**FW:** *You were telling me really interesting things yesterday about the kind of training that the peace groups undergo, the non-violent training, and the thinking about the theory of it and also the practice of it. I think perhaps we don't know really, we're not so aware of that, at least I'm not, in America, that this is going on. [And] it would be really interesting for me to hear you talk about that a little bit.*

**V:** Yes, one of the first things we did as the anti-war campaign was organizing the trainings for non-violent action and non-violent communication. Our first group whom we contacted was German group Bund für Soziale Verteidigung, and actually it was a real discovery for me to get in touch with all this theory, with also concrete methods and techniques: how to do it! Very soon we got in contact with different groups, with different trainers and lots of them were willing to come and to give trainings to us. [And] I was actually very surprised how many people, ordinary people got interested in it and the response was really good even in towns which were on the front line, which were for a long time under the shelling, and still somehow it seems that it gave some hope to the people. Out of these trainings, several projects have developed, one of them was working in a small town Pakrej, which was divided-part of the town was under Croatia control, part of the town was under Serbian control. We were working there trying to do 'social reconstruction,' we call it: actually to make the communications between people from both sides. It was hard, it was tough job, but it worked very well, and it was a model which was later transformed or brought to Bosnia, and now there are some small towns in Bosnia in which this model of work is applied. The other project which came out of these trainings is Peace Studies. Peace Studies are just starting officially this autumn. Though we had organized for two years already, sort of one week events/workshops in which people who are active and who learned a lot through their engagement and through trainings there, participated in disseminating this knowledge to just ordinary people who came and participated in these events.

**FW:** *I guess one thing we haven't really discussed that much is what you think is the possibility for a media future for women in Croatia, and also it might be interesting to hear what you think are the most pressing problems for women right now. I know there's many different groups of women, and many different positions, and economic backgrounds, in Croatia, but if you can make, perhaps, some generalizations or comments it would be interesting to hear.*

**V:** You are asking me about the future for the women in Croatia? Actually, one very interesting thing has happened during these years of war (and this phenomenon is known from the history as well) and this is that actually all these different civic initiatives--not just women's initiatives and women's groups, but also human rights groups, peace groups, most of them were led by women and actually, though the war is not a very pleasant experience, somehow a lot of women got encouraged, and they really started some projects, and are working still on developing them. And what I think at the moment is important (there is no war situation anymore) is that I would not like to see all these women falling back again to (let's say) ordinary life, which means: life in which they will become invisible again. And I hope it won't actually happen. Besides that, I would really like to see more women getting involved with these new technologies. I am personally also very excited about it and I hope that I will also have more time now, to just play with the Internet and to see what will come out of it.

**FW:** *Are there any questions from any of you?*

**Cornelia:** *I have another question. You mentioned you worked together with people from Bielefeld building up what was it exactly? You have a mailbox system, Zamir Net. I would like to know what your experiences have been with women from the West or Western countries, Germany especially, in terms of their cultural background and the difference in the role of women and the different background in Feminism. I'm sure that women in former Yugoslavia have been brought up differently and have a very different system in their mind than we have here (in Germany). I would like to hear something about that.*

**V:** Well, though there are definitely differences, especially in the fact that during socialism most of the women in our countries were working so they had economical autonomy, but beside that the problem was this whole, old patriarchal system, which is I guess even worse than in the West. So there are differences, but my experience with working and cooperating with the women's groups from the West is actually quite positive. We could find a common language and we also could learn something from experiences which were made by all the women's groups here. You had twenty or thirty years of experience in organizing, in doing campaigns, founding the houses for women victims of family violence, and all these experiences were quite valuable to us. Because of this we could cope in better ways with some problems which are part of natural group dynamics, conflicts which arise in every group, so it was easier for us-- it's a sort of natural phase in the development of the group. On the other hand, of course, we tried to relate to our own reality and to our own experience, but this communication was, I must say, quite productive and I guess that also women's groups here got something from it.

**FW:** *Thank you very much, Vesna.*

Corrine Petrus

# WEBGRRLS

Webgrrls is a very diverse group of women. About 17 months ago, I was surfing the internet, looking for women on the internet, because I was interested to find other tech-grrls on the net. I'm a computer programmer and working in the field for quite a while, but I didn't know any female colleagues at all. So, when I got on the net, I was interested in finding out about other women. I wanted to find out, if there are other women like me. I didn't find a Dutch site, so I went to Aliza Sherman's site, located in New York. She had the first Webgrrl site, and I think there was also an English group. I wrote an e-mail to Aliza Sherman and asked her, if she knew about a Dutch group. 14 days later I got an answer from her in which she asked me to start this Dutch group.



I thought, no way. I'm a technician, I'm not interested in founding groups. But on the other hand, it was a reason to build a website. I decided to make the website, because it might be the opportunity to find other women. Later I could hand it over to somebody else. Last year in May I opened the website and two months later I had my first Webgrrls meeting. I didn't know, where they were coming from, but in June 1996 there were already 100 webgrrls. We met in Rotterdam. 25 of them came there and we talked about different topics. It was writers and journalists and all kinds of women and we all talked about our personal approaches to the internet. We were all very enthusiastic about that new thing, because we all had the need for talking to women, just to have the proof, that we were not alone out there.

I should explain what the idea of webgrrls is. Well, the idea was already there before we met. Aliza had founded the first group. What we do is, we network. We have mailing-lists on the net. I have about 5 mailing-lists in Holland and one in Belgium. They have all different topics. Mainly we talk about computers. But some women also wanted to chat about everyday life problems, and so I established an extra list for that. I was on it for 2 days, but I left very fast. You have to like it.

The Webgrrl concept is, that everybody can become a webgrrl. The only thing you have to have in common with the others is, that you have an interest in new media. There are very different levels of involvement and capacity, starting from just knowing how to open Netscape and surfing the net to professional programmers and system engineers. On a Webgrrls mailing-list you cannot ask a dumb question. Everybody is taking you serious, so very simple facts are passing by, but also very deep discussion for specialists.

In our meetings we all talk about our work, very different topics, all kind of knowledge and we have fun. An important part of the webgrrls is the webgrrls site. The reason why I started webgrrls, and what I think is most important about the site, is the "who is who" part. On the first meeting we talked about that we cannot find many women on the net and that we want to make them visible. So 6 of us decided to introduce ourselves on the web. Now we have almost 100 women in one year, who published a lot of information about themselves on the net. You also can send them an e-mail. Many women who read it, can't wait to be on the site themselves and send in immediately their who-is-who-form.



For me the visibility of women on the net is the most important thing. The last couple of months I'm trying to go further with it by forming all kinds of groups. I formed

a programmers group, because I had a special programming problem and wanted to exchange about it. As a programmer I do a lot of work for different companies, but I do not have much presence on the net, with my work. But I wanted to exchange about my work and so I started this programmers group with the most nerdy girls. Every three weeks six of us meet to talk about special programming problems and we are developing now a common project. Mathilde is also in the group, and we force each other to tell each other every three weeks, how far we got. Each of us is doing a part of the project and can choose, if she wants to do it in Java, VRML or whatever she wants. We give each other as much knowledge as we can.

Another thing is women and business. There are a lot of women who have a talent. They are working for a company, but would prefer to start their own business. We mix it together and slowly start to form little companies, maybe on a small scale at first. I'm just testing the bandwidth of everything, because I think women are always much too modest. I always was much too modest, and too shy. (I lost that somewhere on a longer line.) I had a lack of confidence. I thought, who the hell is waiting for me to do or put something out there? Nobody is interested in that.

I remembered that yesterday, when Pit Schultz was talking about nettime. I'm reading nettime for one year, but I never said something there, because I always thought: who the hell is waiting for me to say something out there? There are all those interesting people, with their interesting ideas, ideals. Who am I? He said that the reason why so few women post on nettime is also a lack of confidence. And I thought, he is right. It was the same with my first webpage, my first homepage. I was unsure what to say. But I got a lot of good reactions from people sending me e-mails. So I got a lot more confidence. And now I have this organisation. There are 850 members in Holland, 25 in Belgium, and I'm going to start in Luxembourg. I have maybe other countries in my mind.



The only thing I want with that, is to... I do it for myself. I never thought that I could do something like that, run a big organisation like that. As I told you, I'm learning about my own boundaries and I'm searching for other ways to do that more. And I hope everybody else is inspired and think that they can also do so.

Finally I would like to say something about Cyberfeminism. I don't consider myself a feminist, but maybe I want to call myself a cyberfeminist. There is one thing I like very much about Cyberfeminism and this is, that nobody knows what it is exactly. It has no boundaries yet. Maybe that is not important, but that is why I want to fit in there.



We talk a lot about feminism on the Dutch mailing-list, and I know a lot of the webgrrls have not much sympathies in that direction. Of course they are grateful for the merits and fights of the women before. But they think it is over. Cyberfeminism can bring something different in it. That's why I came here. I hope to find other women that are prepared to go out there and make the internet their own, publish their texts, thoughts, websites. Do what ever they feel like.

<http://www.webgrrls.com>  
<http://www.webgrrls.de>

Note from July 29th, 1998:  
In the meantime I have left Webgrrls to start a new organisation. Tech Women, this a new organisation, which will organise festivals and other activities. This is not a group, like Webgrrls was, but a professional organisation. Tech Women has one important goal and that is to show women that work with technology, businesswomen as well as artists.

# FEMALE EVOLUTION

Scientists have found facts that indicate that female primates were the discoverers and users of tools in the history of mankind. The now almost extinguished Chimp apes show cultural use and tradition of tools. Somewhere along their evolution line among several groups different types of tools have come to use. The females are the most dedicated users and teachers of these tools. Looking at our own evolution the women must have somewhere in history laid these tools aside. Resulting in nowadays debates, why and how woman should come forward out of the untechnical shadow.

We are suppressed to long, have believed for too many centuries too much myth about our incapacity with technology. Fact is also we are short of memory and making the same mistakes ourselves over and over again in history. We saw how man could faster and more craftfully swing a hammer so let him have it, there are enough other tasks to do. We entered the electronic era and women were allowed to take jobs at telephone switchboards and other technical tasks. However now we are labeled as telephone addicts not technicians. Why is grandma's role at the switchboard so easily forgotten? Why she stopped her career there is easy told. Yes woman had lower wages and yes they had care of the children. But new women should have stepped forward with increasing interest in the technology behind the scenes. And that did not happen. I have never seen a female telecompany technician, they have sort of say extinguished.

But today we do things different. We have become alert on the female underdog role. Females have no longer the mother role. Her income is equal to her male colleagues. And we have entered the computer era with a wide variety of new possibilities. Of course computers are expensive, not something you just go out and buy with a tight budget. One has first to find all a solid reason to spend such an amount of money. But that can not be the main reason why female and male computer nerds are unequally presented. There are many women involved with computers at the office, doesn't that give a spin off? Think of working all day with a text processor in an office returning tired at home and finding yourself amongst rebellious children, because they had to look after themselves too often. Logic thinking says: This person is definitely not spending her holiday bonus on a computer. Such person will resent to spend hours after office time in exploring and gaining computer knowledge. The army of data processing women outnumber the legion of male computer users who just bought the machine out of curiosity. This results in a large group of women who's status is more like a puppet on a string the role of 'the data doll', while the male are frequently focused on showing of and getting a taste of the action.

No wonder female computer nerds have to shout out loud, to get seen in such crowd. But computer science is young and open for anybody male or female. With the internet the crowd of female nerds becomes more visible. „I'm not the only women“ I always told my male friends. To make my point I joined the Webgrlls. With internet the social computer face increased and likewise with the telephone the use by females increased. Alas were the telephone was just a simple ten number device, the computer asks with never exhausted logic for more technical insight. Even before the internet a certain attitude with computer malfunctions was known to be typical female. While male shout; „I just don't get it. The device is designed wrong. Do I have to buy a new one?“ Female sigh; „I really do not understand computers. It does not work for me. I did such and so but then every time this stupid message appears, telling me I'm wrong. Could I've damaged something?“

Even though there is no muscle power required for computer usage. And there for women should be equally handy as men there is also a biological difference. Research to the influence of stress and health made clear that average women have a higher cortisol level in the blood than man. Cortisol is a product in the blood that is produced by ACTH a brain hormone produced when experiencing stress situations. An increased level of Cortisol slows down the immune system of our body and makes us vulnerable to diseases. With computers it comes to the point where we all get stressed when things do not function as expected. Because most women have a higher Cortisol level it is likely that they have an unmeasured extra sensation of physical discomfort when their created work is subjective to mystical computer errors. This could be the answer why some women are eager to reject computer knowledge especially with dreadful computer operating systems like Microsoft Windows.

But it might be time to understand that every time a syntax error appears on screen a pop-up window with General Protection Fault number bla blah in such and so or something likewise, one is offered a credit point. One is offered the opportunity to step further in computer knowledge. And the error is for 99.9% a result of the software programmer not oneself.

Instead of cashing the offered credit point by investigating the repetitive pattern and persistence and thus origin of the bug, the computer is regarded as hostile. I wonder how much women have a Microsoft operating system on their computer? And how much of these have tried the program debug, delivered with the ms-dos operating system or Win95. The amount might be scary

small. While men have a tendency to impress friends with (faked) computer knowledge or hardware terms. A handful of computer nerds is more and more overshadowed by the female computer-at-the-office user and internet socializers. Social contact on the internet and browsing newsgroups shows few women on technical subjects. Prejudice lurks around the corner. Where a female once was confronted with pleasant surprise reactions when she confessed her computer knowledge more and more these reactions are intermixed with doubt. When companies have a vacancy for an internet specialist there are already signs on the wall. A blond woman can see the company visiting her web-site with blonde photo but their answer is silence. Once that company should have benefited from the free minded computer scene open attitude towards women. Now female specialists are more and more confronted with disbelief. How much longer are we women about to wait, to see the proof of how we participate in screwing up the gender equal trust situation with computer knowledge? Isn't it about time any woman who is working with computers tries as hard as she can to master the machine she trusts with her work? Isn't it about time females accept their example role. If a young girl learns from her mother computers are frustrating. And she has a hard time getting along with these lessons at school, what else can she do then also get frustrated with computers? It sound all very harsh and it cannot be said enough; No one can be an expert on everything. That's why I state, run for the best you can do, not for Bill Gates chair. The male half of human kind is definitely not going to wait for the female half. If we cannot keep up with the computer blitz the wall is build and it will take yet again some heavy power to get it down. That's a burden we cannot pass through on next generation beta women. It would be unscience-fiction.

The male population is also eager to see our role in computer science. Besides for obvious social reasons there are also computer specific reasons. Almost every software program is created by a male. Programmers are beta people and most of them proofed already at teens to be able to get disconnected from outside world to focus for several weeks on a personal project and belief. Most programmers confess some lack of social intuitive understanding. Software generated by large companies is therefore most of the time designed by a group of people with different tasks. The programmer is kept away from the user interface because it is clear to understanding that especially the user interface will make or break a good piece of software. Programs we hate because all keys and buttons are too confusing could have been totally different if only someone was there to understand and take over. Especially at that point computer science hoped for the inflow of women with a social intuitive view on matters to make a change. We women could have told that pressing special key combinations like <SHIFT F7> takes both hands to do. And therefore such key combinations should only be preserved for rare used program functions not for saving or printing a file. Take a look at most programs and the opposite is true. A program like Word Perfect for instance.

The most frequently used key combinations show the male programmers view on ergonomics. But there are other examples with Graphic User Interface programs like Netscape, the user is overwhelmed by a menu strip,

button bar, sliders and extra push buttons everywhere around in the window frame like broken keys and mail envelopes. Why does no-one in the Netscape office stop the programmer with all that button voodoo which only leads to the agony of erroneous clicking wrong hot spots. The software industry lacks women with sound understanding of software engineering and our quick understanding what makes a program human friendly. The female touch like the irreplaceable concept of the hammer.

Governments also try on the side line to let the women equally participate in computer knowledge. However in the school system there is a gap. It does not consider the fact that interests and ease of learning differs in phases in life. While someone might be more focused on social life at teens it does not rule out the technical capacity someone might have at later age. Taking on technical matters at later age also require more persistence and organization. Most people have trouble taking such step at age of 25 or 40 leaving them with a lack of knowledge and missed opportunity. With computers this might easily be pardoned because today's hot knowledge is tomorrow's sorrow. But still a basic understanding of what has been bought in the computer shop, might be a step in positive direction to explore things further. We have the internet now at our convenience and an opportunity to create the new home office style industry. All it takes is just a little extra investment in computer knowledge.

So next time you find yourself confused with technics ask you mother why she never bothered to explain. Ask yourself why you have the right and reason why you should not start to make the difference yourself. Because the handy Chimp females might die out, but at least we can take their lessons at heart. Do not throw away computer technical facts for males only. Learn it as best as you can, use it and pass it through.

Since the media attention in the '80 hacking is mostly associated with bank burglary and destruction. Most of that misperception originates from the 80's when computer information was easily mixed with assumptions filling the gaps of knowledge.

Besides the media-hyped excesses hacking is more; Hacking is technical exploration beyond or sometimes without documentation. Best known are the incidents of playful computer experts who hunt for security holes in networks. Its their honor and part of the game to notify the system administrators when a gap in security is found. But hacking is also changing software or hardware. At the level of software it can be for good or the famous evil. Not creating viruses and cracking software registration code perse but also changing an operating system like Ms-Dos for personal convenience. On the hardware level it can range from redesigning the functionality of old waste to getting complex hardware to run without a manual.

Another misperception is that a hacker is familiar with all techniques. As if a olds automobile fanatic has to be involved with model airplanes. Most of the time a hacker is focussed on only one field, an innocent innovative purpose. The result if good is often adopted by the industry, with only a silent honor for the original hacker. Although it is an understatement that fashion is created on the streets, the computer hacker is still seen by the public at large as dangerous instead as part of the

Kathy Rae Huffman and Eva Wohlgermuth

# FACE SETTINGS

FACE SETTINGS is a female-focused communication project and Internet web site that reveals the growing Net community of women. Eva Wohlgermuth and Kathy Rae Huffman host performing installations and cooking events, around the world, and connect women through IRC and various Internet chat systems. FACE SETTINGS began in Spring, 1996 with the stated goal to join real groups of women into a network strategy to expand female connectivity. Our plan is to engage women in discussions about Internet, virtuality, and their online presence -- issues of importance to each community-- during the traditional female process of preparing meals and eating together.

Today, women don't have a dominant voice in the media, although they have a lot to say. The internet is really a great environment for women, because people can't interrupt what you're saying. Men can't interrupt you. You can always finish your sentence online.

FACE SETTINGS investigates how women can use the Internet environment to understand their own work better, as well as other peoples lives, other cultures, and new potentials for collaborative future projects. There are no strict goals, only the establishment of an community consisting of women involved with media, also artists and other women who just want to communicate with us. We share things online.

We think that women are communicating differently than men, and we somehow observe ourselves in dialogue with other women. We have a theory, and there are some women who are objecting it, who say that there is no difference in the basic communication between women and men, women to women and men to men. They



say its all the same.

A topical thing for us to discuss could be: if there is a difference, should this difference be overcome? Is it more interesting to live in a --more or less-- unified communication world? Can I go to the female part of my personality or to the male part, according to the mood or

situation? Our theory tries to explore these and other questions about connectivity and online presence. We have created an environment which we think is a 'female environment' on the net. This also means it does not have to have black backgrounds.

It is a well know fact that the Internet is a male environment, populated by a mere 15% women in Europe. Although statistics vary from survey to survey, all agree that the fastest growing category of users in Europe are (young) women. A strong online community of women already exists in America and Australia, and terms like CyberFeminist or Grrrl are often used to describe websites and ideas surrounding this topic. Along with FACE SETTINGS, we will show online communication projects that offer valuable services, information and resources to women, and works that bring a fresh, feminist perspective to Net politics and theory.

The questions FACE SETTINGS raises are various, and are evolving. We are personally invested in the process of establishing a female network, and establishing personal links in each of the FACE SETTINGS locations. A fe.mailing list, FACES is a parallel activity that involves approximately 100 media artists, critics and theoreticians around the world.

We ask:

1. How do communication practices differ in various cultural settings?
2. How are women kept out of the technically challenging network and what can be done to change this?
3. What are local (and traditional) communication practices of women, and what might this project offer to local women's groups?
4. What special stories, recipes, and traditions, reveal the unique female contributions to cultural communication in each location?
5. How does the fact that women speak and communicate differently than men affect our female involvement in online culture?

We want to help assist women to build stronger connections between each other in the online environment. We are especially interested in female mailing lists, web projects, 3D spaces online, and international emale-focused communication events, conferences, and festivals.

You'll find an interview with Kathy about her online activities at:

<http://www.obn.org/boys/kathy.htm>

Diana McCarty

## WHAT IS SADIE PLANTING?

*A review of Sadie Plant's book: „Zeros and Ones. Digital Women and the New Technologies“*

There it was. A quick, short mission accomplished. Silver cover gleaming in the fluorescent light of the bookshop, alongside all the rest of the cyber readers and countless anthologies. Just one, good thing for me that it wasn't zero. In my hands: DIGITAL WOMEN + THE NEW TECHNOCULTURE. I hadn't known this was the subtitle, under giant raised print that read ZEROS + ONES, and at the top, again in black, SADIE PLANT. The authoress. The cyberfeminist. Fresh from the first Cyberfeminst International, and the hectic media arts circle, I was cynical, excited, pumping with cyberfem enthusiasm, I wanted this to be good. I would learn from this book.

I was disappointed. Angry, troubled, deeply engrossed. Where was the history of women in technology? Ada Lovelace? That's it? But I couldn't put it down. Like a good (or bad) novel, I was mesmerized by the words, the flow, the images. I wanted to talk about it. I mailed around, desperately looking for somebody who I could rant with. I couldn't stop thinking about it. Cyberfeminist? No, surely she is joking. But the book has its merits. Not a history of women in technology? It is a lie? She has seduced me, along with all the rest of her readers. The silver cover, the promising subtitle.

Yet, once seduced, I cannot resist. She has put before me much more. And I eat it up like candy. Ada, the brain, the woman who invented programming, a perfect candidate for Freudian analysis -- put her on the couch, ask her about how she feels about her father. Redeeming the zero, and going on to examine how and where it appears throughout western culture. How can women, feminists, cyberfeminists, dismiss this book? This writer? No traditional academic, Plant refuses to conform to gendered codes of relaying information. She does not adhere to the codes of writing theoretically, historically. No neatly presented argument logically followed by substantiating, factual information.

Yet it is readable, and pleasurable, informative. We know Freud was a bastard, that he reduced women to zero, to empty, to lack. But Plant capitalizes on it. She starts with Ada's story, but is that the beginning? She weaves (inspired I'd say) her way through Ada's life and world,

through time, and back again. Ada as archetypal woman -- the zero that must be counted, imbalanced, dangerous -- her womb traveling, hysterically. Is this where her creativity, her will & desire to discover is located? Perhaps. Plant refuses to commit herself to one story. Instead, she opens doors, all of them, even the ones the don't yet exist.

Problematic: she embraces the notions of such thinkers as Freud and Irigaray, and remixes them. Are women different? Of course. Is it all about genitalia? Why not? But then she goes further, takes us through the mainologies that define and inform our now, our future. In and out, now and then. We see ourselves reflected in the ladies of the 19th Century, confined to the delicate pursuit of botany, and where that led. Do you have any idea just how important the lichen is? Or how the study of these fungi became important in modern biology? Plant offers another way of reading the past. Not confining herself, or her readers, to historical fact, she wields her mighty pen (keyboard more likely), quoting Freud, Lovelace, Dement, cyberpunk, Irigaray, a multitude of others, and Beatrix Potter!?

Cleverly, she avoids the compromise of absolutes. She finds and follows threads just as far she needs them - the reader is left to ponder the connections. Plant has no fear of being illogical, irrational, neurotic, bitchy. And I suspect that she is not worried about her womb wandering. Almost fiction? Historical? No, much better, it is a daring hybrid. Plant refuses to give it all away. Just read interviews with her. Does she ever give more? She will not explain what she meant. What did she say?

It is positivist, techno-utopianist, techno-determinist and all the other bad things you've heard or thought. But it is not only that. Instead Plant carves a space of difference out of nothing, out of zero. Contradictory, but she never pretends that this is the final word. Yet it is precise in its own way. The logic here is based on Freud's view of women, and how he characterizes us -- of the myths of science, how we, as women, are seen in the eyes cold hard light of rational thought. She embraces it all and turns it around and in doing so, she smartly critiques the unquestioned paradigms of logical thought. She shows us that it is possible to relate real and valuable information without a dependence on traditional forms. Despite her reliance on female behavioral stereotypes, Plant is planting seeds for a much deeper discussion.

# CENSORED INFORMATION

NOAM CHOMSKY ANALYSES THE HAITI-U.S.A. CONNECTION



The installation CENSORED INFORMATION is a commentary about censorship in the media demonstrated by the artist using as the subject-matter the severe human rights abuses during the Haitian military coup.

The installation consists of two parts, whereby Part I, PRIVATE SPACE documents the results of Part II: PUBLIC SPACE.

PRIVATE SPACE consists of two televisionsets that both show images of a Haitian woman, mutilated severely by the Haitian military, because she had a poster hanging in her house of the first democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Her head is slashed open by a machete-knife and her left hand and forearm are chopped off. She was found on a heap of dead corpses on a massgrave, left there by the military who thought that she was dead. The 2 monitors show images of her before and after the mutilation. The images are shown as freeze frames on two TV-sets, superimposed, so that it requires a bit more of a commitment by the viewer to decipher the gruesome documents. The TV-sets are completely covered in lead, a material reference to the poisonous content of disinformation and manipulated meaning of nowadays TV-news information as it arrives in peoples homes.

PUBLIC SPACE shows excerpts of computerized texts by Noam Chomsky who analyses the political arena from which part I is the result: the Haitian military coup, the role of the C.I.A. and the U.S. in the coup, the media-disinformationcampaign

against the exiled President Aristide and the current functioning of world organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank.

The texts were documented by the artist during several interviews she conducted with Chomsky, a follow-up to their earlier collaboration, when Chomsky was involved as the American protagonist in the award-winning documentary Babeth co-produced and directed HAITI: KILLING THE DREAM.

The installation tries to evoke a commitment by the viewer to look for real information about world affairs and enables them to listen to an in-depth analysis of the Haitian struggle by Noam Chomsky via headphones.



<http://www.desk.nl/~haiti-if/main.html>

Ingrid Molnar

## BORDERCROSSING FEMINISM — CYBERFEMINISM

One of the essential human rights is the entirety of body - of the own body - to own the own body. This also includes the belly and so "Mein Bauch gehört mir" was one of the most famous demands of feminism in the 70's to claim the right of abortion.

"PREGNANT" does not mean "with child" here Cassells dictionary is definitely wrong. Since I am fertile - I know that sex with male humans - even using contraceptions - can cause pregnancy, but this has not to cause maternity. "Make pregnant" must not mean "Put the girl in the family way." And since the middle of the 70's in many countries all over the world abortion during the first 10 (or even 24) weeks of pregnancy with the help of a gynaecologist can take place. In Austria for example - it is legal for 23 years, but in the countryside it is still nearly impossible to do it. In this little country where I'm coming from, in the 70's not the politics - but the conservativ doctors caused problems by not giving the permission for withdraw by suction. So the feminists did not demand to legalize abortion but legalize suction - but only in Vienna and some other big cities it was and is possible. Did feminism only take place in big cities? In the countryside lack of infrastructure, traditional family structure, church as the only cultural institution gives social control and patriarchy place. Social networks are essential and that means contro, if you try to escape - restrictions follow.

In West-Germany in the 70's it was a political matter and abortion stayed illegal until 1992. But during this time, under certain circumstances it was allowed to do it. But the necessary circumstances differt a lot from one part of the country to the other. So in 1988 a gynaecologist in the wonderful countryside of bavaria was put on his trial for doing abortion under circumstances, which would not have been illegal in an other parts of the country (as long as tax is paid) and about 200 of his patients and their friends and husbands were found guilty, too. Wondering what is going on in Memmingen and how could it happen we started to visit the trial and most of the time, we were the only visitors. Some women, who lived in the surroundings wanted to watch the trial, tried to get to town but could not manage it, because somebody else needed the car and without it they could not make it from the village to the nearby town, as we found out during several interviews. The trial already was going on for months, and there were no reports or protest in media until a demonstration with thousands of visitors from other region - cities - was organized. There we met some activ feminists of the 70's - living and working in cities and one of them said- "Maybe we have forgotten the countryside and now they hint us here." Can cyberfeminsm help in cases like that? Now, ten years later are there enough girls and women online, but also in the countryside ?

I wonder, if girls and women living in this closed circuit of patriachate with the chorus of the church as the one

and only cultural meeting place can escape to the cyberspace. Especially because in most of the cases to go online for joining a chat on the net with somebody far away - would cause a big amount of costs. To call a provider (most of the time more than 50km away) would be a long distance call.... and in this case to go online costs "as much as travelling....." So we simply cannot meet countrygirls on the net - cyberfeminism, as feminism in the 70's, takes place in the big cities all over the world but usally does not cross the border to the countryside.

And here one of the reasons, why feminism did not exist in the countries associated to the former CCCR. In East-Germany abortion was considered to be one of the possibilities of contraception since the 60's and as women from the former CCCR told me - beside condoms - it was the only one. Curettage was the most used method (and I am afraid it still is). Sometimes there was not enough tinned blood and women bled to death. The women of the eastern countries in Europe wanted - and still want - better medical care. But they want it for their parents, husbands, friends and sons - as well as daughters, too. This is just one of the examples, why feminism and women's movement differ from east and west and there is also a big difference between north and south. How strong religion can influence politics we learned in summer 1998. The government of Portugal has problems to legalize abortion and Hoechst stopped the production of RU 486 (allowed in England, France and Sweden), because of the protests of the catholic church and no ideological support from any government in Europe.

In the USA abortion is allowed - during the whole pregnancy. In China, it can cause problems, when a woman gets more than two children. And I am sure cruel things happen in the case of abortion in Iran. The "real life" of women seems to differ a lot. This are just few thoughts about one of the main topics of feminism, but in my opinion an important one. Even in Europe in countries, where economy and social structure does not differ so much, we have big gaps in field of contraception and abortion - and I am sure this causes different behavior in the (hetero) sex life - but does it also effect our virtual life? Can girls and women really enjoy virtual life as long as they are struggeling for a minimum of freedom, for example a room for their own, food and medical care in their physical state of life? Listening to Corinne Petrus how fast Webgrrls movement developed in the Netherlands - the mekka of abortion in Europe. In a country, where law and order includes the demands of the feminism of the 70's girls are already grrls and go online easily. And arent all those grrls who developed a certain grrrl power living in countries where abortion during the first 12 weeks (and even later) is legal and not only available in big cities and medical support is on a high level? Netherlands, USA, England and Scotland - and what is going on in Ireland - were abortion is still illegal?

Gudrun Teich

# „DOLLED UP“

"Dolled up" is a video-projection from 1995. I was commissioned by the German TV Station, WDR, to edit a short piece about the Pret-à-porter in Paris, in which the bodies of the models were decorated on the catwalk like living display dummies in order to present the dresses. The designers moved around them like racehorse owners move around their favorites.

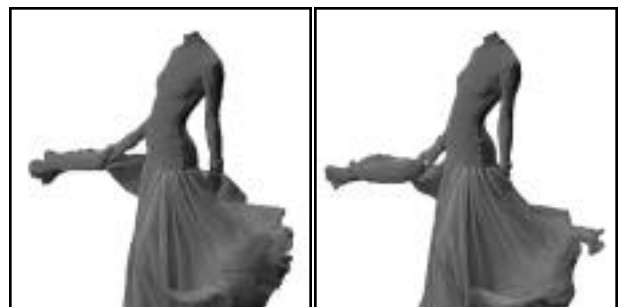
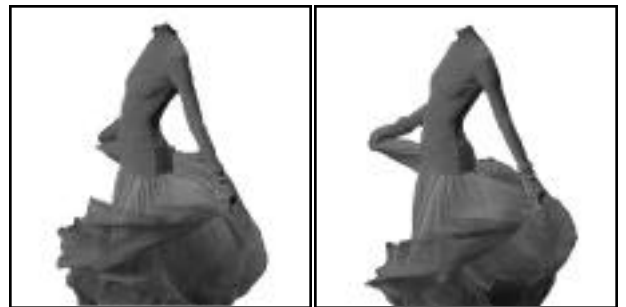
At this time, in the world of fashion, the phenomenon of supermodels developed, women who gained the status of superstars, like only musicians and actors had in the 80s. Models used to be nameless. Now it's predominantly their names which are commercialized -- rather than the designer's names whose clothes they wear.

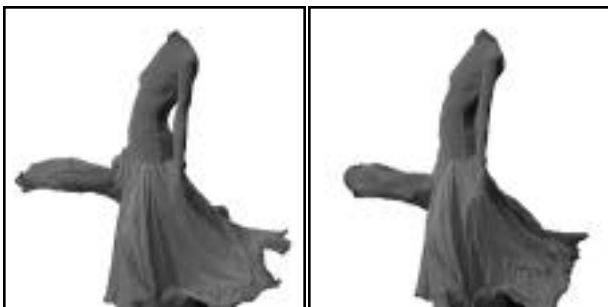
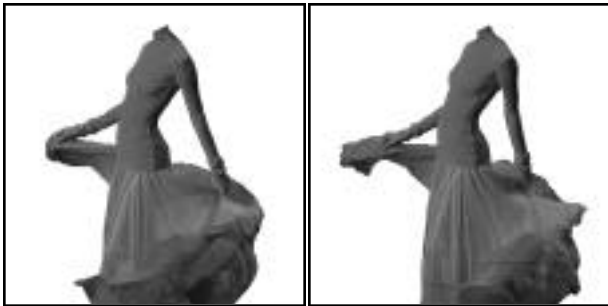
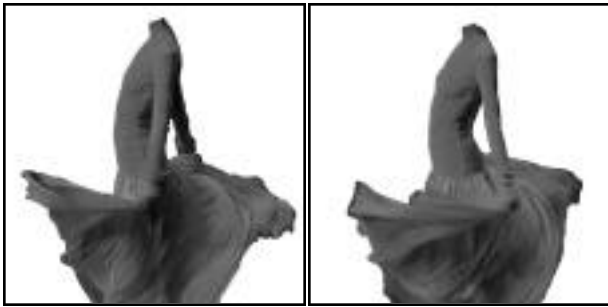
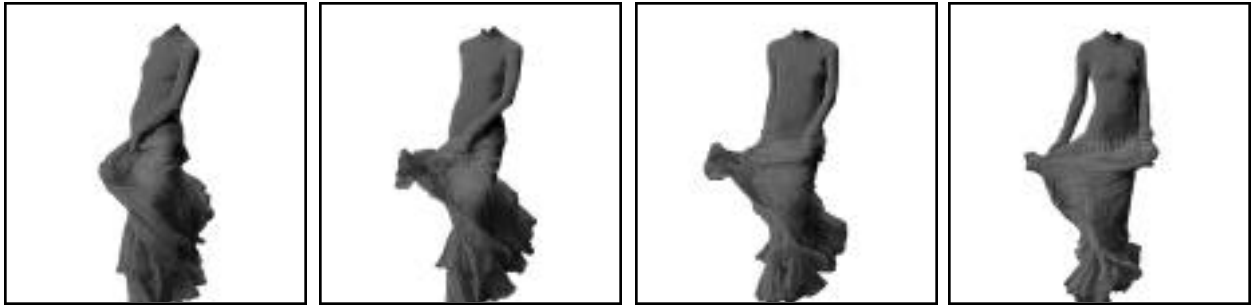
I used these bodies, that have been stylized as idols, in five video sequences which show the typical turn of the supermodels at the end of the catwalk. Frame by frame, I separated the dresses from the body or respectively the body from the dresses with the paintbox. As a result the dresses seemed to move by themselves, and the absence of the bodies became visible via contour and volume.

Clothes have often been described as a second skin. In "Dolled-up" each moves as an empty shell or wrapping of something that is not there anymore, and turns depressingly around itself.

As a projection the dress-shell moves for a minute before turns into another through computer morphing. Lifesized, they are projected onto the wall, dancing a permanently repeated, monotonous rhythm that makes the computer animated dresses appear like statues or robots. Like the logo of a prestigious company.

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Stills from the video installation „Dolled-up“



# Data DJ

Ina Wudtke

Life has become more complex in the overwhelming sea of information. Since '68 the poststructuralistic theory describes the dead of the 'Subjekt' and has replaced it by setting plural denotations of culture and identity.

I formed a multiple personality: I'm artist, DJ T-INA and editor of the NEID Magazin. Three or more identities changing, replaceable, shifting. This 'additude' is a cultural form of life that refers to a world of 'differences' and 'mille plateaux' (Deleuze/Guatarri) as well as to a never ending network. No traditional static denotated 'Subjekt' can keep up with this way of life only this quicksilver type of 'shizophrenia personality' (with a method).

Some of the very static and common identity models german culture offers to the germans is the theme of my: 'Foto Notes'. Right now there exist 7 serials. Each of them contains 60 portraits taken in a classic portrait cut way. Compiled together in various combinations, the series become studies of both variety and stereotypes of gestural expression and body image. There are series re-

presenting: german soldiers (1998), german boy group fans (1997), women on german magazine covers (1996), women in german TV (1996), women in my hood/germany hamburg, karolinenviertel (1996), hip hop teenagers in N.Y. (1995), hip hop teenagers in germany (1992-93). The rows of body images are specimens of characters of a complex script. Whether taken as live portraits, the picture tube or glossy covers, my photographs are descriptions of images. They discribe how individuals and identities are modeled not only through language. The bodies are battlefields of urban culture, -gender clichées, and -logos proudly presented on clothes and skin.

All this was important when 'we' (Ina Wudtke, Claudia Reinhardt, Heiko Wichmann) founded 'NEID' (the german word for envy, relating to Sigmund Freuds 'Penis envy). Since 1994 there is a molecular collective of international authors, performers, musicians, filmers, programmers, haidressers, artists, layouters, fashiondesigners etc. working interdisciplinary (Bettina Bartzen, Lars Bulenheim, Lucian Busse, H.CH. Dany, Jan Diedrich, Tanja Dückers,

Kai Dünnhölder, Alexandra Filipp, FeedBUCK & Galore, Ulf Freyhoff, Peter Fröhner, Andreas Gram, Honey Suckles, Barbara Jung, Hans Kroier, Ina Kurz, Pia Lanzinger, Simone Leiffert, Bianca Ludewig, Jessika Martin, Elke aus dem Moore, Ellen Nonnenmacher, Claudia Reinhardt, Dirk Rohe, Christian Roosen, Hinrich Sachs, Erik Schmidt, Lori Shy, Julia Solis, Nalla Smith, Paul Snowden, Inga Svala Thorsdottir, Dirk Uhlig, Felix Velasco, Heiko Wichmann, Birgit Wudtke and lots of others.

NEID is a transmedial project. Once a year we publish a magazin, all the people mentioned in this text took part on it. But we also do shows, music events, parties, readings, performances and movie shows. My personality Ina Wudtke tha NEID Magazina takes care of all organisation work concerning money and spaces and coordinating participants as well as participating as an artist. You can also call my profession: 'art work mixer' - the method woman.

The other personality of mine: DJ T-INA is heavily involved into 'word, sound, vision' events. My interest is a combination of this three elements. The magazine as a reference to the 'scripture and writing tradition' of western culture needs a heavy 'oral culture' workspace to talk about all the identities that will never be expressed in 'downwritten' words (as may be Linston Kwesy Johnson would express it...).

'Word' means here the 'spoken word'/'club poetry'/'Dub Poetry, coming out of a tradition of african oral culture you can find in clubs and cafés all over the world (especially in London and N.Y.C). 'Sound' contains: noise, music with and without beats, tone-quality concerning mostly the equipment you are using as an asthetic standpoint... 'Vision' refers to:slideshows, digital live videomixes which are projected, power of thoughts, hallucinations, monitor views...

Please check for detailed information our web pages (created by Heiko Wichmann):

<<http://www.thing.de/neid>>

In 1997 me, myself and I were continually cooperating as a DJ with videoartist Ulf Freyhoff and german Poet Ina Kurz. In this time we really started to make each media interact to really come to a data-mixing and -distorting that creates a certain atmosphere out of a thousand inputs.

We are constantly working on changing the meaning of (german) words around (rap/ slang/poetry), mixing it up with some spicy english or other languages, combine it with Sound and a vision, sample it loop it, put it new together work it... we prefer to do this 'live' cause that's what creates 'mad styles' (refering to grafitti's stylewars) that changes all the time and never comes out exactly in the same way. As a DJ I work with everything my mixer is offering: cutting, pitch, transforming, mixing one track over an other, change equaliser, using effects like delay, (always) flanger, reverb and so on. I try to keep my selection of LP's very open. That means I combine all types of music like film music, slideshow soundtracks, hip hop, house, soul, fairytale records for kids, classical orchester, speeches etc ... still I mix it in a certain way that it all comes together just right. Someone who listens to my mixes can take it for granted that I mean what is said and mixed there as a 'mood sculpture'. But like DJ Spooky said: 'So many people hear but do not'!

Especially in Germany I do see peoply trying to fulfil a certain livestyle that tells you to go to clubs and buy certain CD's but there's just no sensibility and no ability to distinguish styles, mix methodes, sound and so on. Germany nowadays suffers a lot from Nazi-Deutschland that has really managed to kill all important cultural workers or making them leave the country. Mixing fragments, re-combining potential, giving it a new meaning, like future without a past that is what young urban 'Data-DJ' culture is working on.

Whatever I'm doing - music, magazin, fotos, the only thing that is for sure is the constant change. That's my object of asthetic effort, acting like a data dj: compiling, mixing, re-presenting.

**<http://www.thing.de/neid>**

**Everybody's got to see  
that there are  
creators of  
REALITY**

# BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

## AND MORE URLs:

### - Susanne Ackers

art historian, lives and works in Berlin and Skövde, Sweden, founding member of the Old Boys Network. She is experienced in multi-media project management and teaches art history as senior lecturer at the Högskolan in Skövde, Sweden.

### - Irina Aktuganova

lives in St.Petersburg with her husband and daughter. She graduated from St.Petersburg Academy of Fine arts in art-history and art-theory. She was working for state museums and exhibition halls in Siberia until 1988, writing for central magazines and newspapers at the same time. Since 1988 Irina is involved in St.Petersburg artmarket, opened a commercial gallery, got money and invested in the non-profit Gallery 21. Since 1995 she is dealing with new media as a director and owner of Gallery 21, organizing the Cyber-Femin-Club on the base of Gallery 21, together with Alla Mitrofanova. Currently they are opening the internet studio, and organizing workshops for women.

### - Ulrike Bergermann

is working in literature and media studies and in the women's cultural center of Bremen, teaching at the University of Hamburg. Working fields are concepts of several media: pictures, writing, women et al. Doctoral thesis about sign language notation.

### - Josephine Bosma

lives and works in Amsterdam. She has been making radio programs since 1991, first was involved in Radio Patapoe, an Amsterdam pirate radio station, where she did art radio, reporting and, mostly, a mix of these, focusing on "an investigation of the body in human perception of the world and its exchanges with it". Later she worked at the Dutch cultural radio/tv "organization" VPRO. After that Josephine "went into" new media through the idea of media as extensions of the nervous system - through her fascination for the internet as a focal point for communication and interhuman relations and as a place where the interconnectedness of disciplines --art, politics, philosophy, economy, sociology-- is quite remarkable and obvious. She organized the radio section of the „next5minutes“ conference in Amsterdam, 1995. From the beginning of 1996 she started writing -- interviews (about net.art, net.radio, cyberfeminism), later also her own texts. Together with Rasa Smite she was responsible for the radio shows of the First Cyberfeminist International.

### - Shu Lea Cheang

was once a New York based installation artist/filmmaker, now a cyberhomesteader managing a digital existence. Her video installations, structured to activate cross-cultural collaboration, include COLOR SCHEMES (1990, Whitney Museum, New York), The AIRWAVES PROJECT (1991, Capp Street Project, San Francisco), Those Fluttering Objects of Desire (1993, Whitney Museum Biennale Exhibition, New York). Her feature film FRESH KILL was premiered at Berlin International Film Festival (1994) and included in the Whitney Museum Biennale Exhibition (1995).

Over the past few years, she has done installations that traverse actual and virtual spaces: Bowling Alley (1995, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis), net-links a local bowling lane with the Walker Art Center's gallery space and www. Elephant Cage Butterfly Locker (1996, Atopic Site Exhibition, Tokyo, traces US radar detect in Okinawa. Buy One Get One (1997, awarded 2nd prize, NTT/ICC Biennale Exhibition, Tokyo; part of the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale special project), locates net-access in Africa and Asia with a bento digi-suitcase.  
<http://www.nttcc.or.jp/HoME>

At present, she is working on a website feature project BRANDON with the Guggenheim Museum Soho and co-

producing with Banff Center for the Arts, Canada and DeWaal, Society for Old and New Media, Amsterdam.

### - Valentina Djordjevic

lives and works in Berlin. She is studying literature, was working with "Internationale Stadt Berlin", is founding member of Old Boys Network and member of mikro.e.V. <<http://www.mikro.org>>, an initiative to support media-cultures in Berlin. Vali is in charge of the "Media Arts Lab" in Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, and wrote a study on "Netiquette" for the Wissenschaftszentrum, Berlin. <<http://duplox.wz-berlin.de/texte/vali/>>

### - Marina Grzanic

lives and works in Ljubljana, Slovenia, received her Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana. Marina has worked collaboratively in the field of videoart and installation for 17 years.

### - Sabine Helmers

ethnologist, lives and works in Berlin.

### - Kathy Rae Huffman

She is Associate Professor of Electronic Art at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Troy, New York, since August 1998 and curator for the Van Gogh TV Virtual Museum System. She was based in Europe since 1991, working freelance as a specialist in networking and metadesign. She has curated numerous programs and lectured at festivals and arts institutes. In Vienna she was associate of HILUS, created the Internet projects FACE SETTINGS and SIBERIAN DEAL together with Eva Wohlgenuth. Together with Margarete Jahrmann she created pop-TARTS, an interactive writing project for the Telepolis online journal. She co-moderates the female-only mailing list FACES.

### - Vesna Jankovic

is former chief editor and now director of ARKZIN (antiwar-campaign) magazine, is an activist feminist organizer and writer who lives in Zagreb, Croatia.

### - Margarete Jahrmann

freelance writer, curator and mediamatic artist, lives in Vienna. Trained at the Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna; Audiovisuals Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam; degree in communication theory. Since 1993 art CD-Rom programming, since 1994 net projects, 1997 DJing lectures, 1998 Superfem-Performances. Workingfields: artistic internet/audioc-performances, internetprojects, multimediaworks, articles, presentations and programming of art and mediatheory events. Co-founder of the column pop-Tarts on female netculture in 96, for the Telepolis online magazine.

<<http://www.konsum.net/fem/>>

Intertwinedness:<<http://interwine.aec.at>>

Pop-Tarts: <<http://www.ix.de/tp/deutsch/pop/default.html>>

### - Verena Kuni

art historian m.a., studied art history, literature, media science and psychology at the universities of marburg and hamburg, currently assistant at the dept. of art theory/fine arts, university of mainz. ph.d. project on mythologizations of the artist in contemporary art and art theory. works as free lance author, critic, content consultant and curator. publications in the field of art history, cultural history, contemporary arts and media issues (<http://www.kunst.uni-mainz.de/~kuni/public.htm>). computer & net activities: started early with the use of computers to get ahead with her rusty typewriter, lurked at festivals like ars electronica, worked as "data-banker" for a scientific image archive, jobbed for a little software company specialized in network systems, former member of The Thing bbs, later more and more addicted to internet and www. currently runs the weekly "the thing rundbrief", a newsletter for

frankfurt/m. on art, club & cultural politics and a mailing list for feminist art historians (sektion frauenforschung im ulmer verein). publications on and in the net (see above and <http://www.kunst.uni-mainz.de/~kuni/nettext.htm>).

**- Olia Lialina**

lives and works in Moscow. She is net artist, critic and curator. Olia is founder of the "Art.Teleportacia" gallery. Since 1996 she is director of "CINE FANTOM" Film Club, co-organizer of the "CINE FANTOM" festival, author of lectures. Contributing editor of 4 RUSSIAN VIDEO ART AND ALTERNATIVE VIDEO compilations "HISTORY OF PARALLEL FILM".

**- Vesna Manojlovic**

Vesna, or Becha as her friends call her, is an internet operator for radio B92 in Belgrade, and she also organises exhibitions and other presentations in the B92 cultural space, called Cinema Rex. At the moment she is studying Dutch, as she plans to emigrate to the Netherlands in the beginning of 1998. There is a plan to start an internet/digital arts 'department' at cinema Rex, for which negotiations are taking place. This might be called Cyber-Rex, or C-Rex. There is no net.connection to C-Rex, as the connection B92 has is already a very special one, and had to be applied for via special diplomatic channels due to the embargo against Serbia. Net.art will therefore be presented unplugged.

Quote: "It was a woman that opened my eyes that women are always organising things for men. Somebody wrote about this on the Faces-mailinglist, after Siggraph. Women are organisers there. Also in C3 women are the organisers..., the director of Cinema Rex is a woman..., the next person organizing things in Cinema Rex is also a woman, the artdirector there is also a woman, that's strange." (from an interview with Josephine Bosma, done in Kassel, during the last block in Hybrid Workspace)

**- Diana McCarty**

Dangerous McCarty, American Intelligence Agent, based in Budapest, is into conference co-ordination and snappy dressing, and apart from being an expert in dealing with troublesome net.artists, she's also a notable socialiste and a dab hand at social networking. She's very outspoken, neurotic, friendly, intelligent, and American. She has a sense of humour, is a little paranoid and extrovert. She drinks a lot, smokes like a chimney and she cares about the environment. She's also instrumental in creating Mailing Lists (nettime, FACES). Diana McCarty is infamous for hacking into electronic art and culture conferences and uploading editorial on various websites about them. Thats when the rumours began that she was indeed a CIA spy since she was very active in the Eastern European Underground media scene. Most important: She thinks that the internet will be taken over by women in the future. "It will eventually be controlled by a small number of robots programmed by powerful women with big hair".

**- Alla Mitrofanova**

lives in St. Petersburg. She graduated from St.Petersburg University as art historian and philosopher. Alla is a writer, curator and editor of the internet magazine "Virtual Anatomy":

<<http://www.dux.ru/vir>>

1990-94 main topics were nomadic subjectivity and nomadic semiotics, theory of m

1995-98 topics: body theory, post-information theory.

**- Ingrid Molnar**

independant filmmaker, lives and works in Hamburg, Germany. Trained in Visual Communication at the Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg, (Academie of fine arts), Diploma in 1989. Working with photography since 1979, founding member of the "Fotogalerie Wien". Selection of her films: "EDV registered", "Tangential" Hamburg/Marseille, „Days Counting, "Mutter aus Passion" ("Mother out of passion"), a documentary about abortion, "Make a Wish", "Jadebusen", "Vita & Bella". Ingrid is working free-lance as cameraoperator and editor, and is doing screendesign and programming since 1995.

**- Ellen Nonnenmacher**

was trained to be an artist in Hamburg. She was co-founder of frauen und technik (women and technology), the once famous "-Innen", and she enjoyed being an old boy for a while. Her

harddisk is located in Berlin.

**- Helene von Oldenburg**

lives in Rastede and Hamburg, Germany. Helene holds a doctor's degree of Agricultural Science and studied visual arts at the Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg. She is member of obn. Selection of works: "Der Imaginale Ort IV", Kunsthalle Hamburg (1991), "Nine Sculptures New York 1993", The Thing <<http://www.thing.net>>, "Information Molecules" a research project in futurology (1994), "Traces of Future. New Ways of Experimental Arachnology", Fernerkundung, TheaLit, Übersee Museum, Bremen (1996), "SpiderFeminism" (1997), "The Mars Gallery", together with Claudia Reiche (1998) <[http://www.obn/the\\_mars\\_gallery](http://www.obn/the_mars_gallery)> <[http://www.obn.org/the\\_web\\_page](http://www.obn.org/the_web_page)>

**- Corrine Petrus**

lives and works in Rotterdam. She is a computer-programmer with a great interest in communication and in people. In the beginning of 1996 she founded the Webgrlls Chapter in Holland and Belgium. Quit Wengrrls in 1997. Now Corrine has her own Computer Consultancy Business called Webdiva (<http://www.webdiva.nl>) and is chairwoman a the new organisation „Tech Women“ (<http://www.tech-women.nl>)

**- Julianne Pierce**

is a new media producer, writer and curator. She is a founding member of the collaborative computer art group VNS Matrix, who are currently developing an interactive game called BAD CODE, (prototype funded by the Australian Film Commission). She has curated several new media events including 'Code Red' (international and Australian artists investigating new media and information technologies, November 1997); 'Critical Media' for the Australian Centre of Contemporary Art (October 1995) and 'Future Languages' with VNS Matrix (Artists' Week, 1994 Adelaide Festival). She is the inaugural moderator for the

recode::: internet mailing list, an Australian based forum for discussion on new media culture. Julianne has represented

Australia at several international exhibitions and conferences including ISEA (International Symposium on Electronic Art), Ars Electronica and in Sept 1997, participated in the First Cyberfeminist International meeting (Hybrid Workspace) at Documenta X in Germany. She is on the Board of the Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) and Artspace. She has an Arts Degree from Flinders University and a post-graduate degree in Women's Studies from the University of Adelaide.

recode::: - <http://sysx.apana.org.au/recode/>

Code Red - <http://www.anat.org.au/projects/codered/>

VNS Matrix - <http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns>

**- Daniela Alina Plewe**

lives in Berlin, studies in Philosophy, Literature and Anthropology and Video at Université de Paris VIII. 1991-95 member of the AI-group "Logic, Theories of Knowledge and In-formation" at Freie Universität Berlin. 1995 project-artist at ZKM, Center for Arts and Media, Karlsruhe. 1995 grant of French Embassy, Bonn. 1998 grant of Senate of Berlin. International presentations, lectures and exhibitions.

**- Barbara Rechbach**

lives in vienna and london. ma hypermedia studies at the university of westminster, london. working with digital media - interactive multimedia, video, photography. background in electronic arts and communication theory at the academies for applied arts in linz and vienna; member of "freie klasse", wien (open class vienna), university of applied arts in vienna; co-editor of the vienna based magazine "test".

**- Claudia Reiche**

lives and works in Hamburg, Germany. She holds a M.A. and a Diploma in Visual Communication. She is a literary and media scientist, author, performer and does educational work at the University of Hamburg and at the Academy for Fine Arts Braunschweig. Claudia is staffmember of the Women's Culture House TheaLit Bremen, (concept and organisation of "Künstliches Leben:// Mediengeschichten", international laboratory on media art and theory). Actually she is member in the VW-research project at the University of Hamburg "Körperbilder. Mediale Verwandlungen des Menschen in der Medizin" ("Bodyimages. Medial transformations of man in medicine"), directed by Prof. Marianne Schuller, focussing on "Living pictures, medical visualization, artificial life and electronic entertainment",

especially the Visible Human Project. Claudia is a cyberfeminist member of the Old Boys Network. Together with Helene von Oldenburg she is curating "The Mars Gallery", the first international and interplanetary exhibition space for fine arts on Mars.

**- Rasa Smite**

is a famous net.radio activist living and working in Riga, Latvia. Together with Josephine Bosma she was responsible for the cyberfeminist radio shows of the First Cyberfeminist International.

**- Cornelia Sollfrank**

is an artist, lives and works in Hamburg and Berlin. Central to her conceptual and performative works are the changing notions of art, the advent of a new image of the artist in the information age, gender-specific handling of technology, new forms of disseminating art, as well as networking and communication as art. She was a member of the female artist groups "frauen-und technik" and "-Innen", and founding member of the first cyberfeminist organisation "Old Boys Network".

**- Josephine Starrs**

is an Australian new media artist who has a schizoid relationship to new technologies. While entranced with the playful possibilities of the medium, she maintains a healthy paranoia of its obsessions and controlling implications. She is a member of the cyberfeminist artist collective, VNS Matrix, whose early performance work in virtual communities used irony and humour to reveal the gendered biases hard wired into computer culture.

Her video "White" made in collaboration with Francesca da Rimini explores the language of madness to create a hyperreal vision of alienation, psychic disturbance and transcendence and has been screened in Europe, Australia and the US.

She worked with Leon Cmielewski to produce the CD-ROM "User Unfriendly Interface", an ironic look at the hype surrounding cyberculture. In 1997 they were artists in residence at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin where they made and exhibited the installation "Diagnostic Tools for the new Millennium". Starrs and Cmielewski are currently artists in residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts, where they are working on a new media co-production entitled 'Dream Kitchen.'  
<http://newweb.banff.org/projects/starrs/starrs&cmielewski.html>  
<http://sysx.apana.org.au/artists/vns/>  
<http://newweb.banff.org/projects/starrs/>

**- Barbara Strebel**

is a soft social engineer. She studied cultural anthropology, arts (art history) at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and video-art in Basel (CH). She spent most of her life cross crossing the atlantic.

**- Rena Tangens**

artist, lives and works in Bielefeld, Germany. Experimental film, video and free radio work. Founded the gallery and art project "Art d'Ameublement" together with her friend and colleague padeluun in 1984. They organized many exhibitions there, among them an event in 1985 with their hacker friends from the CCC Hamburg. She brought the first modem onto documenta (d8!) and women into the Chaos Computer Club.

They initiated the monthly cultur technology event PUBLIC DOMAIN in Bielefeld in early 1987 and is curator of this ongoing series since then. They founded the association „FoeBuD“ e.V. and the BIONIC bbs in Bielefeld and took active part in the development of the German political, non-commercial networks Z-NETZ and/CL as well as ZaMir Transnational Network in former Yugoslavia. They always supported privacy and encryption, published with „FoeBuD“ the first PGP manual in German language. Since 1990 software design for ZERBERUS and CHARON mail and news systems.

Rena does scientific research on androcentrism in the network, published a book on women in the networks, is lecturing, giving seminars and consultancy on network, culture, sustainability and education for organisations, companies as well as the „Enquete-Kommission“ of the German Bundestag.

Recent artwork: "wiwiwi - nang nang nang", babylonian communication model. Exhibited in Graz, at European Media

Art Festival and at „Earth Wire“, East Cleveland.

**- Gudrun Teich**

video artist, living in Düsseldorf, Germany. She was trained at the art academy in Düsseldorf (Nam June Paik, Nan Hoover) and did post-graduate studies in Multimedia at the KHM, Cologne. Gudrun is working free-lance in postproduction for TV stations. She is organizing exhibitions and events and is running the X Object Space in Düsseldorf together with Ute Hörner, Mathias Antlfinger and Petr Zubek. Selection of her works: "Das Gespräch" (The Conversation), "In Schale geworfen" ("Dolled-up"), "Ein Ort" ("A Place"), "Haut" ("Skin"), "Videoportraits" ("Video Portraits"), "Und immer wieder ...NICHTS" ("Again and again ... NOTHING").

**- Kerstin Weiberg**

lives in Berlin, studied art in Braunschweig, Barcelona, Berlin and Amsterdam. 1994 Diploma in the field of performance and new media. Free-lanced work in the field of multi media installation and performance, collaboration with KONIC Theatre, Barcelona. Since 1995 collaboration with Richard Schütz. 1996 -1999, staff at the Fachhochschule Potsdam, developing a multi media presentation about the daily life of prisoners of the concentration camp Sachsenhausen between 1936 and 1945 for the memorial and museum Sachsenhausen.

**- Faith Wilding**

born and brought up in South America by German refugees in a religious commune, emigrated to the US in 1962 and active in the civil rights and anti-war movements, active in the women's liberation movement, worked in Southern California with Judy Chicago, Lucy Lippard, and others to found the Feminist Art movement and the Feminist Art Program (an educational program for women), active in feminist organizations both political and cultural, member of Heresies (the first US magazine on feminist politics and culture), and of WAC (Women's Action Coalition). artist who works in many media including audio, drawing, painting, installation, and now a little WEB work. written and published a lot on issues of feminism, art, and politics, teaching at universities and colleges for almost 30 years, currently a visiting professor at Carnegie Mellon University, actively pioneering interdisciplinary courses about media and performance and women's relationship to technology and technoscience, actively exhibiting artist also. anarchist, deeply interested in activist politics and in being part of the conversation of her time. Finds Cyberfeminism a promising new wave of (post)feminist thinking and practice.

**- Eva Wohlgemuth**

lives and works as an artist in Vienna. She was trained as a painter at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna (1979) and worked as a teacher for many years. At this time she explored and developed her original "Systems"-work. In 1989, she began (partially in collaboration with Andreas Baumann -CH) System I - "Around Vienna", a conceptual location sculpture that would lead her around the world.

Eva Wohlgemuth's interest in electronic networks grew out of her work of linking physical spaces to virtual realms. System X Siberian Deal, 1995/96 ( in collaboration with Kathy Rae Huffman) is a virtual real travel and exchange project between the West and East, and comprised an on-line travel diary sent from the road and the building up of a website, promoting a network community with Eastern Europe.

<<http://www.t0.or.at/~siberian/>>

"Face Settings" started in autumn 1996 with a Real/Virtual Interface to initiate and establish communication amongst women in Europe and overseas. It resulted in the female mailinglist "Faces" - (in collaboration with Kathy Rae Huffman) <<http://thing.at/faces/>>

Topic Project: Psychic mapping, cartografie und personal body-systems, derived from a 3D fullbody scan.

<<http://thing.at/bodyscan/>>

**- Ina Wudtke**

diploma at Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Hamburg/Germany (B.J. Blume). Founded 1992 together with Claudia Reinhardt the Magazine NEID. Brought the project NEID (=envy) on a higher, extended level (transmedial works/shows). Works with Vision, Sound, Word. Since 1992 working on a foto project called