



STREAMING EGOS **DIGITAL** **IDENTITIES**

**GOETHE
INSTITUT**

Streaming Egos - digital identities

is an artistic and discourse-based initiative of the Goethe-Institut in South West Europe, in cooperation with Slow Media Institut Bonn and NRW Forum Düsseldorf.

blog.goethe.de/streamingegos

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Slow Media Institut
Forschung und Beratung zum digitalen Wandel



STREAMING EGOS

DIGITAL

IDENTITIES

Streaming Egos - digital identities

Published by
Goethe-Institut Paris
17, avenue d'Iéna
75116 Paris
France
www.goethe.de/paris

© Goethe-Institut Paris 2016
ISBN: 978-3-945048-20-7

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THANK YOU

to everybody involved in this project and in the publication:
the “spin doctors” of the Streaming Egos project - Sabria David
and Nikola Richter, the colleagues of the participating Goethe-
Institutes, the country curators and the country circle members,
the NRW Forum Düsseldorf, it's director Alain Bieber as well as
it's team who kindly hosted the Digital Identity Convention, the
technicians, live streamer, photographer and graphic recorder, all
authors, translators, designers, the producers of the e-publication
– and everybody else whom we might have forgotten to mention,
but who contributed to make this amazing project possible.

FOREWORD BY THE GOETHE-INSTITUT

ULLA WESTER

The digital space offers whole new possibilities to address the concept of identity, create new identities on the web and play creatively with multiple identities. Artists and web experts have been studying shifting notions of identity in the digital age for some time now. This phenomenon is not only about the self, but also the 'we': New, flexible, and mostly ephemeral collective identities emerge in the 'global village' that is the internet and social media.

What if we brought artists, web culture experts and people who are active online together and asked them to work cooperatively on these topics – not only in terms of conversation, discourse or reflection, but with the objective of creating something new, then present it to each other and start a dialog about it?

This was the idea we had at a meeting of staff members from the Goethe-Institut in Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal – which is why we began our experiment with said Western and Southern European countries, which are strongly impacted by Romance languages and cultures. And since the Goethe-Institut is the institution for the promotion of cultural relations between Germany and other countries, Germany was going to be part of it, too.

We were able to recruit the *Slow Media Institut* in Bonn and the *NRW-Forum Düsseldorf* as our project partners. The next step was to look for experts and artists in the participating countries, people who were experienced and well connected on the issue of identities and digital culture and interested in getting involved in this open-ended process.

Their task as country curators was to identify individuals with whom to collaborate on the topic and develop an artistic or discursive product. During the reflection and production phase in the fall of 2015, we maintained a web log in six languages where the country circles documented their creative processes and posted background articles on the topics at hand. The country circles mainly used Twitter to share with the other partners as well as the public – Tweets with the hashtag #StreamingEgos were fed directly into the blog.

In early 2016, excitement rose when participants shared their

results with the other groups and the public at a two-day *convention* at the NRW-Forum, in conjunction with the closing ceremony of the exhibition "Ego Update", an artistic take on the selfie-phenomenon.

The results were as diverse as the different approaches used by the country circles:

The Italian group presented an exhibition of very tangible artistic objects by the participating artists and artist coops, addressing the topic of excessive self-exhibition on the web and on social media ("prettier, faster, better"), questioning the notion of the self-made IT entrepreneur, and exploring internet users' digital traces and profiles as well as the self-image of today's (digital) artist. Portuguese visual artists presented online projects and asked themselves how Europe, Portugal and the other European countries present themselves in our digital culture. What image of our country do we, the Portuguese, want to convey? The entirely performance-based Belgian group presenters used their "performance lab" to question the notion of physical and virtual identities in the post-digital age. French artists and web culture experts discussed obfuscating identities as a strategy against digital surveillance: They presented a case study that created an average Facebook profile based on all real users by the name of Camille Martin; this profile was analyzed and evaluated by algorithms – highlighting the absurdity of digital profiles and algorithms. The German contribution was an endeavor to revive salon culture: A digital salon with contributions on topics such as "Goethe's transnational discourse" and "digital technology and participation in social discourse" was continued on a very real, very retro, staged salon in Düsseldorf. The collective work of the Spanish group was a walk-in plastic bubble in which an artist and a dancer performed to music that was being streamed live from Madrid – allowing visitors to experience the correlation between the digital and the physical.

The range of formats and themes was remarkable, the presentations and exhibitions powerful, but quite limited by time constraints – which is why participants expressed a desire to capture the results in a publication. This e-book is more than a mere documentation: In addition to artistic and discursive project outcomes, it also provides essays and statements by the participants

and other experts, delving deeper into the topics we addressed.

Questions about identity and community are gaining importance - especially in times when many experience a loss of identity and orientation, when people search the digital space for avenues that offer identity, distance themselves from what they consider alien, and turn to populist movements and radicalization.

Please join us as we explore the various aspects and notions of (digital) identity, what they mean for our understanding of the present, and how they can shape our future.

FOREWORD BY THE CURATOR

SABRIA DAVID

Dear readers,

To integrate and harness the digital revolution for constructive political, cultural and social purposes: This is the central mission formulated by us, the founders of the Slow Media Institute, in the preamble of our Slow Media Manifesto.

This is why I immediately accepted the offer to conceive and curate an international project on the topic of “digital identities” in cooperation with the Goethe-Institutes of South-West Europe. For the project “Streaming Egos” allowed us to address precisely these vital development tasks for digital societies: How can we use digital media to build a good and resilient society?

I consider it a very central and socio-politically relevant question to ask how we in Europe – and looking beyond, how we in a globalized world – deal with our identities. Digital cultural techniques can help us find answers.

Our globalised and digitalized world scares many people. We don't know who we are any more. We don't understand who we need to be to make it in this new world. All of a sudden, everything has to do with everything. What are we to make of this?

The ‘other’ that seems to get so menacingly close to us in a globalized world, becomes our enemy. In times like these, timeworn concepts such as nationalism seem to promise security. In Germany, citizens are chanting the slogan they once used to fight for their own freedom: “We are the People” – but this time, to drive away refugees. In Poland, local media are told to cover more national topics. The Brits fear freedom of movement and immigration – which used to be prime accomplishment of a united Europe without internal borders – to such a degree that they chose the Brexit. In the USA, the idea of building a wall to keep away their Mexican neighbors – more than a quarter of a century after the historic, much celebrated fall of the Wall between East and West – is met with great acclaim.

In these times of an opening and increasingly networked world, walls and barriers are conjured up almost frantically: national

borders, ceilings, capacity limits.

But digital infrastructures offer us, the citizens, an unparalleled opportunity to own our digital societies. We can take an active part in shaping the world like no generation before us. While the culture of constant connection confuses us, it also offers us historically unprecedented opportunities for participation and building new, reliable communities. We can form new communities via social media across national borders. We can create our individual and collective identities ourselves, tell our own stories.

This publication is a two-part documentation of our project's progress:

Part 1: Country circles

Here you will find the documentation of the national-level discourses conducted by the participating countries Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium and Germany. Under the guidance of a country curator, each country circle worked on the topic of digital identities. The output from these countries represents a wide array of disciplines; it is artistic, performance-based, media-theoretical, discursive and visual – revealing diverse perspectives and approaches to the topic. What has prevailed – our differences, or the things we have in common? Is nationality the decisive factor that sets the circle participants apart from one another? Or does the curator's gender have a greater impact? Or does it rather make a difference whether the curator is a theorist or an artist? You decide!

Part 2: Thematic circle

In January of 2016, all country circles and participants gathered for an international convention at the NRW Forum Düsseldorf in order to present their work products to each other and the public. Across all the involved countries, languages and disciplines, the central aspects of the topic of ‘digital identities’ emerged: self-narration, conditions of transnational discourse, managing private and public spheres, hacking the system – flanked by the central questions “Can we forget about nation?” and “How can digital media enable discourse and shape identity?”. We invited the project participants and international authors to comment on these

topics in essays and statements.

The thematic circle is an incubator for transnational discourse in which people jointly elaborate its various aspects and feed each other new ideas. I hope that this is the first of many bold steps towards this transnational discourse. How can digital technology build bridges for us? Let's open digital social spaces in which people of various nationalities can encounter each other as if in a classic salon, and build their future.

I thank the Goethe Institutes for their courage to embark on this project!



Link to Slow Media Institut
<https://goo.gl/u24Cxn>

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PART 1

COUNTRY CIRCLES: DOCUMENTATION OF THE COUNTRY PROJECTS

BELGIUM

BRAM CREVITS (CURATOR)
MARIJKE DE ROOVER
LUCILLE CALMEL
BOLWERK
WIM LAMBRECHT

**A NEVER ENDING PERFORMATIVE LABORATORY,
BUT FOR THIS OCCASION IT SHOULD BE SHORT.**

"A never ending performative laboratory, but for this occasion it should be short." is a performative laboratory growing strategies and infrastructures, creating new communities, and challenging the notion of both physical and virtual identities in the post-digital age. The laboratory is aiming at networking the un-self, alter-avatar egos and no-(e)go personas through radical performative vernaculars.

Partition 1: The Animal,s Who I am

Partition 2: Extremely local: Nostalgic for reality

Partition 3: Spooooofing mèmes

BRIEF REPORT OF “A NEVER ENDING PERFORMATIVE LABORATORY, BUT FOR THIS OCCASION IT SHOULD BE SHORT.” AT NRW FORUM DÜSSELDORF

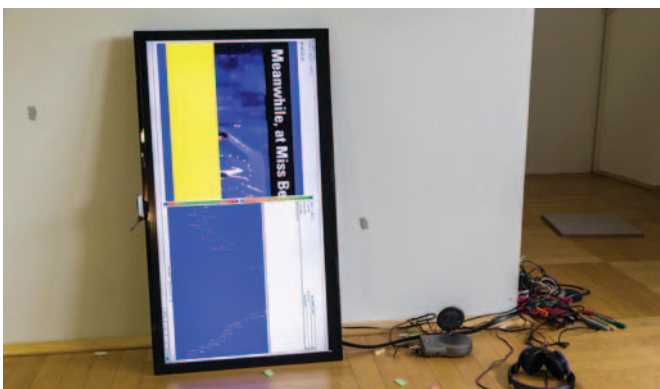
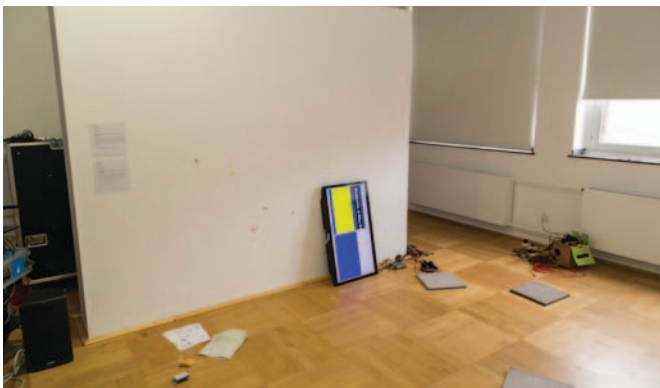
BRAM CREVITS

It will be our pleasure to elaborate on the outcome of the project as presented at the closing event of Ego Update (NRW Forum Düsseldorf), with reference to Goethe's understanding of Weltliteratur, language (and tools in general) becoming infrastructure, scrutinized privacy and personal integrity, and media art as neo-dada or anti-art in the age of global crisis. But for this occasion we will stick to a brief overview for documentation purposes only.

A residency with 3 artists who are active in the combined fields of performance and art & technology, together with an additional external advisor or co-curator led to a series of interventions entitled 'A never ending performative laboratory, but for this occasion it should be short.'

The residency was an artistic research process exploring the notion of online identity in the post-digital age. It started from an understanding of identity as an ongoing performative action, or performative struggle if you will. Next to that, the Belgian identity itself was central to the project. Or to be more precise, the lack of a Belgian identity, and specifically the forms of identity expression which seem to relate to this lack. Two closely intertwined notions were crucial in this approach: radicality or radicalization on the one hand side, and vernacularity or vernacular language on the other hand.

Please discover with us a performative laboratory growing strategies and infrastructures, creating new communities, and challenging the notion of both physical and virtual identities in the post-digital age. A laboratory aiming at networking the un-self, alter-avatar egos and no-(e)go personas through radical performative vernaculars.



SSTV (Slow Scan Television) © Melanie Stegemann



PirateBox © Melanie Stegemann

PARTITION 1

THE ANIMALS WHO I AM

A conference-performance by Lucille Calmel about the phenomena of animalities on Internet (& more) such as non-human movies, animals playing music or acting, interacting with beings, machines and screens. A conference-performance full of porosities, anecdotes & videos around the power of cuteness.



Link to the video
<https://goo.gl/51VRya>

Conference-performance by Lucille Calmel © Melanie Stegemann



PARTITION 2

EXTREMELY LOCAL: NOSTALGIC FOR REALITY

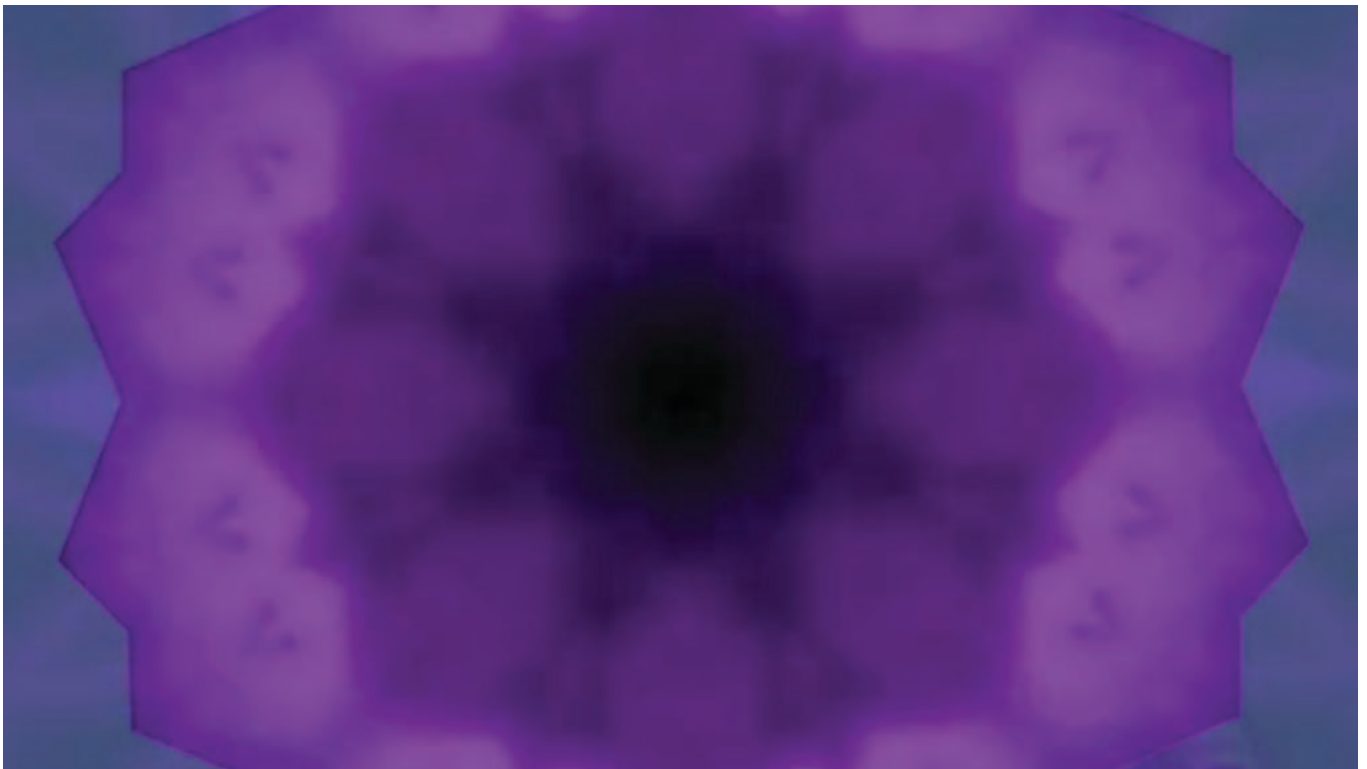
Marijke De Roover: INSTable EGOS

How to rebel gracefully and be emotional about your country in public.



Link to the video
<https://goo.gl/6SLgpE>

INSTable EGOS © Marijke De Roover



PARTITION 3 SPOOOOFING MÊMES

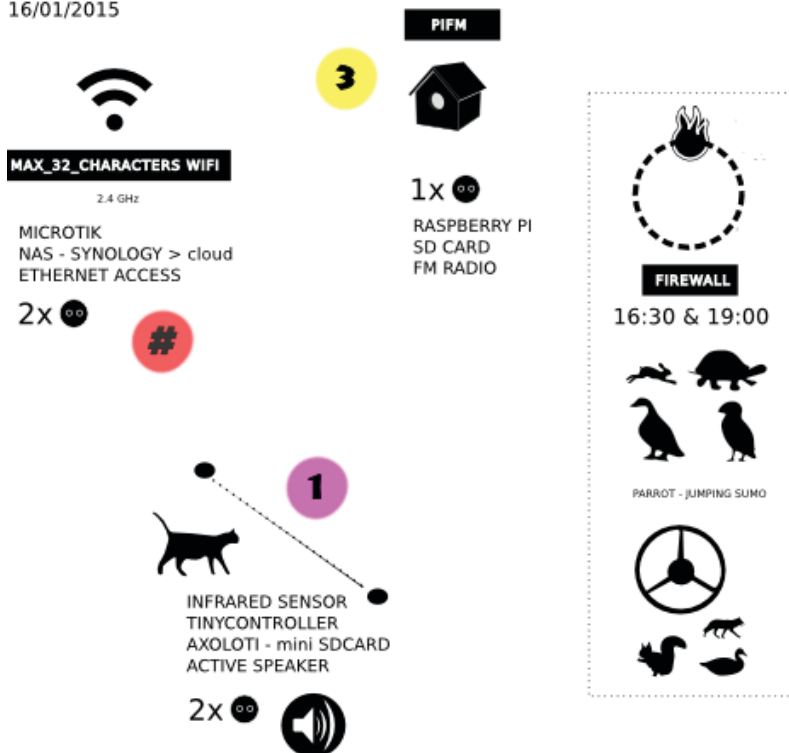
After error code 451, a meme of the internet's OSI layer 1, 2 and 3, constitutes a collective interface for 'Max 32 characters'. The unself goes viral in bits and bytes consciously traversing the electromagnetic field (Wifi, SSTV, PiFM, InfraRed). Welcome, and enter the firewall. Hosted by Marthe Van Dessel



Link to the video (starting from min. 24)
<https://goo.gl/y2kaGs>

INTERFACE - Spooofing mèmes

NRW Forum
Düsseldorf
16/01/2015



Scheme of infrastructure



HOW IT STARTED: “THERE ARE NO BELGIANS ONLINE”

BRAM CREVITS

Grasping the Belgians' identity is a challenge, to say the least. Unlike neighboring countries like France or Germany there is no vast collective historical narrative. 'Sire, il n'y a pas de Belges' is how the Belgian politician and author Jules Destrée was quoted by the Dutch writer Jeroen Brouwers for the title of his essay on the Belgian culture built upon a non-existing national identity. This seems a rather problematic starting point when asked how Belgians deal with identity and identity construction through contemporary digital means of communication, both individually and collectively. However, the fact that it is so hard – if not impossible – to grasp, might offer a very relevant and key perspective on an equally flexible or even volatile notion, namely identity in our current age of wirelessness. If there is no such thing as a Belgian national identity, then this perceived lack of it could be the one and only relevant angle to (national) identities online in general. Or: a problematic starting point for a problematic question. That is how we like them.

Belgian fluidity

Identity should be regarded as a highly dynamic construction, which is often hard to point out in the already continuous realm of 'the real world'. On the internet, however, looking at the formal use of different profiles, avatars, social network platforms or login names, this performative multiplicity becomes much clearer. A multiplicity which is also stimulated by the nature of new media literacy – where passive and private media have consumption transformed into active and social behavior with key characteristics such as play, performance, appropriation and collectivity. And even more, when the sheer act of navigating or wandering around in a 2.0 virtual world urges us to leave traces with a display-behavior of liking, updating our profile status, posting selfies or picking this or that flavour of social network or device. We are online flaneurs. But what can we say about this Belgian lack of a unique national identity? And how is it reflected by individual, cultural or artistic expressions? And can we find it in or relate it to online practices?

There are many interesting Belgian artists dealing with identity online. It would be somewhat short-sighted to say that they typically reflect the Belgian identity. But the poetic sharpness by which they approach the volatility of our wireless self might

be constituted or at least inspired by this Belgian fluidity. Some of the most exemplary artists in this field are: Lucille Calmel, Marijke De Roover, Dries Depoorter, Gerard-Jan Claes and Olivia Rochette, Various Artists, Pascal Barret. It will definitely be interesting to discuss their work further in the project. But for now I insist not to forget popular culture, with some phenomena relating to identities online and Belgium.

The vernacular as an expression of identity

The country, as an artificial political construction from the 19th century, is a multilingual space with different communities with different histories. It's not at all a non-place, but it is a place of transit: a (temporary) assemblage of (temporary) communities on the geographical crossroads of Europe's great nations and cities such as London, Paris and Amsterdam, culturally enriched with an influx of new-comers and passers-by stemming from a colonial past, late-20th century migration, Brussels as the capital of Europe, today's refugees etc. As such, it is often regarded as a crystallization of multi-cultural Europe itself.

If there is one culturally determining narrative for the historical Belgian communities then it is the fact that they have been ruled by foreign occupiers for most of their past: the Dutch, the French, the German, the Austrian, and the Spanish. It is an often heard argument (and a cliché) that this has led to a peculiar relation with officialdom, taking the form of pseudo-conformity and a sense for revolt – be it pragmatic and low-profile. But this also led to a flourishing and highly creative culture of everything vernacular. And the vernacular may well be a crucial thing when it comes to identity construction online.

By far the best example of the vernacular as an expression of identity on the internet has a lot to do with identity, or the perceived lack of it: Anonymous and its initial place of birth, the 4chan forum where no one can log in with a username or pseudonym has proven to be the ideal place to give rise to a vernacular language with a meme-culture flooding the internet.

A somewhat ironic Belgian pride which can be related to a lack of communality is the state of its (vernacular) architecture and infamous lack of organisation of public space. The historical distrust

of authorities by Belgians may have led to a not very outspoken but pragmatic expression of individuality and a consequent proliferation of banality in public space. This is often romanticized and more recently led to a very popular Facebook community 'Belgian solutions'. You may note that there is an implicit reference to Belgium's famous Surrealism here. The ongoing project by the artist Karel Verhoeven 'Anything can B_a Car' somehow relates to the poetry of the not-so-outspoken expression of identity through vernacular solutions.

Radicalisation

If the Belgian identity is hard to grasp, there are several nationalist movements which are very active in constructing their own clear ways of identification. In that respect the country can be seen as a politically divided nation, which should remind us of 'cyberbalkanisation' or the existence of 'splinternets'. The language border (between the Dutch-speaking part in the North and the French-speaking part in the South) is not only a political and constitutional reality but is also reflected by traditional media (there is no national TV, radio or newspaper). And even organised online social network contacts seem to respect that border (apart from multilingual online social networks in Brussels perhaps).

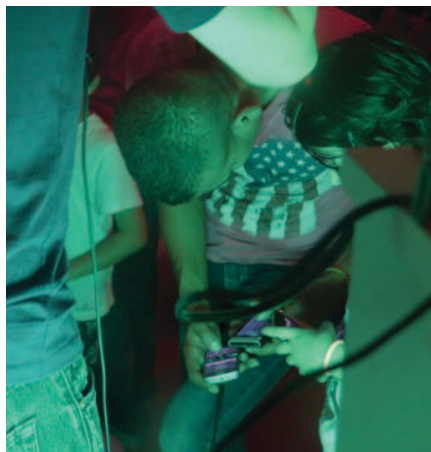
Cyberbalkanisation is an ideal breeding ground for radicalisation. And not only nationalism can be regarded as radical. A very painful phenomenon in Belgium is the fact that the country has per capita by far the most radicalised and extremist Muslim youngsters converted to Syria-fighters. The internet has proven to be of a tremendous importance for this extremism. Hence the hashtagged title '#radicalisme #extremisme #terrorisme' of the essay on this topic by the Belgian political scientist Bilal Benyaich. And this is definitely not only because IS itself is an active recruiter through organised online propaganda, but also because radical Salafism has become a true sub- or counter-culture, deeply intertwined with urban youth culture, peer-pressure

and with gangsta-rap music and corresponding online activities such as fora and music videos.

Engagement in the age of self-promotion

When we think of Belgium – actually, when we think of Europe – we should not forget that there is a great influx of people wanting to stay here. Economic and political refugees from all over the world flood our country and continent. How do they deal with their digital identities? It would be wrong not to mention

a beautiful initiative by Recyclart (a Brussels-based youth and music center). Refugees at the Belgian federal asylum seekers center Klein Kasteeltje/Petit Château were invited to gather in a so-called Phonecard Party and were helped by the DJ to plug in their phones in the mixing table and play the favourite MP3s they stored on their mobile phones; these digital media files most often being some of the few memories they could take on their journey. I was there and wrote a blogpost about this most remarkable event.



© Phonecard Party

But what about the future? When we think of identity related to digital means there is the futuristic notion of

the post-human, or transhuman merging of man and technology. Frank Theys – as a philosopher – made an extensive and challenging internationally renowned documentary film in three parts called TechnoCalyps on this subject. And he recently announced to be working on a new film focusing on the peer-to-peer society together with the Belgian founder of the P2P Foundation Michel Bauwens, highly inspired by distributed network communication, and he envisions this as a future model for our society. Related to this kind of citizen-engagement it would be interesting to investigate what a peer-to-peer society brings for the individual: engagement in the age of self-promotion. The city Kobane has led to a different kind of Syria-fighters and (academic) sympathy, in an unseen progressive defense of pluralism and cooperativism. But this may lead us too far for now. We can think about much

more when it comes to constitutive elements for Belgian identity. Multilingualism could bring more openness, and might leave the Belgians less vulnerable for radicalising splinternets. But we can only speculate. How do Flemish people deal differently with selfies than people from Wallonia or Brussels? This might be answered by Lev Manovich's project SelfieCity. What about the aging population? Or the flood of expats in Brussels and its surroundings? Or the distrust of authorities related to a monopolized and restricted internet? Which brands of hard- or software do we identify with? Again, we will speculate.

FRANCE

MARIE LECHNER (CURATOR)
JEFF GUESS
NICOLAS MAIGRET
RYBN
GWENOLA WAGON

AHA
ASSOCIATION DES HOMONYMES ANONYMES

Homonymy (namesakes) is an essential strategy for blurring identities within a global landscape of both physical and digital tracking and surveillance, a vital tool for freedom of thought and action. The vocation of AHA is to develop and stimulate all types of homonym culture by all necessary means. AHA provides an administrative, psychological and strategic support group for all homonyms, whether authentic or not including wannabes. During the Streaming Egos Convention in Düsseldorf, AHA presented its first case study: the Camille Martin Project.



www.homonym.at

INTRODUCTION

MARIE LECHNER

At the time when the European project Streaming Egos was launched, France had just adopted the Intelligence Act, voted as an emergency measure in the whirlwind after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. This law, officially enacted October 3rd 2015, provides a legal basis for an automatic, “generalized and undifferentiated” surveillance of the population via the opaque implementation of algorithmic black boxes whose job it is to detect suspicious activity of potential terrorists – which are to be installed directly on the Internet providers’ servers. The law, considered very intrusive, includes numerous blind spots and is highly problematic in regards to respecting privacy.

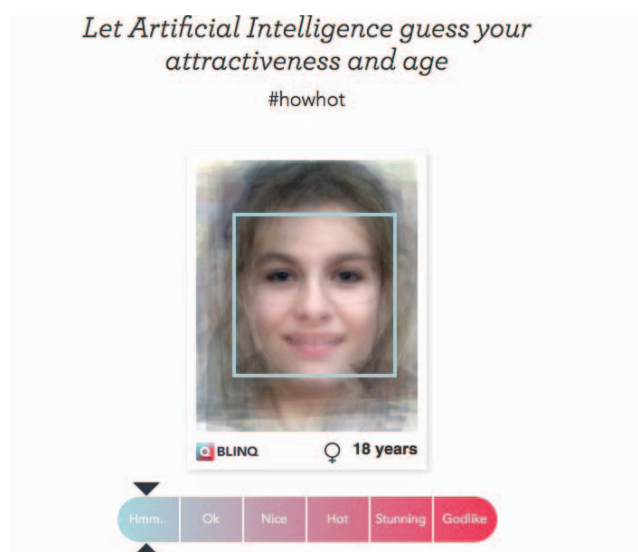
The point of departure for this research is a desire to experiment and evaluate different strategies (obfuscation, (im)proper names, cryptography, fake documents, reverse engineering) allowing one to creatively go undercover and imagine new ways to discern, protect, clone or falsify digital identities.

Homonymy (namesakes) appeared as an essential strategy, undermining the surveillance model for targeting individuals, creating a space for the ambiguity necessary for freedom of thought and action in a world of generalized tracking. Multiplying the same name leads to blurring the referent. As the number of people with the same name increases, the more the subject disappears in the crowd. A strategy of obfuscation is developed, consisting in the multiplication of one’s doubles, reducing the value and fidelity of the “personal data”, through the deliberate production of ambiguous, confusing or deceiving information. Thus making the data harder to exploit, more difficult to act on, and therefore less valuable.

In order to test this hypothesis, the participating artists created l’Association des Homonymes Anonymes (AHA), whose “vocation is to develop and stimulate all types of homonym culture by all necessary means. AHA provides an administrative, psychological

and strategic support group for all homonyms, whether authentic or not, including wannabes»

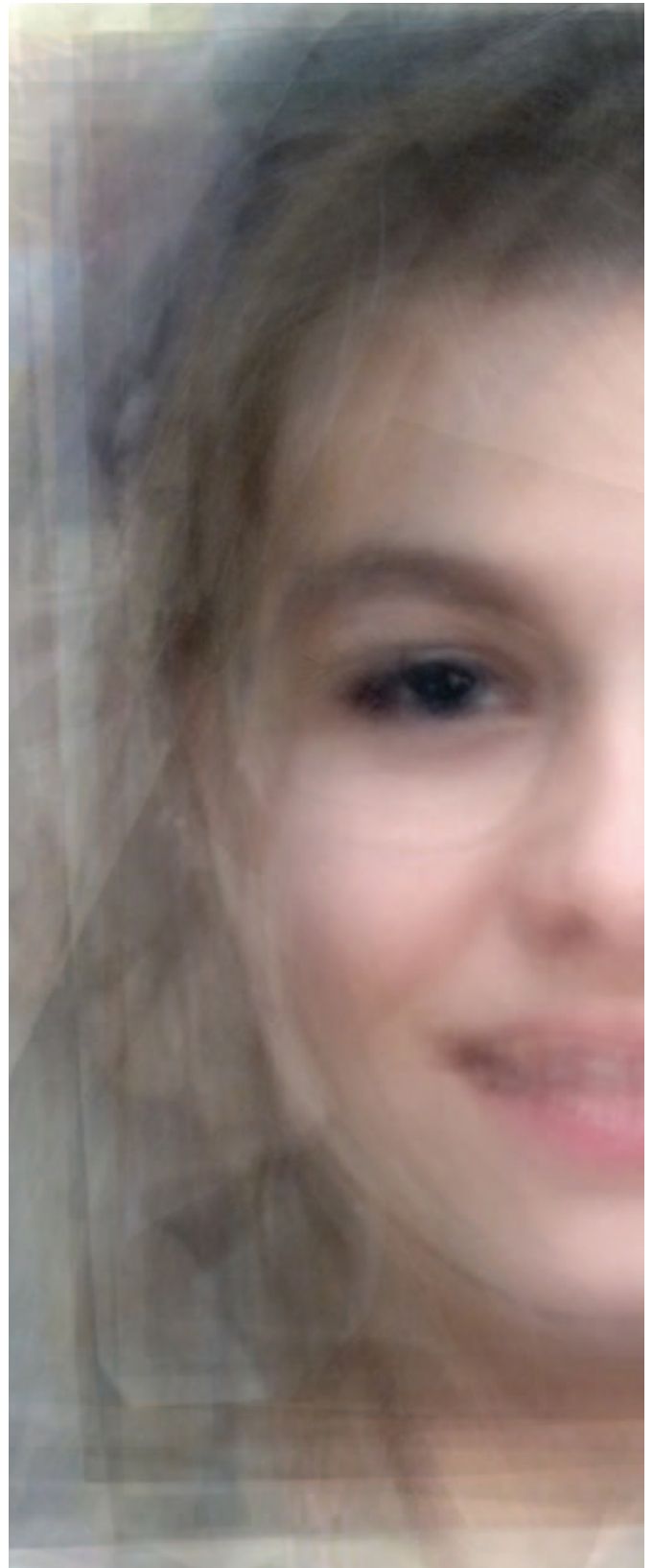
During the convention, AHA presented its first case study: the Camille Martin Project.



“Camille Martin,” is a mix of the most popular first and last names in France. Camille is also the collective and unisex name (both masculine and feminine) that French militants often use to present themselves in front of the media, which expresses both a desire for anonymity and a horizontality in decision-making processes. In order to create this collective body of Camille Martins, AHA began by making a meta-profile on Twitter, a bot that automatically appropriates all the tweets by all the Camille Martins in real time, and tweets (not retweets) the text as if it was being posted by one person. A semi-automatic Facebook account has

been created which only “friends” Camille Martins homonyms and “likes” their posts. AHA collected their photos on Instagram, composited their faces, gathered their answers from Ask.fm, and submitted these data profiles to different types of profiling tools and applications for personality analysis available online in order to generate an absurd digital composite. This fusion of digital traces left by all the Camille Martins creates a shapeless aggregate of individuals, a liquid homonym identity.

For the Dusseldorf Convention, AHA created a website homonym.at to advocate its mission, and compiled a giant map, exploring different strategies to protect digital identities and also linking different trails from Paranoia to schizophrenia, from visibility to disappearance. One could listen to the words written by hundreds of Camille Martins selected and classified by themes, whispered by the synthetic voice of a bot and flip through Camille Martins photoalbum. AHA members organised also a face-recognition make-up workshop and tested some means to hide in the crowd with a «Stalker bot», lurking at disposable SMS and e-mail addresses like freeonlinephone.org & yopmail.com.

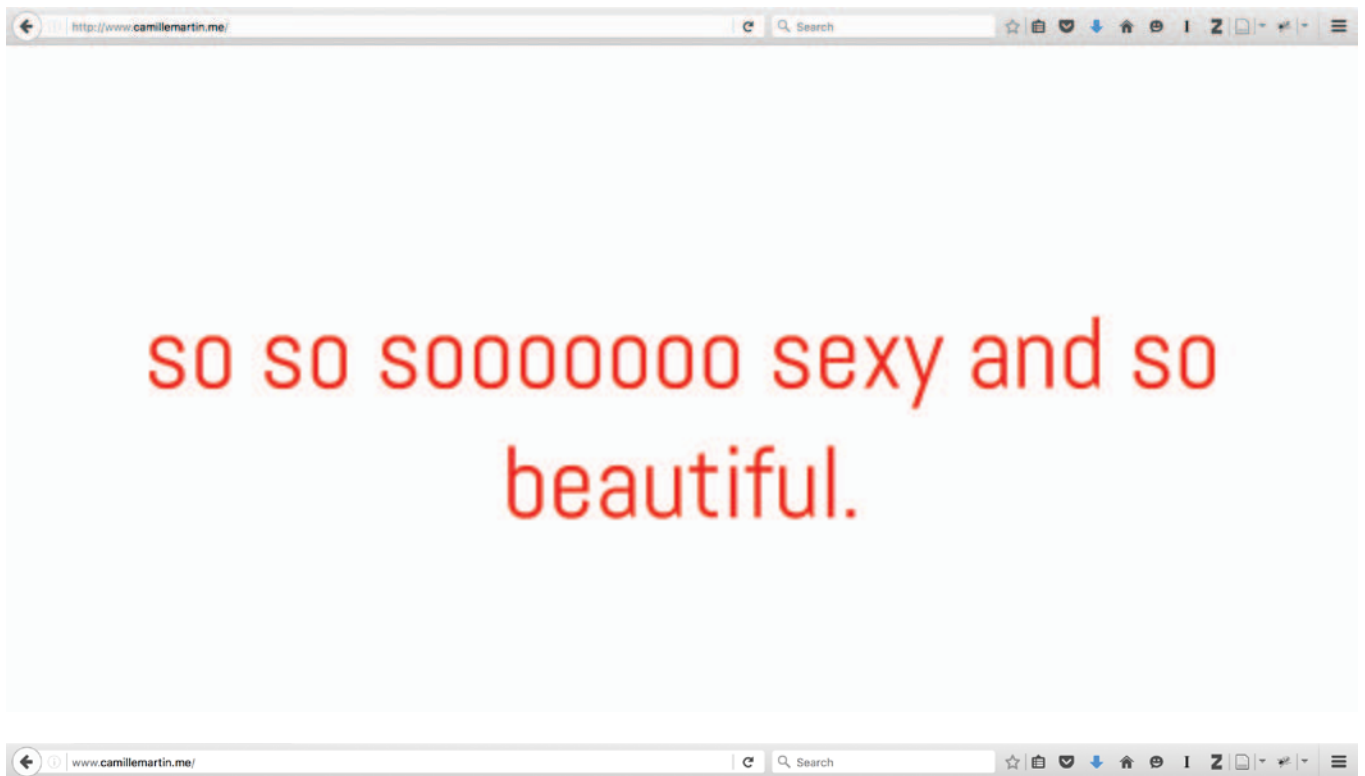


Camille Martin © AHA

Acting upon a collection of strangely similar utterances by the extended community of all Camille Martins on the social networks, bots adopt voices to read them one by one, hallucinating a subatomic Camille-ness, and concurrently fantasizing about Tiqqun's "Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl".



Grace had a dream she
got a phone.



«Don't touch my bag!»



hello my name is camille and I
play guitar and I have a perfect
Youtube channel if you love
metal.



it's the hair



I get paranoid that
people's tweets are
about me even if I've
never spoke to them in
my life



Anonymous knows everything about my life.

STRATEGY 1: OBFUSCATION

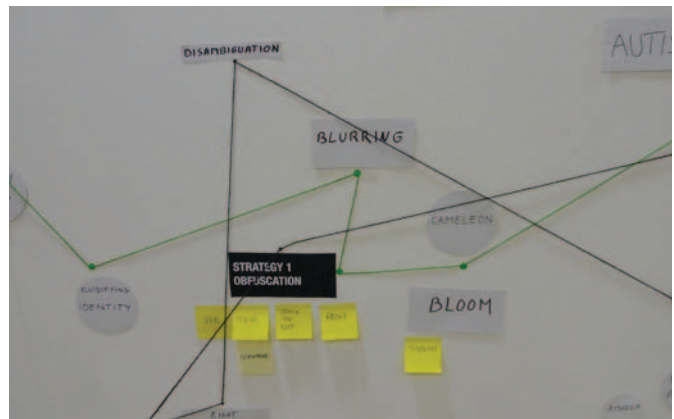
MARIE LECHNER

The controversial *Loi sur le renseignement* (“Intelligence Law” literally “Law on Information”) authorising mass surveillance of French citizens has just been enforced and continues to cause turmoil. In the midst of this particularly tumultuous time frame, we would like to present a series of publications on creative strategies which can be used to skirt surveillance and to pinpoint the normalisation of online behaviour that surveillance entails.

Finn Brunton and Helen Nissenbaum have just published their guide *Obfuscation, A user's guide for privacy and protest* (M.I.T Press), a “survival kit” teaching us how to cope in a world governed by widespread digital surveillance, in which our data is widely collected by governments, companies, advertising companies and hackers. In addition to common techniques used to protect privacy such as cryptography, they suggest also using “obfuscation” techniques, that is to say deliberately using ambiguous and unclear information in order to make the collected data murky.

The manual targets ordinary people who are not experts i.e. those who are not in the position to delete their traces or control the use of their data on the net and aims at providing them with the tools to counter the unbalanced power and knowledge relationships existing today between the surveillants and the surveilled.

In their book, Brunton and Nissenbaum, who are both Professors in Media, Culture and Communication at the University of New York, review a large range of strategies that can be chosen from according to each person's needs and context. They were inspired by both old and contemporary examples, such as the use of metal filaments by planes during the Second World War to blur enemy radar signals (Chaff countermeasure), the armies of “Twitter bots” deployed by the Russian and Mexican governments to manipulate public opinion, or plug-ins such as Ad Nauseam,



Obfuscation2 © Jeff Guess

which helps “make a research profile obscure”.

Could you tell us what “obfuscation” means for you? In which forms can it exist?

Finn Brunton: I don't think we can do better, for simplicity, than our definition in the book: „Obfuscation, at its most abstract, is the production of noise modeled on an existing signal in order to make a collection of data more ambiguous, confusing, harder to exploit, more difficult to act on, and therefore less valuable. The word ‘obfuscation’ was chosen for this activity because it connotes obscurity, unintelligibility, and bewilderment and because it helps to distinguish this approach from methods that rely on disappearance or erasure. Obfuscation assumes that the signal can be spotted in some way and adds a plethora of related, similar, and pertinent signals—a crowd which an individual can mix, mingle, and, if only for a short time, hide.

As highlighted by you in your introduction, obfuscation is not a new strategy. Could you remind us of some ways in which it

was used in the past and explain in what way these examples are also contemporary?

FB.: Part of what makes obfuscation interesting is that it's fairly intuitive – the idea of hiding like with like has a rich history in fact, folklore, and myth. We have examples from the Second World War, from the struggle against Apartheid, even – with examples dearest to my heart – from things like the Roman ancilia, where a sacred object would be kept with excellent fakes to deter thieves. It's not that these techniques in particular are relevant, as that they suggest the diversity of contexts in which obfuscation is usefully applied.

The design of your book cover refers to “Chaff”. Could you explain to us how this anti-radar countermeasure worked and in what way it has influenced your “thought”?

FB.: Chaff was a starting point for us because it came to mind as a point of comparison with TrackMeNot, and the fact that there was a similar mechanism at work in such disparate things suggested there was a larger approach to the problem of surveillance that we could identify and discuss. It's also a great way to frame obfuscation because it's so humble – just pieces of foil, useful only for a limited period of time and a very specific adversary, but quite effective for its purpose. When you can't hide the radar echo of the plane, you make many echoes.

You argue that obfuscation is a necessary strategy in order to rebalance relations between the governed and the governing in the age of mass data.

FB.: It is obvious that information collection takes place in asymmetrical power relationships: we rarely have a choice as to whether or not we are monitored, what is done with any information that is gathered, or what is done to us on the basis of conclusions drawn from that information. Obfuscation is related to this problem of asymmetry of power, as the camouflage comparisons suggests, it is an approach suited to situations in which we can't easily escape observation but we must move and act. A second aspect, the informational or epistemic asymmetry is a deeper and more pernicious problem. We don't know what near-future algorithms, techniques, hardware and databases will be able to do with our data. The problem is the convergence of asymmetries: those who know about us have power over us. They can deny us employment, deprive us of credit, restrict our movements, refuse us shelter, membership or education.

Your guide includes several examples in connection with the obfuscation of data. What advice would you give to a non-expert user?

FB.: This is actually a harder question than you might think, but for an important reason: obfuscation isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, or even a specific approach that be readily slotted into a set of practices everyone should adopt. Our goal for this book

is to present this general technique, which can be applied in a lot of different areas by different parties. We want people to start thinking in obfuscation terms about infringements on their data, and see what they can do with it and how it can supplement the existing world of privacy and protest systems.

Some forms of obfuscation can be carried out by one individual, while others are based on cooperation, such as collective identities, the exchanges of loyalty cards or the anonymity network TOR. Do you think that a massive involvement in these obfuscation strategies could produce a decisive political impact?

FB.: Specifically, it really depends. (For instance, much broader adoption – particularly in setting up relays, exit nodes, etc. – of Tor would be a fantastic thing; broader adoption of some of the other obfuscation methods, by bringing greater attention to them, could make them more vulnerable.) However, in general, massive participation would, we hope, herald public dissatisfaction and resistance on a scale that would provoke business and governmental changes.

Are artists often involved in these obfuscation strategies? Is it because this practice requires a certain degree of creativity?

FB.: This is a great question! I think one of the really valuable things about obfuscation is that it's an expressive technique, which is why it's useful for protest as well as privacy. Depending on the precise approach, adversary, and goal, you're not just hiding but making something. Noise, fake profiles, masks, card-swapping events. There's a particularly playful, trouble-making element of obfuscation as compared to other, more rigorous techniques specifically for protecting privacy, and that expressive, playful aspect of what can be done with obfuscation can be a fruitful place for artistic work.

You also provide several examples of how obfuscation can be used by governments, for instance the Twitter bots used in Russia or Mexico to cloud their opponents' channels.

FB.: Indeed! Obfuscation is used by the powerful – just not often, because they have much more immediately effective tools (like direct political influence, wealth and legal recourse) on their side. Another example, too recent to be in the book, is the use of an obfuscation approach to conceal traffic by „personas“ managed by the US to manipulate conversations on forums and social network sites.

On 21st October 1999, The Electronic Disturbance Theater organised a Jam Echelon Day, which encouraged the community of internet users to send as many e-mails as possible containing certain keywords that were thought to trigger the surveillance network. The organisers believed that if the amount of surveilled e-mails became too big, they would be able to overload the intelligence system and diminish its efficiency. In spring

2015, when the French parliament passed the Loi sur le renseignement (Intelligence Law) making the mass surveillance of citizens legal, the project sur-ecoute.org was launched. This is an application which every time you write on Twitter or Facebook generates a cloud of keywords that are thought to be suspicious for the black boxes that the government has planned to set up on the internet service providers. Do you see obfuscation as an act of protest or rather as a strategy which can actually successfully protect us?

F.B.: It's a mix of the two. With all due respect to the EDT, a major signals intelligence operation is in no danger of being over-worked, even with all the additional input! GCHQ, we've recently learned, is storing and managing „events“ – metadata records – on the scale of trillions, with billions of new additions per day. It's not about trying to swamp the systems of state intelligence services, but rather to find targets, occasions, or adversaries where obfuscation can work effectively. In the French case, for instance, the utility of generating trigger words could lie not in overwhelming the system technically, but in making the words – and their use – less actionable by French law enforcement, as well as a protest action that's visible on social networks and mocks the attempt to use language as an automated flagging system. (I don't know enough specifics about the “black boxes” in this case.) It's to say that obfuscation must be applied, thoughtfully, relative to one's threat model and goals.

How can we assess the actual efficiency of these techniques, when we think of the sophisticated analysis tools that exist today? Wouldn't it be easier to just learn about cryptography?

F.B.: This is a related case. We'd never discourage people from using cryptography – quite the contrary! It's a question of when obfuscation could be useful (potentially in conjunction with crypto, or in a context where one cannot encrypt content but can still try to render it confusing, uncertain, ambiguous, etc). One of the really interesting areas of research for obfuscation in software is figuring out how to model the kinds of analysis it will be subject to. Can we beat them? What about situations where we just need to briefly avoid detection rather than sustained scrutiny? Are certain kinds of obfuscation better against human observers than machine learning, or vice versa?

Obfuscation only seems a temporary option. Wouldn't disengaging oneself completely from the Internet be a more radical solution?

F.B.: We talk a bit about the fantasy of opting out on p 54. It's very, very difficult in an industrialized and urbanizing country to really “opt out”, and the tradeoffs are severe. Many activist movements face the hard choice between ubiquitous, easy-to-use corporate platforms like Facebook and what are often self-marginalizing alternatives. There's something deeply unsatisfying, as well, about being in a position of privilege where you can choose

to avoid all these data-collecting systems (presumably you don't need to work!) and then simply abandoning those less fortunate to their fate.

How do you see the future of this method?

F.B.: We are very excited for the wider application of these ideas! In particular, I'm interested to see if they can be used to help companies provide a truly robust promise of long-term privacy to their users. A tailored obfuscation layer can make it so a company can provide a service to the user, and be unable to use that data for any other purpose. More important, no one else can use that data either – so if they go out of business, or have a change of leadership, your data can't be put to use in some very different context than you planned. The company can make a promise – that your data is safe with them – that doesn't require you to trust them and anticipate all future circumstances.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/mVD3kL>

STRATEGY 2: FAKE DOCUMENTS

MARIE LECHNER

Last May Satoshi Nakamoto was defined one of the latest “big mysteries of the digital age” by the New York Times. We are talking about the creator of the crypto-money Bitcoin, a revolutionary and decentralised payment system through which anonymous and non-falsifiable online transactions can be made independently from governments and central banks.

What seems quite extraordinary is that, in an era in which the surveillance systems of the NSA and other intelligence agencies could get hold of any information they want, we still do not know exactly who Satoshi Nakamoto is. For this purpose, the artists Emilie Brout & Maxime Marion have tried to create some (real) fake ID documents for him in order to provide some proof of his existence.

Completely out of the blue, in 2008 someone using the name ‘Satoshi Nakamoto’ published a research paper on the mailing list Cryptography, setting out the basic principles of the revolutionary Bitcoin protocol. In 2009 the first version of the Bitcoin software was made available and he created the first units of the currency. Satoshi is well-known for communicating uniquely through e-mails and not over the phone. His last contribution dates back to the end of 2010 which was exactly when his new technological invention was starting to attract attention. That was also when he handed the control over to Gavin Andresen, Bitcoin’s chief scientist. It seems that Satoshi Nakamoto, who is described by his peers as a genius, disappeared from public view just as suddenly as he had attracted attention to him.

Despite the regular media announcements claiming the identity/ies hiding behind the pseudonym has/have been discovered (the last being Craig Wright), all the potential people have denied being behind it with statements such as “*I am not Satoshi Nakamoto ... but even if I were I wouldn’t tell you*”.



A name which is often quoted is that of computer specialist Nick Szabo, an ex-cypherpunk (a group whose aim was ensuring the protection of private life through the use of cryptography), who developed a decentralised digital currency called Bit Gold which in a way was a direct forerunner of Bitcoin.

Before him, Satoshi “Dorian” Nakamoto, a 65 year-old Japanese-American based in California made the front page of the

magazine Newsweek on 6th March 2014 when he was presented as “the face of Bitcoin”. Because of his name, his life became a nightmare due to all the media attention. In order to support his “revelations”, the Newsweek journalist brought up his past as a systems engineer working for top secret defence projects, together with some statements by people close to him describing him as a humble genius obsessed with private life. It must be said that, if that were true, it would be legitimate to wonder why he chose to use his real family name.

Fascinated by this modern myth, the artists Emilie Brout & Maxime Marion attempted last year to create some (real) fake ID documents for him by using darknet, i.e. networks ensuring anonymity and the hideout of all sorts of activities (whether legal or not). That was the beginning of a long investigation online to try to gather all the necessary elements in order to create a fake Japanese passport. Indeed, Satoshi states he is Japanese on the forum of the P2P foundation. *“Research on web.archive.org and the reddit.com Bitcoin forum confirms that the date of birth given by Nakamoto himself is 5th April 1975”*, state the investigators. They chose to make the passport issue date coincide with the registration date of the bitcoin.org website by Nakamoto in Panama on 18th August 2008.

“From his first public message and up to his disappearance on 12th December 2010, Nakamoto did all he could to protect his identity”, wrote the artists while listing the strategies he used to cover his traces. Neither the analysis of his code (which seems that of brilliant mathematician good at cryptography and a skilled but not professional programmer) nor his writing style have led to a conclusion therefore giving rise to all sorts of more or less supported speculations and conspiracy theories. As he has always used different IP addresses, identifying his exact location has been difficult. Others have paid attention to when he sends and replies to emails, but he writes at different times and therefore cannot easily be linked to a time zone. Some people have even tried to analyse his writing in order to determine his nationality. However, although his favourite language seems to be English, he switches between British and American spelling and colloquial expressions. This could either mean that Satoshi tries to hide his nationality or that he is in fact more than one person or even a whole organisation.

As ID photo, Emilie Brout and Maxime Marion chose the portrait which is usually used to represent him on the Internet and in the media. *“In reality, this image comes from the video Seven Billion: Are you typical?, produced by the National Geographic in 2011, which presents a synthesis of the average human face, the face of M. Everybody”*, explain the artists, who had to touch up the low definition photo to make it credible. *“We tried to reconstruct an identity on the basis of the information we were able to gather*

and to produce proof of Satoshi Nakamoto's existence by means of the technology he created”.

Once this biographical information had been gathered, Emilie Brout and Maxime Marion started navigating with TOR the anonymity network to get in touch with forgers, covering their traces via a secure email service and a VPN (virtual private network). After searching for several weeks, they reached a deal with a group probably based in Cambodia that could produce high-quality Japanese passports. Of course, they paid for this in bitcoins, the popular currency for online anonymous transactions.

After obtaining a scan of the passport for validation (photo), the artists paid a second down payment and the passport was sent on 7th June 2014 (placed inside a book according to the counterfeiters' version), but never reached its destination. According to the latest news, the “goods” are stuck in Romania. There is no way of checking.

The scan is to this day the only existing trace of this passport ultimately, it is a digital file which is just as intangible as its owner. *“We did not manage to make him real, which means Satoshi Nakamoto remains in a grey area, between reality and fiction, thereby increasing the rumours and fantasies surrounding his character”*, says Emilie Brout. Even if the artists didn't manage to capture him in an artefact, their project *Satoshi Nakamoto (The Proof)* encourages us to delve into the troubled waters of contemporary economies and the darknet a place with a strong fictional element to it. At the same time, through this project we can pay tribute to a contemporary myth who redefined value while also enabling Bitcoin to develop as a real open source project, regardless of the true identity of its creator.

The project also has a second more psychedelic side to it, called *Satoshi Nakamoto (The Myth)*. The artists produced an animation using one of the 3D face models that is most widespread on the net. Then they placed Satoshi Nakamoto's appearance over it. What we see is a mask that doesn't look at us but constantly divides into two and changes. A Janus with multiple faces – a monstrous enigma that is not ready to reveal its secrets.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/EBgN5U>

STRATEGY 3: FALSE POSITIVES

MARIE LECHNER

If you were one of the visitors wandering around MicroMarché – a creative platform in the centre of Brussels – with your smartphone on 3rd October, then you probably received weird and unwanted text messages. “Welcome to Candygram. Reply with your personal e-mail address to start”. Depending on how paranoid you are, you may have deleted this spam message immediately, wondering how the company could have got their hands on your phone number. However, if you were feeling particularly adventurous and curious, you may also have replied to the suspicious invitation. What would have followed is a second text message to reward you for your choice and then other slightly more worrying ones. “Would you like to be more than just a number to us? Reply with the word GOPHERSET to find out how”. “Thank you! Did you know that GOPHERSET is the name of a GSM software which uses the API of a phone’s SIM card to control it remotely? Answer with the word CROSSBEAM if you would like to register for a free personal data review”. When you get to this stage, going back is difficult. “Great. Visit our pop-up booth at MicroMarché to find out what we know about you ... Oh, by the way: CROSSBEAM is a GSM module capable of collecting voice data ...”.

In the mean time, the booth of the unknown phone operator MicroMarché is alive and kicking. Designed in the colours of the company, it includes a banner, a logo, brochures and sellers calling out to customers outside. To begin with, it may look like any other phone operator booth. But going back to the second option (if you had been curious and adventurous), soon enough you would be sitting face-to-face with a Candygram representative wearing a white coat. The representative would introduce himself to you as “Personal Data Consultant” something in between a therapist and a fortune-teller and would ask you to follow him behind a white curtain and sit in a private area in front of a computer screen. Then a slide show would be shown revealing everything the company knows about you by carefully analysing



Map presented during Streaming Egos Convention © Jeff Guess

your digital traces and online profiles which are publicly accessible. Every slide presents an aspect of this digital double: name, age, gender, work experience, interests, as well as keywords and associated images.

“When participants sign up to get a personal data review, we ask them for their e-mail address”, explains Mark Shepard, who is one of the three artists behind this artistic project called False Positive (together with Moritz Stefaner and Julian Oliver) and also the bearded Personal Data Consultant of the fictitious phone operator Candygram. “This address reaches our server, where the code written by Moritz Stefaner searches the web, collecting data on the individual through several tools and APIs. With this data, a personality profile is created”.

The last slide gives you a score on the basis of five criteria: willingness to try new experiences, awareness, outgoing behaviour, pleasantness and emotional weakness. These five main aspects describing personalities are those used in the famous Big Five.

Although this widespread empirical analysis model is criticised by many, it is becoming common and nowadays it can be found in most profile analysis constructions. By showing us how we are fitted into moulds and standardised through algorithms, the artists hope to involve their visitors in conversations on the digital doubles they generate.

The slides function as basis of a series of questions asked by the consultant. "What does this portrait mean to you? It seems you have been associated with these keywords. Could you tell us more about each of them and what they mean to you? Does this digital double correspond to the perception you have of yourself?". However, although we are subjected to more and more sophisticated profiling forms, both online and off-line, the "data-bodies" which are algorithmically generated could nevertheless contain errors. Shepard has explained that the distortion between an individual and his digital portrait depends on the individual, how much he connects with other people online, his activity on social media and his privacy settings. He added that "usually people panic when shown this data, as often they are not aware that an unknown person could know so much about them".

At the end of the meeting, participants are asked to confirm (or not) that they are the person described in the profile and whether they accept that this information is used to promote the project. Then the visitor is given a Candygram brochure which includes some online resources to improve the protection of digital data, links to learn about e-mailing, voicemail and secure browsing, cryptographic tools, etc.

In English the term 'Candygram' refers to a box of candy which is delivered with a greeting or message. But it is also the name of one of the special tools which are part of NSA's "implants catalogue" (of spying technologies). Through this tool, mobile phones and computers can be surveilled and their data can be hijacked or even modified. This is what we can read on the leaked Candygram description sheet: "Imitates a GSM relay tower on a targeted network. Capable of operations at 900, 1800 or 1900 MHz ...".

The Candygram operator probably used this type of stealth infrastructure to send text messages to devices within its influence area. This project by Mark Shepard, Moritz Stefaner and Julian Oliver, which was commissioned by Imal as part of Connecting Cities, explores both the insecurity of mobile networks and the unreliability of online profiling by making (partly) visible the mechanisms behind our new generation smartphones. By doing this, the artists pinpoint the imbalance of knowledge and power underlying the relationships between governments, companies and the ordinary citizen who is eager to exchange some personal data to access online services.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/uEF2rv>

STRATEGY 4: IMPROPER NAMES

MARIE LECHNER

In his recent book *Improper Names: Collective Pseudonyms from the Luddites to Anonymous*, Marco Deseriis, Professor at the Northeastern University of Boston, whose research tackles for instance the cultural and political dimensions of activism on the net, traces out the genealogy of what he calls “improper names”, that is to say the adoption of the same pseudonym by organized collectives, affinity groups and individual authors. Deseriis provides several case studies, ranging from Ned Ludd, the legendary leader of the English Luddites (who threatened the destruction of industrial machinery in the nineteenth century), to the Anonymous group, to Alan Smithee (an alias coined by Hollywood film directors), to Luther Blissett (the Robin Hood of information age serving as an alias for actions by European cultural activists in the 90s). The author argues that these names arise in periods of crisis, when the existing aesthetic and political participation forms (party, unions, etc.) no longer match the new context. – Read the interview with the author:

Would you mind defining what you call improper name vs proper name?

Marco Deseriis I define the improper name as the adoption of the same pseudonym by organized collectives, affinity groups, and individual authors. This definition is meant to express a tension between the collective and the individual, the organized and the spontaneous, coordinated and idiosyncratic uses of an alias.

How did the proper name, as you recall in your book, evolve as a political technology?

MD. This is a complex answer, which would require a thorough examination of how practices of naming have evolved throughout history and in different cultures. In modern times, the proper name becomes a political technology when the name is registered at the birth's record office. By becoming legal, the proper name enters a whole network of apparatuses (demographic records, criminal records, fiscal records, voting records,



Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann

immunization and health records) through which the state can both identify an individual and effect calculations and operations whose domain is, as Michel Foucault argued, the population. From the state's standpoint, fixing a reference – i.e., ensuring that a legal name identifies one and only individual – is an essential precondition of modern politics. It is through the legal codification of proper names that a government gets to know

its people and can target either specific individuals through the security apparatus or segments of the population through the leverage of political economy. This double operation – which is both selective and extensive, individuating and massifying – is predicated upon the assumption that there should be one name and only one name for every subject, and never the same name for two different subjects.

What is the origin of this [improper name] strategy?

MD. There is not only one origin as practices of sharing a name have existed across cultures for a long time. As a conscious political strategy to build symbolic power while escaping identification from the authorities, the first reference I found is Poor Conrad, the mythic leader of the Swabian peasant rebellion against Duke Ulrich of Württemberg in 1514. In their revolt against taxes and tithes several peasants leagues adopted this pseudonym, which was the name used by the nobility to deride poor farmers. Interestingly, the English Luddites also derived the name of their leader (Ned Ludd) from a purportedly inept textile worker, Ned Ludlam, who had been ordered by his master to “square his needles,” that is, to adjust the mechanisms of his framework-knitting machine. Allegedly, Ludlam took a hammer and “squared the needles” by destroying the machine. If the story of the origin of Luddism may be apocryphal, it is interesting that many collective pseudonyms are ironic twists on names that are associated with ineptitude or social inferiority. Such is also the case of Luther Blissett, a case study from the 1990s. Luther Blissett was mostly known to the Italian public as a soccer player who had played an unfortunate season with AC Milan in the Italian Serie A in the 1980s. Thus when a group of Italian activists decided to use the name as a shared pseudonym a decade later, Blissett was connotatively associated with failure.

When and why (in what context) did this use of improper name surface? Is the function of improper name identical in the pre-modern times and in modern society?

MD. Whereas collective pseudonyms have existed for a long time, I argue that collective pseudonyms become “improper” when those who have originally introduced the alias for a specific purpose begin to lose control of the name as this is disseminated in the public domain. For example, the name Ned Ludd quickly spread across different regions of England (the Midlands, Yorkshire, the Northeast) because the news of the first Luddite riots was widely reported in the press. At the same time, different sectors of the English working classes appropriated the symbolic power of the alias and adapted it to their local context to advance different demands. In this sense, media play an important role in determining the evolution of a collective pseudonym from a name that has originally a circumscribed function to an increasingly decentralized strategy. Because in pre-modern times media are still relatively scarce it is unlikely

– yet not impossible – that the pseudonyms that were introduced in rural societies could circulate wildly outside of their originating contexts. In this sense, as a conscious political strategy, the improper name is largely dependent on the emergence of modern media.

You make a distinction between collective pseudonyms and multiple-use names? Would you mind explaining it?

MD. I will explain it in this way: whereas all multiple-use names are improper names only some collective pseudonyms are improper – those which eventually evolve into multiple-use names. A multiple-use name is an alias that is released in the public domain for everyone to use. The inventors of the first multiple-use names (Monty Cantsin, Luther Blissett) knew since the beginning that they were going to lose control of their aliases but decided to take the risk, as it were. On the contrary, inventors of collective pseudonyms such as Jane (a codename used by U.S. women to run an underground abortion service in Chicago in the late 1960s-early 1970s) and Nicolas Bourbaki (a pseudonym shared by a collective of French mathematicians from the 1930s to the 1990s) did not introduce these pseudonyms for public use. Access to those pseudonyms was restricted to members of specific communities. My argument is that a collective pseudonym evolves into a multiple-use name when “unauthorized” and unforeseen uses of the name begin to undermine its original function. In this respect, collective pseudonyms and multiple-use names can be seen as two attributes of the improper name, which define it in terms of varying degrees of control from the centralized (collective) to the decentralized (multiple-use).

As an example of multiple-use names, you tell the infamous Monty Cantsin story, an especially unruly improper name. What is the legacy of this „open pop star“ experiment?

MD. The Monty Cantsin experiment has left multiple legacies. The name was introduced by a group of mail artists and musicians in Portland, Oregon in the late 1970s. It was then adopted by several individuals in North America and Europe throughout the 1980s and, more sporadically, in the 1990s. Monty Cantsin was an open pop star and an open reputation. At the most basic level, it was supposed to function as a shared resume and portfolio, which could be used by any artist and musician to reclaim space and visibility. At a more conceptual level, Monty Cantsin was supposed to undermine the art system’s reliance on originality and novelty – the whole political economy of the signature as guarantee of originality – as well as the modern avant-garde’s own obsession with originality and novelty. In fact, Monty Cantsin was the spokesperson of a pseudo-avant-garde named Neoism, whose very name ironically celebrates the new for its own sake. This more overtly political side of the project did not go very far, as many conflicts emerged within the Neoist network, which were difficult for participants to negotiate. However, the

experience of Neoism allowed those who had participated in Monty Cantsin to hand down their experience to the next generation of artists and activists, the founders of the Luther Blissett Project, with a minimal set of guidelines. The first recommendation was to cloud the origins of the multiple-use name in mystery so that nobody could reclaim individual authorship over the idea. And the second was to prevent individuals from identifying personally with the name, that is, to use it as a personal alias (e.g. I am Marco Deseriis aka Luther Blissett).

Monty Cantsin was an imaginary name unlike Luther Blissett who already existed. Is there a difference between creating a new entity and appropriating an existing one?

MD. There is and there isn't. Appropriating an existing name can have the advantage of using a name that already exists in the public imagination, and thus is more recognizable to a general audience. However, it is far more important to have an initial strategy and a tactical capacity to "seize opportunities on the wing" as Michel De Certeau would say. Because improper names can be appropriated by anyone, it is important to know how to respond to unforeseen, and potentially undesirable, uses of the name.

You write that Luther Blissett was a figure of the „incalculable productivity of immaterial workers“. As such Blissett reclaimed „a generalized citizen income for ordinary social activities such as wearing branded clothes, coining slang terms, responding to surveys or becoming the involuntary subject of data-mining“. This was in 2000, and seems more relevant than ever in our big data society. But is it still possible, in the Facebook and dominance of social networks era, to share a collective pseudonym?

MD. Yes it is, even though it seems that everything is immediately appropriated by capital and put to work, there are many many practices that escape capture. Anonymous is an excellent case in point.

How could this „strategy“ of improper name adapt to the massive surveillance operated on the networks, and at a time where it is your online „behaviour“ that defines you (and the way you are profiled) more than your „name“, be it proper or not?

MD. Names are still essential for targeted advertising. Consider Facebook and Google's "real name" policies. Many social network sites now define themselves as "identity services" and claim to know us better than we know ourselves. So I would say that the proper name is still an essential anchoring point, without which the extraction of value becomes very complicated. After the mass marketing of the first half of the twentieth century and the niche marketing of the last three decades of the twentieth century we have now entered the age of individualized marketing. And it is

difficult to imagine the individual if it cannot be interpellated and called in question by name.

In the 1970-90s, those aliases were a very playful thing. But it looks like nowadays, improper names have become „darker“, defensive, against governments and big internet corporations who demand transparency for everyone, except for them? What is your feeling?

MD. If you are referring to Anonymous, I agree and disagree with you. As Gabriella Coleman's book on Anonymous shows, there is a lot of playfulness within Anonymous. Its public face might be threatening but many of its tactics and modes of socialization are playful – albeit, as you say, always infused with a dose of dark humor. Anonymous demands transparency from governments and corporations but the users of the moniker are also aware of the fact that they themselves can be exposed. No doubt, this is a contradiction, but an asymmetrical one. Anonymous does not aspire to collect taxpayers' money or to serially produce goods and services. Even though some of Anonymous' actions are questionable, its effects on society are rather limited. Further anonymous speech enables social interactions that are not really possible when individuals know each other, as we naturally tend to evaluate speech on the basis of the identity of the speaker. Mind you, many interactions within Anonymous are via channels – such as the Internet Relay Chat – where individual users are pseudonymous. A pseudonymous reputation economy is not the same thing as a completely anonymous one. My wager is that if you really want to understand Anonymous as a collective process of subjectivation, you need to analyze the platforms that enable its formation and reproduction.

Your book starts with Ned Ludd and ends with Anonymous, we could consider both of them „machine breakers“/“luddites“ of their era. Do you see a secret genealogy between these two movements?

MD. I see at least three similarities between the Luddites and Anonymous. To begin with, both movements do not have representatives or official spokespersons, but build their symbolic power through iterated uses of a shared pseudonym. This lack of representation makes it difficult to integrate them within an institutional framework – be it labor relations or electoral politics. Secondly, both movements emerge at particular historical junctures, characterized by a deep crisis in traditional ways of organizing labor. The Luddites appear in the interregnum between the irreversible crisis of the guild system and the foundation of the modern trade unions. Anonymous also emerges at a time in which traditional modes of organizing and representing the collective interests of labor are in deep crisis. Thirdly, both the Luddites and Anonymous target machines of a specific kind: industrial labor-saving machines in the case of the Luddites, and closed systems and proprietary information technologies in

the case of Anonymous. If we use McKenzie Wark's definition of the hacker class as the class that struggles to keep information in common, and we add the autonomist Marxist insight that the common is the basis of capitalist accumulation, we can see how Anonymous' campaigns for freedom of information do not only concern the sphere of political rights but also the economy. Yet it is important to keep in mind a major difference between the Luddites and Anonymous. The Luddites – at least the Luddites of Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire – wanted to exert control over the technologies that were being introduced in their workshops, as the guilds had done for a long time. This means that the Luddite subjectivity is not constituted by the new industrial machines, but in opposition to them. By contrast, Anonymous is constituted through the Internet and relies entirely on the network for its organization and reproduction. Because the Internet is now inseparable from the social bios, I believe that Anonymous has far greater chances to be a long-lasting movement than the Luddites. In fact, it has already outlived Luddism, which quickly declined after its initial outburst in 1811-12.

Anonymous has no name, „anon“ by default, and is also a swarm entity, much more diverse, unstable and unknowable than the previous ones you describe in your book. Since Ludd, do you notice an „improvement“, or a complexification of those improper name strategies?

MD. No, there is no improvement as each shared pseudonym emerges in specific historic circumstances and to fulfill specific needs, which are not necessarily replicable in different historic contexts. Anonymous, however, is more abstract than its predecessors in that it emerged from a distinctive techno-culture, the imageboard 4chan of 2005-06, and then migrated to a variety of socio-technical networks and sociopolitical contexts, which have very little if anything to do with its originating milieu. I believe that the reason of this resilience lies in the closer proximity of the improper name to pure anonymity. Even though Anonymous is still a recognizable entity, whose appearances in the public domain are not accidental but the result of intentional and concerted actions, the name works as a threshold of sorts. Anonymous marks in fact the passage from anonymity as an impersonal and potentially anomic condition to anonymity as a communicative condition of belonging that is considered more egalitarian because detached from individual reputation. One of Anonymous' texts, a manifesto of sorts, reads:

“Identity. One of our most precious possessions. You believe we all have one, but you are sadly mistaken. Identity belongs only to those who are important. Those who have earned it by struggle and blood. Those who matter.

You my friend, do not. Identity is a fragile and weak thing. It can

be stolen or replaced. Even forgotten. Identity is a pointless thing for people like us. So why not let go of it and become Anonymous?”

Thus Internet users are invited to “let go” of their individual identities not to become no one, but to become Anonymous. It is through detachment and disindividualization that a new condition of belonging can be explored. With its many offshoots, internal conflicts, and agonistic challenges Anonymous functions as a regulator between anonymity as pure flight from the field of representation and Anonymity as a field in which actions have a symbolic value and words have pragmatic effects, but without necessarily being pinned onto a human subject that is ultimately responsible for them. In this respect, Anonymous is a form of conscience that exceeds the properly human and opens up the entire problematic of the improper name to the more-than-human or the chain of human collectives with technical ensembles with a high degree of indetermination.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/D3NdCl>

STRATEGY 5: CRYPTOGRAPHY

MARIE LECHNER & RYBN

Following the Paris terrorist attacks on 13th November, the French, American and British governments have been quick to take the offensive again against enciphered communications. The intelligence hawks across the Atlantic have promptly used the debate to claim a better government access to encrypted communications. Former CIA Director James Woolsey, has taken advantage of the situation to settle his score with Edward Snowden, stating that the whistle-blower had “blood on his hands”.

He has accused him of putting the population at risk by partly revealing NSA's methods and by encouraging the use of enciphering tools, which allegedly allowed terrorists to fly low, below the radar range of the intelligence services. In the wake of the Saint Denis assault, the Manhattan prosecutor called for a new federal law which would constrain phone manufacturers such as Apple and Google to install ‘back doors’ so that the government could access users’ private data. This is a demand which has been frequently put on the table since the mid-90s.

Indeed, we have witnessed a resurgence in the popularity of enciphering since Edward Snowden's revelations on the indiscriminate mass surveillance operated by NSA. In order to protect their civil freedom and ridiculed private life, citizens have started using enciphering more in everyday conversations. At the same time, the web giants were accused of sharing their data with the secret services and decided to strengthen the security levels of their products to try to improve their image in the eyes of clients. In September, Apple and Google, whose operating systems are used on 96% of smartphones, reprogrammed their software to include the enciphering of the whole disk, preventing themselves from having access to the conversations which are on the computers, tablets, phones and software they produce. Many popular services have also incorporated enciphering by default, such as the instant messaging service WhatsApp (owned by Facebook) and its rival Telegram, which has been accused of being



Streaming Egos Convention © Jeff Guess

“terrorists’ favourite application”. Its founder, Pavel Durov, believes enciphering is “the scapegoat concealing the defeats of mass surveillance”, which however did not stop Telegram from closing dozens of official or presumed Islamic State Group accounts.

Although it seems obvious that terrorists did not start protecting their conversations only following Snowden's revelations, the preliminary results of the investigation show that the Paris terrorists did not use cryptography but coordinated their movements through text messages, which is one of the most easily monitorable types of digital communication. Apparently it was a non-enciphered and unlocked phone that led French authorities to an apartment in Saint Denis. Besides, as The Intercept have pointed out, most of the attackers were already known to intelligence services.

The investigatory magazine believes focusing on targeted surveillance of known suspects is better than applying trawl net surveillance to all citizens which, for the time being, has not

proved efficient and is riddled with legal and ethical issues. The debate on the enciphering of conversations proves how difficult it is to find the right balance between security and privacy. While the metadata gathering programme ceased on 29th November under the Freedom Act, intelligence services try to make the debate swing in their favour using the Paris attacks as an argument. Such issues were already at the core of the 'crypto-wars', which started in 1993 with the internet boom and the wish of the secret services to limit the chances of hiding away online.

But a group of Californian Libertarians, known as 'cypherpunks' started developing advanced enciphering techniques meant for all users to help preserve the net from State interferences (Julian Assange, who founded Wikileaks in 2006, became a member in 1995). Also around this time, in 1991, Phil Zimmerman programmed a powerful tool named PGP (Pretty Good Privacy), a secure type of messaging software developed following Zimmerman's concerns over what he saw as a disproportionate intrusion of law into citizens' privacy. By freely distributing his software, he had strongly provoked the American government. Its use was not liberalised until Clinton's mandate and the development of e-commerce (which requires cryptography to ensure the security and confidentiality of data circulating on the net, particularly for financial transactions). Around 2005, the defenders of making cryptography accessible to everyone thought they had the upper hand. However, such vantage was then shaken up by Snowden's revelations on the range of NSA's surveillance programmes and by the recent attacks in Paris, which reignite the crypto wars.

For a long time cryptography, the art of hiding the content of information, was only used in the diplomatic and military fields and considered a weapon of war. The first enciphering methods date back to ancient times and have improved over time through the development of several enciphering machines, thereby playing a key role in both World Wars. This discreet science of secret writings has also fascinated writers and artists, such as Edgar Allan Poe. For instance, cryptography is a key topic in Poe's detective short story *The Gold-Bug* (1843), in which an old parchment leads to a treasure. Other main examples of fictional cryptography are Jules Verne's novels *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864) and *Eight Hundred Leagues on the Amazon* (1881). Poe wrote novels, poems and articles on cryptography and also challenged his readers to send him coded messages that he would then try to decipher. At that time, cryptography played a key role in society. We have to bear in mind that individuals did not use the Internet or telephones at the time and that letters could be dangerous and compromising if found and read by others. Following the telecommunications boom, cryptography developed around the middle of the century by incorporating information-coding techniques. However, until the 1970s

cryptography was very much a military sector secret and only after this period did it become of public use and a science studied in universities. Consequently, secret codes were gradually replaced by algorithms.

In 1992, at the time when cryptography wars had reached their peak across the Atlantic, William Gibson, the science fiction author who coined the term "cyberspace", and the artist Dennis Ashbaugh presented *Agrippa (A Book of the Dead)*, an extremely limited-edition work of art consisting of a large printed volume containing a 3.5 floppy disk with a 300-line electronic poem on it. The poem was about memory and loss and was designed to be read only once, as it was programmed to encrypt itself after one use. Cryptography analysts managed to crack the Agrippa code twenty years later.

How long will NSA analysts take to decode the small gift David Huerta sent them as a form of provocation? In May 2014 the hacker artist, who was a co-organiser of the Art Hack Day and the New York Cryptoparty, did not send a floppy disk but a DIY tape to the NSA headquarters.

The parcel, sent through the good old postal service, contained an encrypted mixtape using an Arduino board in a transparent case containing the "soundtrack for the modern surveillance state". The cassette could not be listened to without the password necessary to unlock the private key, which would allow to decipher the SD card where the music was stored.

"Although the fact that the NSA had several programmes to exploit and intercept all types of systems has been brought to light, enciphering remains the blind spot of NSA's all-seeing eyes", argues David Huerta, who through these actions wishes to revive the cypherpunk tradition of the 1990s. "It is also a reminder that the rules of mathematics are more powerful than the laws of even the most powerful states", Huerta believes.

The Berlin Telekommunisten, specialists of "dis-communication tools", suggest skirting the digital panopticon by adopting espionage methods such as the good old "numbers station". These shortwave radio stations, first used during World War I, produced broadcasts reading out lists of numbers and coded messages meant for on-the-field spies. The potential whistle-blower in you was encouraged to join this underground network at the Transmediale Festival in 2014, through a printed card that was supposed to help decode the messages which were randomly broadcast on the RebootFM and π-Node radio stations.

"This project was not really about enciphering but rather a reaction to the tendency in hacker communities to see 'circumventionism' as a solution in itself", toned down Baruch Gottlieb, one of the authors who question this 'crypto-utopia', which he believes carries with it new forms of privileges and asymmetries.

“We should see that this call for pervasive cryptography and a crypto-curatorial order is a clear sign of the future militarisation of the social sphere.”

According to the artist, these skirting techniques have an extremely limited range when it comes to undermining power structures. “It all depends on social and human networks and, at the end of the day, there is no magic trick to help a group defeat the enemy.”

Brendan Howell, on the other hand, who is also based in Berlin, has shown interest in steganography, which is a strategy complementary to cryptography consisting in deliberately concealing information from everyone, in seemingly harmless letters sent via public and unsecured channels. While an enciphered text can be easily identified but is hard to understand, a text hidden using steganography is difficult to retrieve. A common practice for instance is concealing text in images posted on online forums or in e-mails that look like spam, or even storing the messages in the drafts of a Gmail account without ever sending the e-mails.

In 2012, one year before Snowden’s revelations, Howell presented *The Black Chamber*, which was a project inspired by the French *Cabinet Noir*, the secret office in France where the government inspected letters of suspected persons before sending them on to their final recipients. For this artwork, he used the e-mail exchange and the data produced for the WEISE7 Labor exhibition and mixed these with Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Purloined Letter*, to produce what we could call a “paranoid archive”.

“Steganography can lead to paranoia, as every text could potentially be harmful”, wrote the artist. According to him, such paranoia is the state of mind of those working for the big intelligence agencies. “The association between spy and paranoia is not really new, but certainly the combination of digitalisation and the sheer amount of data we have have changed the scale of things.”

Although Howell was not incredibly surprised by Snowden’s revelations concerning the surveillance of citizens, he was nevertheless shocked by the range of tracked data: “NSA’s paranoia and their control mania have led them to try and record the traffic of the whole net. It is insane. They will have to build a system larger than the Internet to manage to track and analyse all the data. Even if they have billions of euros to do this, it is far too an ambitious project”, stated the artist, who continues to carry out research in order to deconstruct this simplistic crime detective discourse. In particular, he is interested in the arbitrary character of the automatic techniques used for text analysis. “It

would be interesting to look at the limits of the ‘superficial intelligence’ of these tools used to search texts to identify suspects by assembling data.”

With his “Project Cuckoo” designer Jochen Maria Weber, who is also based in Berlin, imagined a contemporary version of steganography, by using social networks and their infrastructure to hide information without however putting privacy at stake. In this project, the sender and the recipient are equipped with an electronic box and Cuckoo encodes the messages into randomly generated words and into noise, before simultaneously scattering them over several social platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and reorganising the data so that only the recipient may decipher it. Cuckoo presents a type of hidden social network which is built on existing networks and acts like a parasite for these platforms.

Apart from these artistic projects, others have spoken from the field of cryptography itself. One example of this is Philipp Rogaway, Professor at the University of Davis. Rogaway reminds us of the discipline’s responsibilities in this post-Snowden era. “Which is the exact maximum level of surveillance we can tolerate before it becomes oppressive?”, he asks.

“Cryptography reorganises power, in that it establishes who can do what and in what way. This is what makes cryptography a fundamentally political tool and confers a moral dimension to this sector.” The Professor calls upon his colleagues to deal not only with the mathematical puzzles but also with the social implications of their work, reviving the commitment which was representative of the cypherpunks.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/gm4OKs>

STRATEGY 6: HOMONYMY

MARIE LECHNER

The European project Streaming Egos is concerned with digital identities as seen from the context of the six participating countries. At the same moment that the project was launched, France had just adopted the Intelligence Act, voted as an emergency measure in the whirlwind after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. This law, officially enacted October 3rd, provides a legal basis for an automatic, “generalized and undifferentiated” surveillance of the population via the opaque implementation of robot snitchers – algorithmic black boxes whose job it is to detect suspicious activity of potential terrorists – which are to be installed directly at the source, on the Internet providers’ servers. Even before releasing the algorithms in the wild, the future head of the government commission overseeing technical installations, admitted that control would be difficult to enforce. The law, considered very intrusive, includes numerous blind spots and is highly problematic in regards to respecting privacy.

More recently, Paris again suffered new terrorist attacks, followed by the prolonged application of a State of Emergency giving the State extraordinary powers. The progressive deployment of this legislative arsenal increasingly infringes upon freedoms under the premise that France is “at war”. The point of departure for this research is a desire to experiment and evaluate different strategies (obfuscation, (im)proper names, cryptography, fake documents, reverse engineering) allowing one to creatively go undercover and imagine new ways to discern, protect, clone or falsify digital identities.

“You were born to be real not to be perfect” – Camille Martin

Eric Schmidt, while CEO of Google in August 2010 gave a taste of what was to come in an interview in the Wall Street Journal where he predicted that young people would one day have the possibility to change their name upon becoming adults in order to wipe the slate clean of previous teenage hijinks and other



Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann

embarrassing escapades visible on the social networks.

As Marco Deseriis has underlined, “ensuring that a legal name identifies one and only individual – is an essential precondition of modern politics. It is through the legal codification of proper names that a government gets to know its people and can target either specific individuals through the security apparatus or segments of the population through the leverage of political economy. This double operation – which is both selective and extensive, individuating and massifying – is predicated upon the assumption that there should be one name and only one name for every subject, and never the same name for two different subjects.”

“Shut that ego down” – Camille Martin

In this context, homonymy appears as a scourge. A strong argument, in the era of Web 2.0 and social networks, where sharing the same name can become an identity headache.

“Homonyms on the Web, Hell is other people” is a common title for e-reputation sites, between those who look like you, disturb you or crush you. In the press, stories of namesakes proliferate with the rapidity of new Facebook accounts and usually end badly, social networks banishing, often without scruples, users they consider as identity thieves or squatters of name brands.

Ordinary people become invisible in search engines because of a famous homonym, have their accounts brutally terminated for sharing the same name with a football player, teenage pop star, the North Korean president or the executive director of Facebook. Others have their bank accounts blocked, their wedding banquet destroyed, or even have their lives upset by harassment for having the same name as terrorists.

“Who would you like to be? Nobody” – Camille Martin

Homonymy becomes problematic, undermining the surveillance model for targeting individuals. The hypothesis of the participating artists was to turn the problem on its head, allowing them to theorize homonymy as a form of camouflage, creating a space for the ambiguity necessary for freedom of thought and action in a world of generalized tracking.

Multiplying the same name leads to blurring the referent. As the number of people with the same name increases, the more the subject disappears in the crowd. A strategy of obfuscation is developed, consisting in the multiplication of one's doubles, reducing their value and fidelity, through the deliberate production of ambiguous, confusing or deceiving information. In order to test this hypothesis, the French group created l'Association des Homonymes Anonymes (AHA), whose “vocation is helping, encouraging and guiding, by all means both necessary and useful, all homonyms, known, in the making or disavowed.” To quote the slogan of the Janez Jansas, a project by 3 Slovenian artists who changed their names to the Prime Minister's, “The more of us they are, the faster we'll reach our goal!”

“You're so wonderful and gorgeous on your profile photo, (wink little perverse eye).” – Camille Martin

The AHA project recalls the one Stéphanie Solinas made between 2003 and 2009 with some 200 homonyms „Dominique Lamberts“, a very common name in France. The photographer, who undertook a poetic exploration of identity, asked them to fill out a personality test. A panel of experts (a psychologist, a statistician, a police inspector...) extrapolated a written “identity” from the responses, which were then submitted to an illustrator, who made a drawing, which was given to a policeman in view of producing a composite sketch. Upon which, she began a search for a person resembling the composite who was to be

photographed. The true face of each Dominique Lambert remains hidden behind a series of aliases produced through a protocol, the logic of which becomes absurd.

“I'm so excited about my life that I haven't had sleep. Now this is what it feels like living your life based on joy and purpose!”

– Camille Martin

Instead of looking up homonyms in a telephone book, AHA was experimenting with a similar strategy, using personal data and network identities. Its case study is focused on the name „Camille Martin“, a kind of „digital native“ version of Dominique Lambert „digital native“, a mix of the most popular first and last names in France. Camille was also the name that the Zadistes chose to present themselves with. The name appeared during the blockade in Nantes where the Camilles occupied a terrain that was to be used for the construction of a new airport in Notre-Dame-des-Landes. A collective name, unisex and militant, was brandished in front of the media present on the site of the *Zones à défendre* (zones to defend) which expresses both a desire for anonymity and a horizontality in decision-making processes.

“Camille Martin and Camille Martin are now friends” – Camille Martin

In order to create this collective body of Camilles, we began by making a meta-profile on Twitter, a bot that automatically appropriates all the tweets by all the Camille Martins in real time, and tweets (not retweets) the text as if it was being posted by one person. We created a Facebook semi-automatic account which only “friends” Camille's homonyms and “likes” their posts. We collected their photos on Instagram, composited their faces, collected Camille's answers from Ask.fm, and submitted these data profiles to different types of profiling tools and applications for personality analysis available online in order to generate an absurd digital composite. This fusion of digital traces left by all the Camille Martins creates a shapeless aggregate of individuals, a liquid homonym identity.

“There are millions of gorgeous girls. The hard part is finding the total package. Beautiful inside and out.” – Camille Martin

Little by little, Camille Martin culture surprised us in its homogeneity, and seemed to speak as much about them as about the social networks in which it flourished. In this huge echo chamber, where you don't know any more who says what, the hundreds of singular identities were but one, a hall of mirrors with multiple ramifications. The Camille Martins, these “Young Girls” were tossed about in a custom computer program that brought them into contact with their origins: who personify a way of life characterized by uniformity and blandness, become a sort of

human shield, where being mainstream, “normcore” appears as a common front.

“To Sean, thank you for teaching me to be my authentic self”

– Camille Martin

In a political landscape of total traceability, where our actions are compulsively scrutinized, collected and analysed to elaborate statistical models of “normal” behaviour, this “becoming homonym” is the onset of a new collectivism, a bringing together of a community for blurring identities, and creating a smoke screen for rendering metadata useless.

“Nothing can attain the values that Basketball represents: solidarity, teamwork, team spirit, friendship...” – Camille Martin

Curiously, homonyms were recently the focus of several marketing campaigns in France, such as „Fight for your name“, by the PSG, the Parisian football team and the telephone company Orange, which invited its customers who have the same name as a famous football player to confront their famous homonyms in a penalty kick contest. In Strasbourg, a business school, EM, launched a publicity campaign for new recruits, „Be distinctive“, with a series of videos representing the homonyms of well-known French figures and stars (Christine Lagarde, Didier Deschamps, Sophie Marceau...). The message is clear: „You can't choose your name but you can choose who you become“. With AHA, we all become Camille Martins.

“For I am yours, And you are mine” – Camille Martin



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/NEeJvV>

STALKERBOT SMS

The following messages are fragments of conversations between robots from different services and humans who do not want to communicate their real phone number. www.freeonlinephone.org was used to obtain those text messages, but there are many other services which provide anonymous phone numbers. Their existence expresses the need of camouflage in an era where social networks and other online services ask the users to disclose their phone number in order to associate their digital identity with

their real identity. Most of the time, the messages are activation codes or verification requests, but there are also spams and other mysterious messages.



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/r58Rga>

Használd a(z) 41649 kódot telefonszámod megerősítéséhez a Steamen. Sent 6 minutes ago from Number +44778147XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | Hey Sent 10 minutes ago from Number +1254913XXXX to Number +19093170112 | PayKey verification code: 15430 Sent 13 minutes ago from Number +1309791XXXX to Number +441143520353 | Id=8835). Sent 14 minutes ago from Number +1646798XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Paxful new trade - 0.03415358 BTC (sent to escrow) for Target Gift Car... from user0cd263ef, trade 2zE1NpLbdo Sent 14 minutes ago from Number +1347768XXXX to Number +441143520353 | imo code: 5643 Sent 14 minutes ago from Number +1631770XXXX to Number +15592355035 | tickets through the NightHub app(http://deeplink.me/nitehub.com/public/my_nights_v2?bookingDate=2016-05-14 00:00:00.0&sessionId=4&venueId=271&invitation Sent 14 minutes ago from Number +1646798XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Your Course Hero verification code is 875346 Sent 18 minutes ago from Number +1650489XXXX to Number +441143520353 | Your verification code is 8054. Sent 21 minutes ago from Number +4676944XXXX to Number +441143520353 | Your verification code is 9770. Sent 21 minutes ago from Number +4676944XXXX to Number +441143520353 | imo verification code: 0450 Sent 23 minutes ago from Number +IMO to Number +441143520353 | <https://privnote.com/9f42kEUw#NikBdL16R> Sent 24 minutes ago from Number +49162264XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | Your Viber code is: 958250. Close this message and enter the code into Viber to activate your account. Sent 25 minutes ago from Number +1269225XXXX to Number +14508752358 | imo code: 5643 Sent 25 minutes ago from Number +1214814XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Your Viber code is: 958250. Close this message and enter the code into Viber to activate your account. Sent 26 minutes ago from Number +1424227XXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your Viber code is: 151964. Close this message and enter the code into Viber to activate your account. Sent 32 minutes ago from Number +1269248XXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your Viber code is: 151964. Close this message and enter the code into Viber to activate your account. Sent 33 minutes ago from Number +1980288XXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your Viber code is: 407127. Close this message and enter the code into Viber to activate your account. Sent 35 minutes ago from Number +1480725XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Your Viber code is: 407127. Close this message and enter the code into Viber to activate your account. Sent 37 minutes ago from Number +1918347XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Your KingsChat Code: 57568 Sent 43 minutes ago from Number +1917259XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Your KingsChat Code: 05081 Sent 45 minutes ago from Number +1917259XXXX to Number +19093170112 | Momo mobile confirmation code: 436125 Enter the code into Momo to sign up. Sent 46 minutes ago from Number +1940601XXXX to Number +14508752358 | Kod: 3268. Tack f!r din omregistrering. F!r att aktivera anv!nd f!ljande kod: 3268. Sent 47 minutes ago from Number +1206207XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Kod: 6797. Tack f!r din omregistrering. F!r att aktivera anv!nd f!ljande kod: 6797. Sent 50 minutes ago from Number +1415802XXXX to Number +15877440525 | Επείγουσα Ειδοποίηση Plus500 — Απαιτούμενο όριο! Sent 54 minutes ago from Number +44778147XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | Liftago: Vas kod na 100 Kc je: ADZMTX Plati 14 dni. Zadejte jej do aplikace Liftago pri objednani taxi. Hezkou jizdu! Sent 56 minutes ago from Number +42073630XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | Your KingsChat Code: 32870 Sent 56 minutes ago from Number +1646576XXXX to Number +15877440525 | Υπόλ. λογ.: 10,02 €, Εμπλ. ειδ/σης περιθ. ασφαλείας: 7,37 € Sent 57 minutes ago from Number +44778147XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | 0647 (Tango verification number) Sent 1 hour ago from Number +1956616XXXX to Number +19093170112 | 3797 (ChatGame Verification Code) Sent 60 minutes ago from Number +1832726XXXX to Number +14508752358 | 656540 is your Facebook password reset code or reset your password here: <https://fb.com/I/1P11MRix8Mrl55i> Sent 1 hour ago from Number +592666XXXX to Number +46766920094 | Use 489 650 to verify your Instagram account. Sent 1 hour ago from Number +1856333XXXX to Number +15877440525 | Use code 26596 to confirm your phone number on Steam Sent 1 hour ago from Number +44778147XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | Use code 69283 to remove this phone from your Steam account Sent 1 hour ago from Number +44778147XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | Your Halo verification code is 943 Sent 1 hour ago from Number +1980404XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | Your KingsChat Code: 45361 Sent 1 hour ago from Number +1646576XXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your KingsChat Code: 45875 Sent 1 hour ago from Number +1646576XXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your confirmation code is 56768 Sent 1 hour ago from Number +1408458XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Your lola registration code is: 852-484 Sent 1 hour ago from Number +1925233XXXX to Number +19093170112 | [135234] رس غلک ني يع خا ز و ده [135234] Facebook! Sent 1 hour ago from Number +1415815XXXX to Number +15592355035 | 1752704 als Sicherheitscode f-r das Microsoft-Konto verwenden Sent 2 hours ago from Number +44778147XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | 4129137 als Sicherheitscode f-r das Microsoft-Konto verwenden Sent 2 hours ago from Number +44778147XXXX to Number +43676800200344 | 821576 la ma dat lai mat khau Facebook cua ban Sent 2 hours ago from Number +1415815XXXX to Number +15592355035 | PayPal: Reply with your code or enter it on the PayPal website. CODE: 130079. Code expires in 15 minutes. Msg and data rates may apply. Sent 2 hours ago from Number +6XXXX to Number +441143520353 | Use 6148 as Microsoft account security code Sent 2 hours ago from Number +447509086XXXX to Number +441143520353 | [162069] is your Naver verification code. Sent 2 hours ago from Number +1425777XXXX to Number +15877440525 | [344912] is your Naver verification code. Sent 2 hours ago from Number +1425777XXXX to Number +15592355035 | Carolina, it's Andy with MyRentToOwn. Are you still looking for a home? I can help. Give me a call at 1-888-798-3181. Sent 3 hours ago from Number +1716407XXXX to Number +15592355035 | H!r You hike PIN is 5293. Happy hiking :) Sent 3 hours ago from Number +1415802XXXX to Number +19093170112 |

+190288XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your confirmation code is 102070. Please enter it in the text field. Sent 9 hours ago from Number +Yandex to Number +441143520353 | Your confirmation code is 370355. Please enter it in the text field. Sent 9 hours ago from Number +1720504XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Your confirmation code is 768506. Please enter it in the text field. Sent 9 hours ago from Number +Yandex to Number +441143520353 | Your confirmation code is 914823. Please enter it in the text field. Sent 9 hours ago from Number +1720504XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Your verification code for Hushmail is 547035. Sent 9 hours ago from Number +1424325XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | imo verification code: 5643 Sent 9 hours ago from Number +1872401XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | [Hi, Jabeen B has invited you to Connect! Visit <http://ft.shadi.com/DkZvP> to view her profile and respond now. Sent 10 hours ago from Number +1707688XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Klook Travel Verification code: 045068. Please enter code within 30 mins. Sent 10 hours ago from Number +1630394XXXXX to Number +441143520353 | Please enter 6217 into LINE within the next 30 mins. Sent 10 hours ago from Number +1314366XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | Please enter 8255 into LINE within the next 30 mins. Sent 10 hours ago from Number +1619758XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | Your Account Verification Code is: 1114 Sent 10 hours ago from Number +141586XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your passcode for the e-SignPackage_ATC042 is: 151170 Sent 10 hours ago from Number +1450800XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your verification code for Hushmail is 939728. Sent 10 hours ago from Number +1518730XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | imo verification code: 8328 Sent 10 hours ago from Number +1347773XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Test Sent 10 hours ago from Number +1407796XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | Coinbase code: 878423 Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1587409XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Dear Customer, 254368 is your one time password (OTP). Please enter the OTP to proceed. Thank you, Team Jio Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1415815XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Momo mobile confirmation code: 639802 Enter the code into Momo to sign up. Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1940601XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Momo_mobile_confirmation_code: 625601_Enter_the_code_into_Momo_to_sign_up.[Momo] Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1314366XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | Paxful new trade - 0.03191115 BTC (sent to escrow) for Target Gift Car... from NaniZk15, trade 6vjoWZ9N3e7 Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1347768XXXXX to Number +441143520353 | Paxful new trade - 0.03985334 BTC (sent to escrow) for Target Gift Car... from theve14, trade 4Exm7dLVp12 Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1347768XXXXX to Number +441143520353 | Paxful trade 6vjoWZ9N3e7 marked as paid by NaniZk15 Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1347768XXXXX to Number +441143520353 | Please enter 6333 into LINE within the next 30 mins. Sent 11 hours ago from Number +126233XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | To continue the uploaded pre-verification please use this PIN: 1482, thank you! Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1661249XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | To continue the uploaded pre-verification please use this PIN: 1564, thank you! Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1661249XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | To continue the uploaded pre-verification please use this PIN: 8228, thank you! Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1202888XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Usa 051 342 para verificar tu cuenta de Instagram. Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1629222XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Use 348 920 to verify your Instagram account. Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1619736XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Use 724 381 to verify your Instagram account. Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1619736XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | WeChat verification code (3541) is used for your account registration. Please don't forward the code! Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1919578XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | WhatsApp App code 870-572. You can also tap on this link to verify your phone: www.whatsapp.com/870572 Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1469208XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Your ZodiacCasting Username: HZCRM0216631437. Click here to play now: <http://clck.eu/m-zc0/HZCRM0216631437/> Reply STOP to unsub Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1647360XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | Your verification code for Hushmail is 428004. Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1424325XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | Your verification code for Hushmail is 445956. Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1518730XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Your verification code for Hushmail is 879078. Sent 11 hours ago from Number +1424325XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | Ghhbb Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1978242XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Jdh soaps Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1702759XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Vodi: 230526 la ma xac nhan Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1678369XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | [WeChat verification code (1558) is only used to change linking. Forwarding the code to others may compromise your account. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +3278324XXXXX to Number +46766920094 | WeChat verification code (1663) is only used to change linking. Forwarding the code to others may compromise your account. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1561892XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | WeChat verification code (5384) is only used to change linking. Forwarding the code to others may compromise your account. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1774538XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | WeChat verification code (7589) is only used to change linking. Forwarding the code to others may compromise your account. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1361402XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | Your XONE authentication code is 752775. Continue to fill in other information to complete the registration. --1463105358-- Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1720361XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Your verification code for Hushmail is 077262. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1424325XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | Your verification code for Hushmail is 812635. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1646891XXXXX to Number +4367680020034 | Your verification code for Hushmail is 874830. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1424325XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | [Alibaba Group]Your verification code for validation is 379922. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1346200XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | [Alibaba Group]Your verification code for validation is 456338. Sent 12 hours ago from Number +1720539XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Download Yandex Mail App - <http://mobile.ya.ru/mail-st> Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1917242XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Hello from the Audience Awards. Enter 214419 in the box on your browser to verify your account. You will only have to do this once. Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1720897XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | Hello from the Audience Awards. Enter 302069 in the box on your browser to verify your account. You will only have to do this once. Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1720897XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Paxful new trade - 0.02369593 BTC (sent to escrow) for Target Gift Car... from mckenzeelola, trade YW8mpxKNm7 Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1347768XXXXX to Number +441143520353 | Paxful new trade - 0.03951132 BTC (sent to escrow) for Target Gift Car... from user7572, trade xwW1946qYmA Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1347768XXXXX to Number +441143520353 | Please enter 7606 into LINE within the next 30 mins. Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1619736XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | Vodi: 528181 verification code Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1678369XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | Vodi: 740425 verification code Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1678369XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | WeChat verification code (8094) is only used to log in to your account. Forwarding the code to others may compromise your account. Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1720509XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | WeChat verification code (8851) is only used to change linking. Forwarding the code to others may compromise your account. Sent 13 hours ago from Number +5021484XXXXX to Number +46766920094 | Your Facebook code is: 44661. Close this message and enter the code into Facebook to activate your account. #fb Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1720509XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Your Facebook code is: 79272. Close this message and enter the code into Facebook to activate your account. #fb Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1415802XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Your confirmation code is 372453. Please enter it in the text field. Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1917242XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Your verification code: 396390 Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1408659XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Your verification code: 563475 Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1408659XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | [321246] is your Naver verification code. Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1636229XXXXX to Number +15592355035 | imo verification code: 5115 Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1361402XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | imo verification code: 5622 Sent 13 hours ago from Number +1302380XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | 20754 la ma xac nhan Facebook cua ban hoac truy cap <https://fb.com/1D97fLPhqmbZcKd> Sent 14 hours ago from Number +1720509XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | G-958150 is your Google verification code. Sent 14 hours ago from Number +1707339XXXXX to Number +14508752358 | Hey sponsors, so Aaron Staple had a bit too much to drink yesterday. did not stay under his drink limit for the day and/or failed to report his drink tally, which either way, is not good. Please sho Sent 14 hours ago from Number +1415915XXXXX to Number +19093170112 | Paxful new trade - 0.06317319 BTC (sent to escrow) for Target Gift Car... from skyla1, trade AggeB4YR9mX Sent 14 hours ago from Number +1347768XXXXX to Number +441143520353 | Paxful trade AggeB4YR9mX marked as paid by skyla1 Sent 14 hours ago from Number +1347768XXXXX to Number +441143520353 | Testin Sent 14 hours ago from Number +1778554XXXXX to Number +15877440525 | Tu código de seguridad es 443038. Que disfrutes de Dropbox. Sent

HOW IT STARTED: “CAN AN IDENTITY BE CALCULATED?”

MARIE LECHNER

“On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog.” With this cartoon caption by Peter Steiner, the American weekly magazine *The New Yorker* celebrated the emergence of the Web in 1993. It features a dog, seated in front of a computer, talking to his furry companion. With these words, which have become since legendary, he explains what was at the time one of the main features of the nascent network: the possibility of being anonymous. A liberating cyberspace where gender, race and appearance are irrelevant, where real identity is unimportant and where everyone, protected by anonymity, can reinvent themselves online.

Sixteen years later, in 2009, *Le Tigre*, an independent magazine based in Paris, published a “Google portrait” of the anonymous Marc L. Over a two-page spread in its 28th Volume, it read: “Happy Birthday Marc. On 5th December 2008 you will celebrate your 29th birthday. Can we speak as friends? It is true that you don’t know me. But I know you very well. You are the (un)lucky candidate for the first *Le Tigre* Google portrait. The idea behind this column is simple: we select someone anonymous and present their life based on the traces they leave on the Internet, voluntarily or otherwise.”

A media uproar ensued. From the 8 p.m. television news broadcast on French channel TF1 to the *Le Monde* daily newspaper, as well as blogs and forums, everyone was talking about the private life of this ordinary Internet user laid out for all to see. Raphaël Meltz, author of the article and director of *Le Tigre*, had put together by hand stray fragments of information found on YouTube, Flickr photos, etc., combined with Google searches and, more marginally then, Facebook. The result was a rather precise literary portrait, revealing his holiday travels, musical tastes, exes, and more. The magazine took full responsibility for this revelation, wanting to highlight “the idea that we don’t really realise what private information about ourselves is available on the Internet and that, gathered and summarized, this information can present a worrying picture.”

Such articles provoked a sudden awareness that our most private data are collected and exploited by private companies for profit. This population profiling became systematic with the emergence of the Big Data era. Furthermore, with the revelations of whistleblower Edward Snowden about the mass surveillance conducted



Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann

by America’s National Security Agency (NSA), the general public discovered that it is not only the corporate giants of the Internet who collect and exploit our data and metadata, but that even our governments, the American government foremost – but also France, which tapped underwater cables – spy on their own people, under the pretext of combating terrorism.

Black Boxes

On 2nd June 2015, faced with the NSA “collect it all” scandal, the U.S. Senate approved the USA Freedom Act, which restricts the bulk collection of telephone data. But the security measures established by the American intelligence agency continue to make their mark across Europe. On Wednesday 24th June, the Intelligence law, which outlines an unprecedented extension of the powers of the national intelligence services, was overwhelmingly approved in France. This French-style “Patriot Act” gives them the same types of powers as their American counterparts.

The proposed legislation, assessed during an emergency motion in the wake of the attacks against *Charlie Hebdo*, legalizes mass automated surveillance of the population via the non-transparent use of cookies – the infamous black boxes (purportedly algorithms supposed to detect terrorist behaviour on the Internet) – which will be used by Internet access providers and hosts. The French National Digital Council, an independent advisory

committee, laments the “extremely widespread nature of these measures”, which manifest as “indiscriminate surveillance bordering on mass surveillance” and position “algorithms at the heart of our mode of governance”. Despite the hostile campaign led by a large section of civil society, which lambasts the law for its lack of opposition forces and the intrusive nature of the techniques it condones, opponents did not succeed in mobilising the general public, who are resigned (although not consenting), generally divided between feelings of inevitability and powerlessness.

Long before the former employee of the NSA revealed the extent of violation of civil liberties taking place, particularly with the Prism programme that gives the intelligence agency direct access to the servers and data of nine Internet giants (including Google, Microsoft, Facebook and Yahoo), experts within the network alerted the public to these data collections on the Web.

Expert Albertine Meunier has scrupulously compiled her Google searches ever since 2006, the year in which Google launched its Search History service, which stores Internet user requests. In *My Google Search History*, a long-term project, Albertine Meunier presents the exhaustive inventory of her day-to-day searches, detailed as a list of key words, recited by a synthetic voice, presented in a video and also available in book form. This collection of requests gives a precise idea of her preoccupations and reveals the unbelievable amount of information Google has on us all. “Nobody knows you as well as that, not even the person you share your life with,” she claims. Read chronologically, Albertine Meunier’s searches tell a story: her own, but also the story of the Web.

Precarious Identities

Since the launch of Web 2.0, the concept of identity has changed profoundly, according to Christophe Bruno, the curator in 2011 of the online exhibition entitled *Identités précaires* [*Precarious Identities*], in the virtual Jeu de Paume space in Paris: “While with Google you remained the provisional and unstable sum of all your words broadcast online, on Facebook you are required to give your real identity from the start. The dissolution and blurring of genders and types has been replaced by a return to the

normative notion of identity.”

In the early days of the Web, “evading identity” was one of the favourite activities of net experts and media-activists who liked to provoke confusion by creating false profiles, fictional avatars, collective identities and pseudonyms, making the Internet an exciting game field. Players have ranged from Mouchette.org, the first fictional star of the Internet in 1996, to Luther Blisset, the elusive Robin Hood of the information age, whose pseudonym has since been adopted by hundreds of international experts and activists since 1994, along with the Yes Men, “identity correctors” and Anonymous legions.

From there on in, security madness and selling of personal data have contributed to the pressure to make online and legal identities irrevocably coincide. Heath Bunting foresaw this phenomenon in 1998, before the “dot.com” explosion that ended the Internet utopia. In *_Readme.html*, he was already proposing invisibility to counteract the commoditization of the self and is currently working on the Status Project, a construction kit of new legal identities.

The year 2010 saw a wave of virtual suicides, whereby profiles were removed from social networking sites, seen as instruments of domestication and exploitation with the Web 2.0 *Suicide Machine* or *Seppukoo* or the mysterious collective “Les Liens Invisibles”, furthermore encouraging people to “free the digital system of any and all identity stifling.”

Users have only a rough understanding of this identity broadcast across networks, while operators, sellers, search engines and information services alike know more about our digital behaviour than we do ourselves, as they can archive, cross-check and model our data. In the full swing of the predictive web boom, “algorithms are now able to predict your purchases and even directly validate delivery before you have even clicked on the ‘purchase’ button. They can also detect ‘terrorist behaviour’, along with ‘compulsive gambling or pathological behaviours’”, observes Olivier Ertzscheid, a university lecturer in Information Sciences, author of *Qu’est-ce que l’identité numérique?* [*What is Digital Identity?*], which highlights the dangers such “black-listing” represents for democracy. The foremost protection against

“identity expropriation” we must implement consequently requires regaining control over the management of our records.

Predicting Behaviour

The Intelligence legislation anticipates algorithms that are able to detect suspicious behaviour. It remains to be seen to what extent an identity can be “calculated”, and what are the potential strategies to counteract this “big data ideology”. “The risk is even greater because it is not directly perceptible. Our behaviour risks progressively and painlessly adapting to this kind of well-thinking, political correctness and self-censorship of our ideas and movements on the Internet,” warns legal researcher Antoinette Rouvroy, author of the concept of “algorithmic governmentality”. Her warning comes against a backdrop of fear of the progressive emergence of a mainstream system and way of life which does not tolerate the slightest contradictory position, deviation or unique social (or digital) practice.

For the Streaming Egos project, in the specific context of the French Intelligence legislation, we will attempt to analyse the way these algorithms work and reclaim these data mining tools, implementing strategies to counteract such surveillance (obfuscation, camouflage, false positives, etc.) and assess the possibility of creating an operational identity, both administrative and digital.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/pYF04v>

GERMANY

SABRIA DAVID (CURATOR)
MARTINA PICKHARDT
ENNO PARK
DIRK VON GEHLEN

LONG LIVE THE SALON! VIVE LE SALON!

The German country circle uses the topic of “digital identities” to foster a revival of salon culture. We cultivate the classic European concept of the ‘salon’ as a debate format, supported by diverse media. Our analog, digital, spoken and written conversations harness features of the digital space such as interactivity, meme and flow, sounding out how the digital can empower transnational discourse.

We use our blog www.goethe-salon.de as an incubator.

At the convention, we invite you to a traditional salon, which will be streamed live and then posted online. Long live the Salon!



www.goethe-salon.de

THE GOETHE-SALON: A MANUAL

SABRIA DAVID

What have we been doing at the Goethe Salon? Here's a little introduction: It is an experiment to revive the culture of the 'salon' in the digital age. We 'reoralize' written culture through digital media and the internet, reintroducing society to oral traditions like the convivial chat and joint discourse. For the "Streaming Egos" project, we cultivate the fundamentally European idea of the salon as a discursive format through various media and through analog, digital, written and oral conversations.

How can we involve as many people as possible in a social discourse and identity-building – even across borders? With this experiment, we sound out how the digital space can help facilitate and lead social and transnational discourse.

1. INTERVIEW WITH PD DR. PETER GOßENS: “WHAT WOULD GOETHE SAY?”

MEDIA FORMAT

A one-on-one conversation, captured as an audio file. To make it internationally comprehensible, an English-language interpretation was overlaid over the original audio track. We did not take the detour via a written translation, but rather used simultaneous interpretation, preserving the orality of the conversation even in its English rendition. Running parallel to the interpretation, the original sound conveys an impression of the original flow of the conversation – especially at those points of the audio file when the volume of the German track is turned up.

TOPIC

A talk about Goethe and transnational discourse, in his day and today. We talk about Goethe's idea of world literature as a process of exchange and a transnational space for communication, about identity and community building, about Thurn & Taxis as an early provider and Goethe's privilege of sending letters postage-free as a predecessor of the free internet. In addition, we discuss what the aging prince among poets can teach us about creating a borderless post-digital society today.

PD Dr. Peter Goßens majored in Comparative Literature, Modern German Studies and Italian Studies at the Universities of Bonn and Pisa. He earned his Ph.D. in 1998 with a thesis about Paul Celan's Ungaretti translation (Heidelberg 2000) and habilitated in 2011 with his thesis *World Literature. Models of Transnational Perception of Literature in the 19th century* (Stuttgart 2011). Since 2006, he has served as assistant professor at the department of Comparative Studies at Ruhr-Universität Bochum.



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/tq2HI6>



Peter Goßens © Melanie Stegemann

2. INTERVIEW WITH MOKHTAR B.: “WHO AM I? RADICALIZATION AND THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE”

MEDIA FORMAT

The media format is the same as for the Goethe/Goßens interview: A one-on-one conversation, captured as an audio file with English interpretation and the original language track in the background.

TOPIC

Mokhtar B. provides counselling for radicalized youth on behalf of the Interior Ministry of the state North-Rhine Westphalia. He helps them quit the Islamist scene and works preventatively with at-risk youngsters. I talked to him about bonding and identity as stabilizing and preventative factors and about the role of digital media – both as a community-building social space and as a recruiting and propaganda tool. The lack of a positive social vision and, in particular, of a positive, digitally visible image of Islam seems to lead to a void of identity and community that some European youngsters fill with what they believe to be the teachings and promises of salvation of radical Islamists. It is our task as a society to pull the rug from under this sort of radicalization and win back a generation that, hopefully, is not lost to us yet. How do we do that? By facilitating and highlighting alternative visions, opportunities for bonding and a sense of belonging – in the real and in the virtual world, any way we can.



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/A46N3b>

3. SALON TALK ON AIR – INTERNAL

MEDIA FORMAT

Goethe Salon participants Dirk von Gehlen, Martina Pickhardt, Enno Park and Sabria David chatted via video conference (Google Hangout). This was an intimately personal conversation, despite the fact that the participants were physically in Berlin, Bonn, London and Munich. This talk was internal and only accessible to the participants themselves.

TOPIC

We talked about how we were going to approach the topic of digital identities. We came up with the concept of an ongoing conversation, meandering through various media formats, starting with the internal group and successively incorporating more and more external participants. Another goal is to explore which media formats lend themselves to a transnational dialog, and in which contexts.

Digital salon © Gunnar Sohn



4. SALON TALK ON AIR – EXTERNAL

MEDIA FORMAT

A personal conversation between four people at remote locations in Berlin, Bonn, Munich and London. We used Google Hangouts on Air as our media format, which means the conversation was streamed live and open to external viewers. We announced it ahead of time. Viewers were able to engage in the conversation using the question & answer function, via Twitter and via Google. The comments sections for the posts on YouTube and on goethe-salon.de were another interactive option.

TOPIC

Our salon talk between Dirk von Gehlen, Enno Park, Martina Pickhardt and Sabria David revolved around digital identities. We discussed Narcissus and Echo in the digital space, bonding and self-assertion in the context of the 'selfie'-craze, Enno Park's Alter Ego (the fake image with the real tie) and memes such as #confusedtravolta and #doitlikedemaiziere.



Link to the video
<https://goo.gl/OBijwC>



5. EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH ANNETTE SCHWINDT: “NEVER THERE AND YET INVOLVED”

MEDIA FORMAT

This conversation is a written email exchange. It starts with the question how a person can be socially present without being physically present, and the role of digital media in this phenomenon. Other questions (What does Annette Schwindt think of “digital identities?”? Does she even distinguish between her “digital” and her “analog” self?) evolved as questions and answers ping-ponged back and forth. It is therefore almost a verbal conversation in a written form, which can subsequently be translated into other languages.

TOPIC

Where can digital technology build bridges? How can we use digital media to involve people who would otherwise be absent in a social discourse? This question affects not only participants in a conversation who are scattered across remote locations throughout Germany, as was the case in the Salon Talk On Air, but also – in the spirit of inclusion – people who are physically confined to their apartments, unfit for travel, or otherwise immobile. For cyborg Enno Park, this is a cochlea-implant that allows him to hear and take part in conversations. For Annette Schwindt, the internet is a gate to a world from which her illness would otherwise ban her.

E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH ANNETTE SCHWINDT. SHE IS ONE OF GERMANY’S LEADING EXPERTS IN DIGITAL AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION. HER PRESENCE IN PUBLIC IS – CAUSED BY ILLNESS – MAINLY DIGITAL.

Dear Annette,

I would like to talk to you about the notion of presence. You never appear in public in person (except for the Social Media Chat Bonn, which takes place right around the corner from your home). And yet, everyone knows you and you’re a great presence in cyber society. How is that possible?

Annette:

I think it has something to do with the way I communicate. I focus on being approachable and on leading conversations. I answer questions about digital communication every day, I share with colleagues and I publish on the topic. When I do that, I ‘talk’ the same way I would face-to-face. This creates the impression that I’m right there.

Sabria:

This is a beautiful notion. For it means that the sense of being there and present in person is based on whether and how one gets involved in a conversation, how approachable one is. So someone who is physically present but absent-minded during a conversation (perhaps because his or her thoughts are wandering) is less ‘there’ than an engaged digital interlocutor. This salon is about the topic of “digital identities”. What’s your take on this? Do you distinguish between your “digital” and your offline self? Are your digital conversations any different from your face-to-face conversations?

Annette:

No. Why would they be? By the way, a lot of people who first meet me online and later get to know me in person confirm that. Some find it curious, others find it totally normal. How was it for you? We started out by following each other online. When we first met in real life at the Social Media Chat Bonn, you immediately recognized me, but quite honestly, I didn't know who you were right away. *embarrassing* But then again, due to my hypersensitivity, I was totally overwhelmed by the sea of stimuli I was in. This was one of the first times that I ever got into real-life contact with "fans". I had no clue how important I am to people. I was blown away. I considered myself, and I still do, just a person who shares with others online. To me, digital conversation is the same as any other form of conversation. When I'm on the phone, or writing to you as I am now, I'm the same person.

Sabria:

Yes, it's intriguing to see whether one can recognize people offline based on their profile pictures and twitter avatars. That depends on how much you alter an avatar. You recognize some people at first sight, others have to reveal themselves. It's always a beautiful moment at conferences when people are introduced to each other by their real names, and there is a moment of polite suspense because that real name doesn't ring a bell at all. Then when they mention their twitter names, faces light up in recognition: "Oh, you are @zaziemo, @DrBieber, @PickiHH - Of course, we know each other!" This sort of digital and real-world familiarity must be alien to some people.

Annette:

Yes, what's normal in our filtered bubble seems freaky from the outside. It depends on whether you build your reputation on your real name or on a nickname such as @furukama or @meta_blum. As long as you don't make a secret of your real name and your real face, that can be part of your brand. What matters is that your communication is personal and honest. I think it's worse when people feel that when they are online, they are free to do anything they would refrain from in the real world. This leads to excesses like hate comments on Facebook. Offline, those people would most likely act differently. When they go online, they lose all sense of decency and empathy. But actually, online conversation requires particular tact and common sense, because we don't have additional cues such as facial expressions, gestures etc.

Sabria:

True, not everyone handles participation in social discourse responsibly. People want to get involved (or, as in a German idiom that trolls like to use: 'add their own mustard to the sausage'), but at the same time, they are avoiding genuine conversation. Trolling, in a way, is an inability to communicate.

Speaking of participation in a discourse: In his beautiful salon contribution ("Do you even exist, Mr. Park?), Enno Park describes that his digital implant first enabled him to participate in social and personal conversations barrier-free. To me, the interesting issue we raise in our project Streaming-Egos about digital identities is this: How can technology build bridges for us? 'Bridge' meaning, of course, facilitating dialog between people. In this sense, isn't digital technology a bridge for people in your position, as well?

Annette:

Sure it is. I can hardly tolerate any physical stress and I get overwhelmed really easily due to my hypersensitivity. By initiating communication in the digital space first, I can control many sources of potential overstimulation. Once I get to know the other person better, a real-life meeting is a lot easier for me than when I'm thrown into a situation unprepared. And when I'm not required to be physically present, when I'm able to participate "audio only" or in writing, I can lie down with my smartphone, or sit with my laptop, which greatly reduces the physical strain on me. I am physically

unable to work the traditional 9-to-5 job we used to have.

I know a lot of other people with physical limitations who could not be where they are today if it weren't for digitalization. An impressive case in point is Glenda Watson-Hyatt, who is severely limited by cerebral palsy, both in terms of motor skills and speech. Thanks to WordPress, she was able to build a reputation for herself. Today, she is out and about giving speeches with the help of her electric scooter and speech software on her iPad. But the digital age also brings new opportunities for everyone else. Today, I can talk to friends and family across the world in real time using messenger or Skype. I can run projects with colleagues on the other side of the globe. Some time ago, this would have required prohibitively expensive telephone calls, or waiting for letters in the mail for weeks.

Sabria:

Which leads me to my last question: What would your life be like without digital media?

Annette:

Most of the time, I would be pretty lonely, I guess, since I'm not mobile. I would probably be doing what I did when I was younger, writing letters and stories, and I would probably publish them in print only. My background is in old-school newspaper journalism, and I have been "blogging off-line" since high-school: [http://www.nettesite.com/2011/11/analog-gebloggt ;-\)](http://www.nettesite.com/2011/11/analog-gebloggt;-)) Digital media made things easier for me and increased my reach. But I'm basically still doing the same kinds of things :-)

Sabria:

Dear Annette, thank you for this conversation!



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/s0N9Eo>

6. WRITTEN INTERVIEW : 6 QUESTIONS FOR MRS. HÖPKER

MEDIA FORMAT

This is a classic written interview. All 6 questions were pre-written by an interviewer and sent to Mrs. Höpker, who answered them in one sitting and returned them. There is no quasi-oral exchange. The written form allows for easy translation.

TOPIC

Hundreds of visitors attend and join in the musician's sing-along concerts. The interview addresses the revival of old, communal-social cultural techniques (such as singing and salons) via digital means, identity and community building by singing together and musical heritage as well as the manipulative potential of such collective emotion. Which – no surprise there – makes us wade knee-deep in German history.

6 QUESTIONS FOR MRS. HÖPKER

Digital transformation is often fueled by a social need for sharing and exchange, bonding, relationships and making contacts. Social-communal cultural techniques that seemed long forgotten are resurfacing, finding a new and often surprising expression in our digital society.

There are countless knitting blogs out there, getting people to do crafts together and share all their tips and tricks. The 'Maker' scene unites DIY-aficionados, driven by developments such as the very affordable Raspberry Pi or 3-D printing. Projects like mundraub.org or phenomena like guerilla gardening are reclaiming public spaces as a social space. Singing together is another such phenomenon. It doesn't really seem to fit into our times, and yet, new formats and events are popping up all over the place: Whether it is a sing-along to Bach's Christmas Oratorio at a church or caroling in soccer stadiums at Christmas time – the idea of singing together is mobilizing modern-day couch potatoes in droves. What's going on?

I asked Katrin Höpker. Since 2008, the professional pianist, organ player and singer has been hosting her interactive show „Mrs. Höpker invites you to sing“. Since then, she has taken her sing-along on the road, getting hundreds of people in large auditoriums to sing along with her varied program, which ranges from traditional folk songs from all centuries to current hits. And as it turns out, our conversation about singing, community and identity immediately took us to the central theme of my initial article about the German country circle within this project, namely: straight into German history.

Here are my questions and Mrs. Höpker's replies:

Question 1

Your soirées foster the culture of communal singing. In your experience, what role does this almost forgotten cultural technique play today?

Mrs. Höpker: I think you're not asking quite the right question.

Singing is not a forgotten cultural technique. We have always been singing, and we have always been singing together, even though we've been doing a lot less of it in recent decades. There is a variety of reasons for this. German history and the great rupture of the Nazi regime is certainly a big one.

Question 2

In your experience, do we even still have a shared canon of songs – or is there no common repertoire that people from any generation can agree on?

Mrs. Höpker: There is still a common canon, but we urgently need to maintain and expand it. I'm talking about a repertoire that ranges from traditional German folk songs to current hits. I'm amazed that 25-year-olds know hits from the 50s and 60s; and 80-year-olds sing along with Robbie Williams songs. But I'm also observing that many traditional folk songs are fading away, people just don't know them anymore. That is partly due to the fact that the realities that many of these folk songs describe have simply become alien to us. It would almost take a history class to explain what they're all about.

Question 3

Can the act of singing together build identity and community?

Mrs. Höpker: The answer to this is a resounding and cheerful: YES, it can!

Question 4

But doesn't singing together and the sense of community it creates also harbor a huge seductive, manipulative potential? Isn't this 'we'-euphoria also dangerous?

Mrs. Höpker: Yes, that is also true, especially in Germany, since our history has shown how music and collective singing can be instrumentalized. Singing is a very physical, energetically highly stimulating act—which as such, is a very, very positive thing! Yet in a group of marching soldiers, for example, this sense of strength and power can be harnessed for negative purposes. But singing is like everything else in life: Anything positive can be perverted into something negative. Always remember to turn your brain on first. Even before and while singing.

Question 5

Don't we need all this, anyway?

Mrs. Höpker: Of course, we are human beings who need community and group experiences that help us make sense of things. When I sing with a large crowd, it is okay for me to feel a sense of belonging and connection with this crowd—visually speaking, I am horizontally connected, but I am also vertically connected with myself. It is all about being well-rounded!

Question 6

Do digital media play a role in your work? If yes, what is it?

Mrs. Höpker: Sure, I use all the different digital media. When I prepare my shows, when I research music, when I communicate with the other singers etc. But during my shows, and that is the hallmark of my events, everything happens live on stage, without any gimmicks. There is no playback, no pre-recorded material, no midifiles. I am a pure-bred musician. My voice and my piano is all I need!



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/trIQGc>

7. THE ANALOG SALON AT THE DIGITAL IDENTITIES CONVENTION: LONG LIVE THE SALON!

MEDIA FORMAT

At the convention (Digital Identities/Streaming Egos) at the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf, we held a classical, analog salon – perched on original period furniture and using salon props from the workshops of the municipal theater. My guests at the salon were the members of the German country circle Martina Pickhardt, Enno Park as well as PD Dr. Peter Goßens from the Goethe interview and Prof. Bernadette Wegenstein. As the former participants had fallen ill, we acted quickly to bring them to the event live and digitally via Google Hangouts, as behooves a true cyborg. The salon talk is thus a mixed analog and digital format. Even though the participants are German speakers, our working language is English in order to make the talk accessible for all international visitors. The talk was streamed live simultaneously on the project's blog, on YouTube and on Google. Attendees and partners from all participating countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium and Germany) were able to join us remotely and engage in the conversation using the question & answer function as well as the hashtag #StreamingEgos. The recording is available online for anyone who wants to view it later on.

TOPIC

While munching on tea pastries (well, only those of us who were physically present, the digital attendees had to watch us eat) we talked about Marcel Proust, madeleines, archives, recollections, memories and memes, as well as how we can use digital media today to facilitate transnational and decentralized discourses. What can we learn from 19th-century transnational discourse? What parameters do digital technologies provide for us today? Is the internet merely an archive, or rather a memory machine – which is also emotional? One important insight gained from this talk: Memes are the madeleines of the Internet.

Another insight: Language and technology may sometimes be rickety bridges – but they do really create a bond between the present and the absent and between speakers of different languages. And they help make the salon a strong metaphor for togetherness, mutual inspiration, exchange and productivity, especially in the digital age. In addition to the aforementioned bridges of language and technology, another prerequisite is to have confidence in the open-ended process of the conversation itself, to trust that a fruitful dialog will yield something

spontaneous, something new, something that takes us further – in the spirit of Kleist's „l'idée vient en parlant" (The idea will come as we talk).



Link to the video
<https://goo.gl/0cGDBs>



Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann

PARIS

SABRIA DAVID

When we country curators met in Paris at the beginning of June, we stayed at a small hotel on the Canal Saint Martin. We went out to dinner together, crossed one of these pretty steep bridges over the canal to the other side and spent the evening at a small restaurant talking about digital identities, what unites us and what makes us different, how the perspectives from Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium and Germany might evolve over the course of our project. Two blocks down is the restaurant “Le Petit Cambodge”, which was the scene of one of the Paris attacks on Friday, 13th in 2015. Fourteen people perished there. So much for serenity.

Psychoanalyst Arno Grün, who just passed away at the age of 92, said that man retains his humanity only in the awareness of his own fragility and in accepting a pain he may have suffered. Being able to perceive one's own vulnerability is the basis for empathy. Showing compassion means accepting one's own pain, as well – and apparently that is difficult. According to Grün, it is alarming that our societies are developing into societies devoid of empathy – in a systemic way.

The current refugee crisis highlights both empathetic and apathetic responses that we can observe on a daily basis. I can virtually not comprehend the state of emotional coldness and mercilessness of those young people who – as happened in Paris – randomly kill other young people who are talking, eating and drinking together. Something is seriously going wrong in our societies when such deeds will, once again, motivate many from our (own!) midst to join such endeavors. If we provide a breeding ground for such atrocities, we must ask ourselves how we can shape our societies in such a way that this seed cannot grow. France surely represents a special kind of problem with its banlieues, its secluded problem quarters that are left to their own devices – the ones Nicolas Sarkozy wanted to ‘clean with a pressure washer’.

But we, too, must ask ourselves these questions: What holds us together as a society? What unites us? And that puts us right in the middle of these questions of identity that the project Streaming Egos is asking: Who are we? And what is “we”? How do identity-building processes work – also in a transnational context? How do we prevent a vacuum of identity from exploding in such a horrific way? Because the most enticing offer that both Islamists as well as right-wing extremists seem to be making is



Canal Saint Martin © Sabria David



Vive la vie © Sabria David

an offer of identity. So the question for me, as well as for the Streaming Egos project, is: What holds us together? How can we promote the bond that holds us together? And what can the digital cultural space contribute? As part of the Goethe-Salon, I conducted an interview with Mokhtar B. on the topic. People who are working on keeping endangered and radicalized youth here at home and re-socializing them are currently quite busy, but he gave us time to talk.

My thoughts are with our French country curator Marie Lechner and the members of her French country circle who reside in this magnificent city.

HOW IT STARTED: “THE GERMAN PERSPECTIVE – A GOETHE CIRCLE IN GERMANY”

SABRIA DAVID

A German circle devoted to the theme of identity. Does a German identity exist? Is there a German opinion on identity? This is indeed a delicate theme.

Germany was originally created entirely from the aggregation of a large mosaic of principalities. Then, in the 20th Century, suffering from national delusions of grandeur and renouncing the individual in favour of the great and unconditional “We”, it became increasingly divided by profound identity rifts and collective self-doubt. Are we really the people who committed all those crimes? Can we still be a country of poets and philosophers? Write verses in German? History has taught us to no longer be able to take pleasure in “big nation” attitudes. Do we know who we are? Can we (once again) walk with our heads held high? What tradition could reunite us?

Germany carries a responsibility to critically reassess what it really is. We can no longer blindly accept maintaining any national conviction about ourselves. To use the words of Friedrich von Schiller in his treaty on naïve and sentimental poetry: the Germans’ attitude will never again be naïve, yet it will always be sentimental. Through its own fault, Germany has lost the “possibility to act calmly of its own accord, to exist according to its own rules, to its own internal necessity, or in eternal unity with its very essence.”

We can no longer draw resources from within ourselves like the genius Goethe. We are condemned to see, to know, to think. It is sentimentalism, it is the Schiller which is dormant within us. We can no longer be our nature itself; rather, we must search for our hidden nature. And all this is – naturally – also a quest for our identity. Like Nietzsche’s man with a lantern, who runs around the market square crying “God is dead!” and “We’ve killed him!”, we bury our innocence and cry for it, not knowing what the future holds for us. We, Germans, can no longer remain under any illusions about the world.

A sentimental identity – full of doubts and questions about ourselves and about European discourse – this could indeed be the “German approach” and Germany’s way of focusing on its own identity. We aim to study the influence of digital media on the theme of identity and how these enable us to escape the confines



Rhine romanticism © Sabria David

of national context to open up to a wider European arena: digital media is subversive and has no limits – thank goodness!

Human communities are founded on discourse

“Human communities are founded on discourse,” write the authors of the Cluetrain Manifesto. This discourse, made possible by digital media, undermines hierarchies and borders. Hyperlinks subvert hierarchy.

Indeed, what form would be as apt to formulate our discourse on identity in this digital era as circles and salons – the literary salon, rooted in European concept. The salon, where philosophers, artists, encyclopaedists, Enlightenment philosophers, musicians, conservatives and revolutionaries all meet. The salon is an arena for social interaction for discussion and exchange. It is also precisely the very essence of the digital cultural space: discourse, dialogue, memetics and flow.

Let’s revive salons! The place where spoken and written words converge. Let us open circles and salons to everyone; let’s not only allow experts and selected guests to express their ideas, but instead listen to anyone who has something to say. This is the



Jean-François de Troy: A Reading of Molière or Reading in a salon © public domain

wonder of digital media: we can open structures and make them permeable, we can change, dare to try new things and see what happens. Long live the digital salon!

References

"Death is a German-born master", Paul Celan in his poem Death Fugue (1948)

www.lyrikline.org/de/gedichte/todesfuge-66#.VZJtbVK8o3g
www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVwLqEHDCQE

"'Where is God?' he cried; 'I will tell you. We have killed him – you and I. All of us are his murderers!..." Friedrich Nietzsche: Aphorism 125, from The Gay Science (La gaya Scienza) (1882)

www.nietzschesource.org/facsimiles/DFGA/FW2,153

"When I think of Germany at night, I suffer from Insomnia"

Heinrich Heine during his period of exile in Paris, with a perspective concerned with objectivity. In the poem Night Thoughts (1844)

de.wikisource.org/wiki/Nachtgedanken_%28Heine%29

Friedrich von Schiller: *On Naive and Sentimental Poetry* (1795)

www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/cgi-bin/neubutton.cgi?pfad=/diglib/aufkl/horen/139961&seite=00000081.TIF

"For me, Germany is Adolf Hitler and Thomas Mann", Marcel Reich-Ranicki in an interview about Germany (2001)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGUmpAzqHS0

PERSONAL PRESENTATION POSTS OF THE SALON PARTICIPANTS (IN GERMAN ONLY)

TALKING OR WRITING ABOUT ONESELF IN THE THIRD PERSON

Dirk von Gehlen

<https://goo.gl/kG06FC>

DO YOU EVEN EXIST, MR. PARK?

Enno Park

<https://goo.gl/OurYmo>

SOMETIMES I GOOGLE MYSELF

Sabria David

<https://goo.gl/HFzSUS>



Link to original version

<https://goo.gl/dOfG4L>

ITALY

MARCO MANCUSO (CURATOR)
FILIPPO LORENZIN (CURATOR)
SILVIO LORUSSO
ALTERAZIONI VIDEO
AOS - ART IS OPEN SOURCE
IOCOSE

THE ART OF DIFFERENCE

The street and Net protests following the inauguration of the Milan 2015 Expo have been the starting point for a reflection on the representations of the Self on the Net in Italy at a time of severe economic crisis and deep changes. The artists rediscover narrative critical aspects in the artistic and cultural fields – which traditionally reflect the context of a country and reveal its moral condition, thereby acting as a guide.

THE ART OF DIFFERENCE. NEW SELF NARRATIVES IN EXPO 2015 ITALY MARCO MANCUSO & FILIPPO LORENZIN

"Art [...] aesthetically reproduces the illusions and mystifications which make up the real essence of this civilisation, in order that Difference may at last be expressed."

Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, p. 293

"A fragile art comes into being when remaining still to not determine this hostile world, or to make it faster than it has ever been, opening it up to the possibilities of a life that is formed. We must give a voice to the surge of our minuscule lives."

Roberto Ciccarelli, *"L'emergenza delle nostre vite minuscole"*, published in *„aut aut“*, n. 365, 12/04/2014

One of the most interesting aspects of our relationship with technology and how we communicate with other people through technology is the way we build up meaning around the narrative of our identities. The internet, social networks and p2p structures have boosted this phenomenon, facilitating the creation of increasingly large networks built around individuals and their personal narratives in relation to virtual (and real) audiences – which are selected on the basis of personal relationships but also increasingly by taking into account social, economic and professional processes. When interacting with other people on the Net, individuals reflect more and more on themselves, carefully choosing contents (whether personal or not) which others may see. This leads to a self-discourse which redefines the whole notions of identity, repetition and difference.

The aim of the Italy Group of the Streaming Egos project, promoted by the Goethe-Institut and taken care of by Marco Mancuso and Filippo Lorenzin at Digicult, is selecting a group of artists to reflect on the representations of the Self on the Net in Italy in the '10s of the new millennium which for the country is a time of severe economic crisis and deep changes in the political, cultural, economic and work sectors.

Although the Italy Group does not intend to provide a detailed account on such a complex and multifaceted topic, it rediscovers narrative critical aspects in the artistic and cultural fields – which traditionally reflect the context of a country and are actively involved in it, revealing its moral condition, acting as a guide and influencing the critical thought of its inhabitants.



157 prepared dc-motors, cotton balls, cardboard boxes 60x20x20cm © Zimoun

Throughout the past five years, these processes have become increasingly complex due to the fact that Net structures are becoming more fluid and unstable with time because governed by complex social structures involving ambiguous behaviour and narratives which are often representative of a shared perception.

The Italy Group urges arts and culture to critically reflect – in an independent and objective manner – on the society we live in. Such reflection should be able to talk about differences and not only identity mechanisms. Such reflection should respect complexity and not leave behind independent thinking. This intention came into being following the inauguration of the Milan 2015 Universal Exposition on May 1st and the No Expo protests surrounding it which resulted in protests also on the Net. This has led to a

clear perception of the gap between cultural avantgarde thinkers, who are struggling to identify and express themselves effectively, and the bourgeois framework, increasingly narrated through the political superstructures governing the country more and more strongly due to the economic crisis.

The representation of self, from static image to narrative

Matching the complexity of this historical period, the representation of self is not only carried out through a single moment in time during which we show ourselves, but is expressed throughout a whole narrative made up of several moments. This is done by means of accurate production and management of public contents (images, videos, articles, links, etc.) that model and shape the perception that others have of us. The tough challenge is building up an image of ourselves on the Net which is complex and multifaceted – a personal narrative which can tell our story. Our goal is creating a “specific” individual, although this individual is inevitably locked up inside a network of individual definitions and behaviours in which one can perceive copying and repeating of other individual features – which are representative for us. According to Erving Goffman, a key figure of symbolic interactionism, identity has a drama feature. The self is the consequence of a performance act – that is to say the way in which we present ourselves in everyday life. Identity is basically projected onto an audience, which is the audience of our theatre play in which we show ourselves to others. On the one hand, the performer is thoroughly involved in his/her performance and is confident that the projection of oneself onto others is genuine; on the other hand, he/she is aware that the actions they use to impress their spectator are nothing but an act. The Canadian sociologist highlights how often this process is put into practice not only out of personal interest but also following the conviction that it may be useful to the audience formed by one's peers.

“When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the tasks that he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be.” (Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1969, p. 28).

The narrative of every individual is therefore equivalent to some type of game, in which participants do not question the rules. If they questioned the legitimacy of such process, they would undermine the whole system underlying it. The story of individuals is therefore a social one, an external and perfect representation of us, sometimes a follower of common values, often dogmatic and influenced by complex interests. This does not necessarily match the internal representation, but is an image



Face to Facebook, mixed media (2011). Mixed media installation at Artists as Catalysts, 2013 exhibition at Alhóndiga, Bilbao – Spain. © Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico



A Contemporary Portrait of the Internet Artist - African artist with paintbrush and ease, 2014. Commissioned oil on canvas copied from digital image downloaded from Getty Images archive, 38 x 28,5 cm © IOCOSE

built up to be effective in the development of private and professional networks. The perceptions of needs, hopes and ambitions are shaped by an “algorithmic society” made up of friends, acquaintances and colleagues who are identified and determined by complex series of codes.

This “algorithmic society” is the result of economic and political interests of multinational companies, that have the ability to monitor our narratives, share them and shape them in relation to our virtual circles – and therefore the ability to transform our narratives into a marketing item to be sold to who offers more

The distorted representation of self – in the relationship between private life and work life

At a time of economic crisis and lack of good work conditions, individuals need to define their own professional identity. The representation of the self on the Net is conveyed through the wish to tell one's own story, making activities and personal

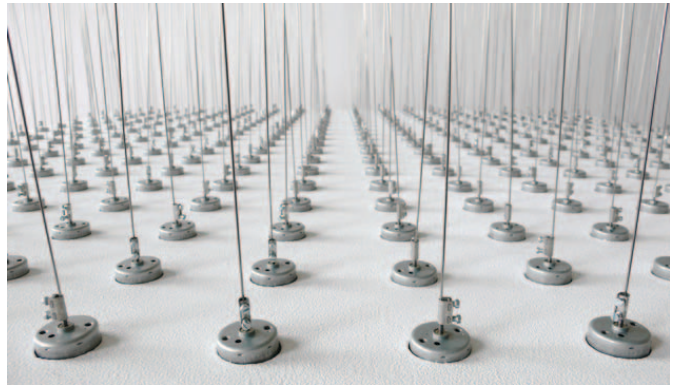
interests known – the goal being the ability to create a profile that stands out and that can potentially influence others. This process is supported by the current IT systems by means of tools quantifying such potentiality with numbers, lists and tags. Before our eyes we have the opportunity to trigger professional networks which may overlap with private ones, telling the story of our individual interests that not only reflect those of a broader community but also match the expectations of our professional field. Undoubtedly, many of us grasp such an opportunity.

“[...] the arts of existence [...] those reflective and voluntary practices by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make of their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria’.”

(Foucault, Michel, *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality: Volume Two*. Vintage Book Editions, translations copyright 1985 by Random House, pp. 10-11)

While, on the one hand, this mechanism works for many people, on the other it may reveal critical aspects and ambiguous representations of the self. As we cannot and do not wish to observe the phenomenon within its social complexity, we may also observe how some “intellectuals” who are in contact with markets such as contemporary music, art, start up culture, design, the maker world – who often use common networks, overlapping market structures, selected meeting points, shared narrative styles – talk about themselves emulating specific avantgarde and counterculture language codes. This appropriation constitutes a dystopic and harmful mechanism both for those “knowledge workers” who represent them independently when they work and in their lives in general and for the creation of a new system of social values and professional opportunities that – in a privileged relationship with banks, companies and art patrons – repeat the classical capitalist pattern of “a-lot-given-to-few”.

The horror of the “intellettuale di se stesso” (“self intellectual”) – as defined by Roberto Ciccarelli in the article “L’emergenza delle nostre vite minuscole”, published in „aut aut“, n. 365, 12/04/2014 – as opposed to the notion of “lavoratore della conoscenza” (“knowledge worker”) “could be explained as the wish to be recognised as a distinct subject, made strong by their “symbolic character”, independent from the “community” of the “unworthy”. This distinction can be obtained through election, or cooptation, by the State. And when this is not possible, this distinction is sought on the market. In both cases, the “unworthy” do not hold citizenship except in the pathetic, compassionate and paternalistic narrations outlined by social-liberal culture. The average attitude of the “self intellectual”, through the grotesque display of their good will, reveals the authoritarian impulse of who intends to reestablish the “normality” of work, family and nation in a common world



361 prepared dc-motors, filler wire 1.0mm (detail), Zimoun 2010. Motors, steel, power supply, wood. Installation view: Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, USA. Dimensions: 59 x 59 x 59" / 150 x 150 x 150cm. File size (photo.jpg): 4224x2376px. © Zimoun

which cannot be governed under these rules.”

The representation of self as a belonging mechanism

The fragility and concern caused by the economic condition of our country have given rise to new representations of the self on the Net. These dystopic forms on the one hand observe the key issues of our country's markets and political and cultural structures, while, on the other, they respect a logic of “belonging” to specific socio-economic classes according to which one's social networks are modified to satisfy mechanisms of benefit and new representation. In other words, what we are looking at is a shift from an old narration of the self to a new one, which selects some of our experience and changes it into something more attractive, efficient and in contact with the contemporary market and political organisations.

For this purpose, Gilles Deleuze puts forward the post-modern idea according to which our lives have to be thought of like a game of differences, therefore breaking off with traditional mental mechanisms based on the principle that we behave and act according to similarity, analogy and identity. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze urges us to learn to treat ourselves, our lives and events which occur to us as external representations (dressing up, moving, “dressed” repetitions) which are possibly unique given their differences. Otherwise the risk is that the “assimilation machine” the machine of copy and analogy – may crush our identities carrying them into a fictitious and illusory world made up of automatisms and so-called “nude” repetitions.

“All identities are only simulated, produced as an optical ‘effect’ by the more profound game of difference and repetition. We propose to think difference in itself independently of the forms of

representation which reduce it to the Same, and the relation of different to different independently of those forms which make them pass through the negative.”(Gilles Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968)

A web page in which every user can look at materials posted by others is a space in which two selection modes come together. On one hand, there is a subjective mode as we decide which personal information to publish and therefore make available to our contacts. On the other hand, there is the selection mode carried out by the online platform, that analyses posted materials and shows us only contents that are potentially interesting for us. This mechanism is put into practice based on several parameters, such as the temporary number of communications between the user and his/her contacts, the potential coverage of the content itself and all the topics which interest us more. Therefore, it appears clear that the setting-up of these materials is not free from external intervention – it is, on the contrary, strongly influenced by the quantifying logic of online services. The two types of selection we have outlined often lead to a flattening of signifiers: most of the materials which are looked at share communication codes and modes, because they are produced to potentially go viral and because those that do are rewarded for it. By telling the story of our memories and existence, we take part in a chain of images (and therefore representations) similar to one another: the result is that although most users try to stand out by posting original materials, this actually leads to a flattening of signifiers. Michel Foucault himself was in favour of undoing the concept of identity, rather than maintaining it or, even worse, creating it. He considers identity a form of subjugation and a way of exercising power, put into practice to prevent the individual from moving out of the limits fixed by customs, society and the dominating social and political context.

“[...] technologies of the self permit individuals to carry out - by their own means or with the help of others - a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality”. (Michel Foucault, „Technologies of the Self. A Seminar With Michel Foucault“, edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton, p.18. Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1988 - Lectures at Vermont University in October 1982)

Representations as new expressions of the social divide

As we mentioned above, this year Milan is hosting the Universal Exposition – one of the biggest cultural and commercial events around the world. The event was inaugurated on May 1st – International Workers’ Day on the same day as the May Day Parade, which has been taking place in Milan for over 20 years



© Ivan Carozzi

now and is the national event representing Italian counter-cultural, opposing and artistic movements. The fact that these two events took place on the same day had immediate repercussions: accounts of the protests and devastation, together with consequent reflection and criticism, constituted the trend topic on the Net for over 72 hours. May 1st this year represented the beginning of a new era in the political and cultural history of our country. Following the May 1st events, we have become aware that a new type of social division exists in Italy – which is not connected to traditional political oppositions such as “right” and “left”, “poor” and “rich”, “people” and “bourgeoisie”, but refers to the narrative, repetition and homogenisation identity processes and the fluid socio-economic models we mentioned earlier on. This division has also involved those who come from the art world or experimental or counterculture milieux and who are now selling such status for the best offer on the marketplace, talking about themselves according to a reward logic and not a difference logic.

The most recent theories on identity study individuals as part of a community of equals and clusters. The focus is moving from personal processing, typical of narrative procedures, towards broader perspectives in which relationships strongly determine the construction of the identity itself. For this purpose, in their essay “Identities and Interactions: An Examination of Human Associations in Everyday Life”, Free Press, 1978, Georgie J. McCall and J.L. Simmons state that “*roles ranked higher will be those supported not only by the individuals but by the surrounding community of reference, providing more significant intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.*”

The way a share of the population narrates the protests (and talks about itself, interpreting the topic) has turned out to be inevitably different from the narration of those who tried to

understand the reasons of the protest itself, accepting its consequences and grasping its complexity. The art world did not – shamefully – take a position: actually, by not openly expressing strong criticism against the economic and political system which supports it, it committed the worst crime. Finally, we should not overlook the aesthetic aspect of the representation (for instance, a girl posing for a photo while leaning on a burned car turned upside down, or the youngsters dressed in black with hoodies and photographed while throwing objects). The symbols and icons on the Net from this day provide an account of opposite forces coexisting in our country today. But this is material for another chapter, maybe less interesting, maybe more. Only if we observe carefully we will be able to tell.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/BIPLD5>

AOS - ART IS OPEN SOURCE

GHOSTWRITER

"Each line requires a pen that tracks it, and each pen requires a hand holding it. What is behind the hand, it's controversial."
Italo Calvino

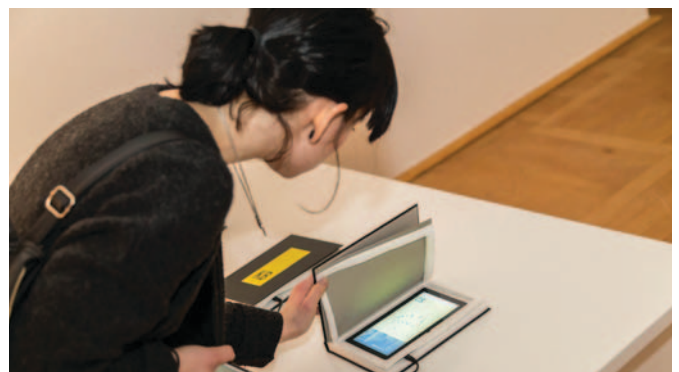
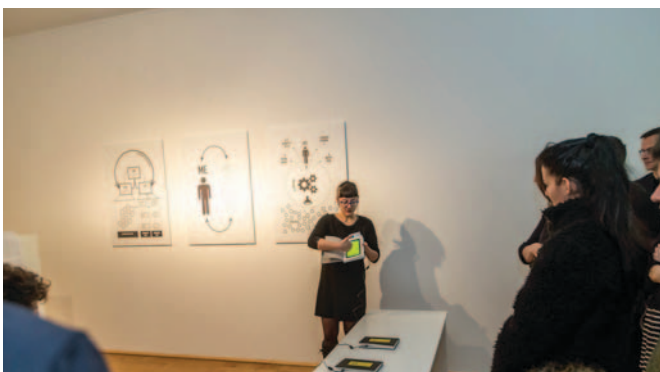
What is an autobiography? Who are its authors? What happens when the 'others' and non-human, algorithmic subjects come into play, increasing the complexity of our interactions and influencing the process of construction/perception of the self?

GhostWriter explores the new boundaries of autobiography in the hyperconnected era describing a new literary genre: the Algorithmic Autobiography. By capturing the digital traces we leave behind in our daily lives, GhostWriter searches for patterns and uses them to create life stories under the form of new types of publications. A reflection about the mutation of identity and the role of data, information, algorithms.



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/klWJNZ>

Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann



ALTERAZIONI VIDEO RAISE THE BAR

"We believe everyone can be the world's best at something. Our mission is to raise the bar of human achievement."
RecordSetter (recordsetter.com)

I've always thought I was better than average - actually, the best. I started off by winning bets at the bar for the hilarity of overdoing it, but then I never managed to stop. I write using my hands

and feet at the same time, I tow my car with my beard and last night I kicked my forehead 127 times in one minute. Not bad, I'll give it another try today.



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/U4xPm>

Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann



IOCOSE

A CONTEMPORARY SELF-PORTRAIT OF THE INTERNET ARTIST

Canvas titles

"Artist Portrait with a Colourful Background"

"Artist Working in Studio"

"Artist Painting on Canvas"

"Artist Drawing on Paper"

"A Contemporary Self-Portrait of the Internet Artist" is a continuation on IOCOSE's portraits of internet artists. The project questions how the different modes of being artists in the internet age could be portrayed. In this new cycle, IOCOSE have represented

themselves on digital photographs while pretending to be working as stereotypical artists, with brushes and canvases. Their photos, labelled with the 'artist' tag, have been uploaded on and accepted by stock photo service Shutterstock. Once made available to the public, the photos were sent by IOCOSE to an online painting service which could reproduce them on canvas. The final outcome is a collection of canvases representing the four members of IOCOSE as they appeared on the stock photo service under the 'artist' category.



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/7Ge1MV>

Davide, Filippo, Matteo, Paolo © IOCOSE



SILVIO LORUSSO

FAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT

Fake it till you make it. Act as if it were true until it actually becomes true. Sometimes recommended as a way to cope with depression, 'fake it till you make it' is also a common catchphrase in the field of startups. Here, it refers to the strategy of pretending that the product is already functional in order to make it more appealing to investors. Fake It Till You Make It features excerpts of interviews with Jody Sherman and Austen Heinz,

both CEOs of tech startups who committed suicide while leading their companies. In an age when everyone is required to be an entrepreneur of the self, Fake it Till You Make It focuses on the gloomy relationships between the relentless optimism of entrepreneurship and the structural and social pressures that founders and CEOs constantly face.



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/5lBwfv>

Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann



HOW IT STARTED: “ITALIANS ON THE NET: FROM THE DIGITAL PIAZZA TO SELF-BRANDING”

MARCO MANCUSO & FILIPPO LORENZIN

Speaking about digital identity in Italy may lead us to assume that such identity constitutes a special case compared to what has developed in other countries throughout the last decade. Of course, this is not true – although during the last 10 to 15 years Italy has built up a controversial and partly unique relationship with the Net, social networks and more generally speaking with open and p2p structures compared to many other European countries.

Indeed, on one hand we have experienced at least two “waves” of artists (often linked – because of their education – to counter-cultures and avant-garde experimentation), who have related to the Net and its structures in a critical manner regarding the concept of identity (and not only identity). Nevertheless, it is also true that Italy’s leaning towards populist talk and an enthusiastic and “functional” representation of the self – bearing in mind that this has been boosted by the severe economic crisis and the definite loss of structure of the political, cultural, economic and work contexts – has found a perfect match in the tendency of networks to select (in an algorithmic and/or personal manner) one’s circles on the basis of personal relationships but also more and more within a logic driven by social, economic and professional processes



#bedroom #droneselfie #intimesofpeace © IOCOSE

terms of a representation and narration of the self (or of a fictitious version of the self) presented to others. Works such as *Darko Maver* (1998-1999), *Life Sharing* (2000-2003), *Portraits* (2006-2007), *No Fun* (2010), *My Generation* (2010), *Emily’s Video* (2012) are key examples of this. Paolo Cirio even goes beyond the use of a single type of media and focuses on the computer environment made up of data flows. His approach is often political, and social, and comes from his experience in the [epidemic] group – which acts against the Net’s economic and political macrostructures. As stated by Tatiana Bazzichelli in a historic interview on Digicult, “Paolo Cirio strategically places some parts of a jigsaw puzzle that can only be completed by directly involving its reference points, whether it is the corporations, the media systems or the so-called ‘users’ of the ‘net’”. On this matter, we must mention works such as *People Quote People* (2007), *Open Society Structures* (2009), *Face to Facebook* (2011), *Street Ghosts* (2012) and the more recent *Overexposed* (2015).

We should also recall the works of Molleindustria (literally “soft/weak industry”), an online radical video-gaming project by Paolo Pedercini

– who has always tackled big social and political issues, such as job insecurity and alienation linked to work, religious divergences (whether spiritual or not) and satirical simulations of processes involving the intervention of some big multinational companies. Looking at the work *Mayday NetParade* (2004) today reminds us of the need to establish a definite “self-portrait of the new temporary workers” and to attempt to “auto-represent” counter-cultures – the incongruity with what happened on May 1st 2015 in Milan, when the Expo was inaugurated, is obvious to everyone. Other examples, in recent years, are research by Mauro Ceolin, *the Les Liens Invisibles*, Marco Cadioli and Salvatore Iaconesi who in 2012 – for the first time in history – hacked his medical file, sharing his brain tumor with the rest of the network with the project „*La Cura - My Open Source Cure*”: a biopolitic

Art and criticism on the Net in new millennium Italy

Here we could celebrate Italy as one of the European countries that has reflected the most – artistically speaking – on how the Internet has been changing, both from a technological perspective and a social and political one. For instance, Eva and Franco Mattes (<http://0100101110101101.org/>, members of the historic group of artists, activists, writers and performers Luther Blisset, also at the origin of the author group Wu Ming) have been working on the ideas of representation on the Net, identity and copy since 2000. They have reflected not only on the invasive aspect of the Internet in our lives but primarily on how the individual (sometimes the artist himself) relates to the Internet in

performance in which the disease is at the center of society and the re-appropriation/socialization of data becomes the metaphor and the starting point to reclaim the human being and its complexity.

Over the years, well-known critics, journalists and scholars have attempted to “tell the story” of this artistic phenomenon and reflect on the topics deriving from it: Alessandro Ludivico, director and founder of *Neural*; Marco Deseriis, researcher and author of the reference text “*Net.Art: L’arte della Connessione*” (*Net.Art: The Art of Connection*) written in 2008 with Giuseppe Marano; Tatiana Bazzichelli, a critic, scholar and activist and recently the author of the book “*Networking. La Rete come arte*” (*Networking. The Net as Art*); Valentina Tanni, historic writer of *Random Magazine* and *Artribune* and the author of the project “*The Great Wall of Memes*” (2014-2015); Franziska Nori, the curator of the group *I love You* (2002, 2004), one of the first exhibitions in Italy on these topics; Domenico Quaranta, who recently launched the *Link Art Center* with Fabio Paris and who some years ago curated two key exhibitions, *Connessioni Leggendarie. Net.art 1995-2005* (*Legendary Connections. Net.art 1995-2005*, with Luca Lampo who is also a former member of [epidemiC]), and *Game Scenes*, within the 2005 Piemonte Share Festival (which resulted in the book *Gamescenes. Art in the Age of Videogames* with Matteo Bittanti, 2006). We should also mention figures who are more closely linked to the social and political discourse, for instance Jaromil and the Dyne.org foundation, that has been carrying out research and development on free and open source software and platforms since 2000, the *San Precario* (“*precario*” being a temporary worker) and *Serpica Naro* networks, Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi’s *Orfeo Tv* or the Ippolita books – the group which produced the texts *Open non è Free* (*Open is not Free*) and *Nell’acquario di Facebook* (*In the Facebook Aquarium*). Last but not least, we would like to mention Antonio Caronia’s reflections on virtual bodies. Antonio Caronia was an essayist, academic and journalist who died recently and to whom we would like to dedicate these thoughts.

Italian users – between local and global

We had to be thorough in our selection and we are aware that, despite the quality and quantity of thoughts published on the



McDonald's Videogame, 2006 © Molleindustria



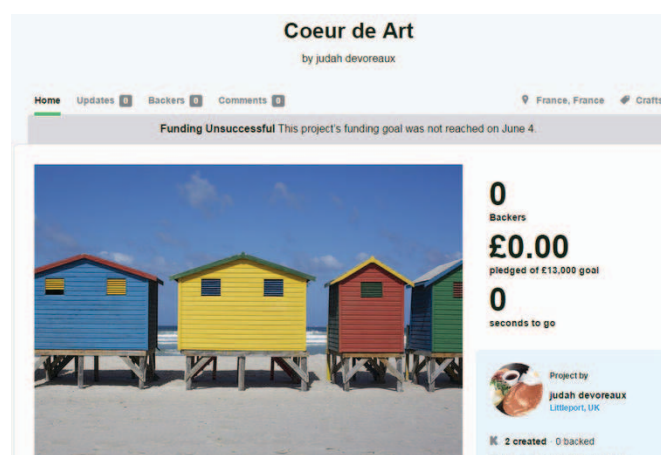
12 Cheshire Street, London - Link Street View from 2012 dalla serie *Street Ghosts*, 2012 © Paolo Cirio

topic, there is growing bewilderment among Italians concerning their relationship to identity on the Net. Online, Italians behave adopting patterns which come from their social customs: as if using their hands to “mime” also when on the Internet, they show themselves to the public, often appearing as what they are not, speaking about several topics and expressing opinions on everything. This way, they blend into new social environments, which are functional for their own narrative, whether private or professional. They play uncritically with visual languages and

codes that are nowadays shared on a global scale. It is as if many of the themes covered throughout the years by our artists, critics, curators and scholars were less appealing – less interesting for the collectivity – and almost outdated compared to new self-narrative models on the Net that leak more easily into the broad networks of cultural innovation, open culture and net economy.

If we look more closely at the concept of identity, it is linked to the concept of person, and going back to Greek this brings us to the idea of mask – that is to say the layers that cover, whether consciously or not, what in western culture is considered the authentic element. Nature before the individual. Indeed, today Italians on the Net behave as if they were a “mask”, both in the sense of “wearing” a mask (concealing their true identity) and of “being” a “character”, often a “trace” of oneself frequently displaying excessive peculiarities and narratives.

On this subject, the period from 2008 to 2009 was the moment in history when the increased popularity of new online collective structures could be perceived collectively. This corresponds to when Facebook became widespread not only amongst the so-called “native digitals” – a generic umbrella term which is useful for our analysis – but also in the older generations. This was one of the reasons for the existence of two differing approaches towards the Net, which in 2015 communicate with one another in a fairly direct way: the use of the Net in the work environment – and not only for personal purposes. In recent years, there has increasingly been overlapping between our work lives and our personal lives, between the time spent at the office and our leisure time. This has led to one extending onto the other and ultimately to a shift in our time management. Today, nearly ten years on, smartphones have become the new collective object of veneration, ensuring around-the-clock connectivity. On one hand, therefore, there is an idea of Net as “*digital piazza*” and “democratic” place, in which a simple logic flattens out the differences between individuals, making them users with equal dignity who share the possibility of expressing their most personal identities without the mediation of the “real world”. On the other hand, there is the idea promoted by the system, that is to say the “branding” of oneself with well-calculated care, often using specific tools such as Klout or Google Analytics. These all



Kickended © Silvio Lorusso

constitute steps in the storytelling of one's experience.

The full-time intellectual

This phenomenon also includes intellectuals, whose popular legitimation is in Italy almost always conveyed through their positions in discussions on the most debated current news stories. Whether it is politics or social topics, sport or cheap humour, they have to be able to manage their characters to avoid coming across as figures belonging to a grey zone which cannot be easily defined. Being on the side of “the people” (and, in a more sophisticated manner, on the side of the “counter-cultures” and the “artistic avant-garde” from which codes, languages and networks can be taken) has constituted, especially in recent years, a fast and simple way to revamp declining careers. Or to spark new and unexpected ones. In this sense, therefore, we have experienced some narrative issues in the arts and culture worlds. The social support structures that according to traditions and goals should reflect and be actively involved in the actual status quo of a country – defining its moral status, acting as a guide and mapping out the critical thought of the people who live in it – have been affected by increasingly fluid and unstable Net structures over the past five years, marked out by complex social structures and ambiguous narrations and behaviours which are often representative of a shared perception.

Be Italian: the new generation artists

In this sense it is comforting (but not astonishing) to see how some Italian artists belonging to the second wave have the energy to reflect on the new ways of representing the self on the Net. Their way of carrying out artistic action is often ironic, strongly aesthetic and careful about the complexity of the current era, without however taking the risk of “reducing” narration to a technical and/or interpretative exercise. This is perhaps because they grew up in a more international environment, through which they came into contact with different languages and studies or maybe because they are the offspring of the current economic and political crisis. They narrate by carefully observing and meditating, reflecting and fiercely denouncing with disappointment and anger the current status quo of Italian art, society and culture.

One of the most well-known examples of this in Italy and abroad is definitely IOCOSE, i.e. Matteo Cremonesi, Filippo Cuttica, Davide Prati and Paolo Ruffino. They are spread out across Europe and founded the group in 2006. Since then they have produced works reflecting the disenchantment of a generation that grew up dipped in nineties “technocentric” optimism. They do not believe in the legitimacy of the main narrations provided by the system or by the utopias, and their – often distressed – language often conveys such disillusionment. Some examples of this are *Yes We Spam!* (2008), *A Crowded Apocalypse* (2012) and *In Times of Peace* (2014).

Another group which is spread out worldwide is Alterazioni Video (Video Alterations). Its current members are Paololuca Barbieri Marchi, Alberto Caffarelli, Andrea Masu and Giacomo Porfiri, and since 2004 they have been producing videos, installations and relational works that very often focus on specific situations relating to Italian society. The project *Incompiuto Siciliano* (literally “Incomplete Sicilian”) is an example of this tradition. It began in 2006, with the aim of keeping track of the big incomplete public works that are scattered around Italy (the so-called “*ecomostri*”, or else “*environmental monsters*”), thereby giving them new aesthetic and artistic dignity.



Bambinopoli Incompiuto siciliano © Alterazioni Video



Salvatore Iaconesi at 2013 in Edinburgh, Scotland. June 12-15, 2013. © James Duncan

Silvio Lorusso belongs to the same generation but tackles different issues. Both an artist and a designer, in his works he combines an extraordinary talent for closely observing specific topics and a way of expressing himself which is always astonishing and never didactic. For instance, in *Kickended* (2014) he gathers a large quantity of crowdfunding campaigns which did not manage to raise a single penny on Kickstarter. The project, which uses graphics and mechanisms that immediately remind us of the American platform, mocks with bitterness the (not kept) promise of economic success which is at the basis of the neoliberal narrative of these platforms.

It is difficult to define and categorize the work of Salvatore Iaconesi, artist, hacker, designer, activist who, with Oriana Persico, launched the international platform/network Art Is Open Source. Salvatore and Oriana explore the mutation of the human being with the advent and widespread accessibility of networks and ubiquitous technologies. AOS promotes and implements a possibilist vision of the world in which art acts as a binder between different disciplines, creating global performances like *Angel_F* (2007) and *Enlarge Your Consciousness 4 Day 4 Free* (2012). In their case, code and binary expression algebraically represent a narrative of our lives that shines spontaneously through „encoded interstices of our city, of our lives, of private and public spaces where we dedicate ourselves to work, consumerism and the narrative function of ourselves“.

To them, a code, some data or a binary expression are algebraically representative of a narration of our lives, of a representation of our identities – which reveals itself naturally through the “codified interstices of our cities, of our lives, of our private and public spaces in which we devote our time to work, consumerism and the functional narration of ourselves”.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/oDjoNL>

PORTUGAL

SANDRA VIEIRA JÜRGENS (CURATOR)
ANDRÉ ALVES
CLAUDIA FISCHER
PAULO MENDES
PEDRO PORTUGAL

MUTANT GEOGRAPHIES

The Portuguese country circle explores the country's representation and identities in the digital age. How do Europe, Portugal and the other European countries present themselves in the cultural digital sphere? Which view on our country do we want to convey? How do we see Europe and the other European countries?

The four participating artists have designed their projects particularly with regard to their digital representation. A team of web designers cooperated with the artists in order to realize the projects and their transformation into the digital media.



raum.pt/en/streaming-egos

NOTES ON MUTANT GEOGRAPHIES

SANDRA VIEIRA JÜRGENS

The collective endeavour *Mutant Geographies* was the result of the first phase of the Portuguese contribution to the international project, *Streaming Egos – Digital Identities*. Using the theme proposed by the project's curatorship, that of reflecting upon the world of digital identities, we wanted to focus on issues related to Portugal and Europe's identity and how they are represented during a time strongly characterised by transnational and relational culture.

We invited the artists André Alves, Claudia Fischer, Paulo Mendes and Pedro Portugal to devise digital projects that, in some way, reflected their perspectives on the theme and characteristics of their art. Although these artists do not usually work with digital forms, the resulting online artistic projects were fascinating. The premise was not to turn physical projects into digital ones, but rather to create possibilities, so that new types of artistic intervention specifically produced for that environment could be developed. These could then take visual, written, sound, cinematographic or other forms, specifically produced for the online platform. And, indeed, as this project has demonstrated, for many creative professionals working primarily with physical materials and spaces, this is a medium that offers a multitude of opportunities for research and intervention.

Paulo Mendes and Pedro Portugal essentially employed the notion of digital archive for creative and documentary-like work on the issue of Portuguese and European (self)-representation in the world, which covered past and present moments in a chronological sequence. In *Europa Augen*, Pedro Portugal created an archival and retrospective record of promotional video clips from each country for the Eurovision Song Contest from 1970 to 2015. With his work, *Policy of the People, proposals for atemporal tourism in Portugal*, Paulo Mendes essentially focussed on the question of how we project ourselves and the construction of images of Portuguese identity, harking back to the dictatorial Estado

Novo period to highlight the changes and continuities of that image building to the present day.

In the much vaster context of *Closer to Home*, Claudia Fischer appropriated photographs taken at observatories in different cities around the world. In *Identities*, André Alves dealt with mistrust regarding the assumption of national identity in times of digital culture and focussed primarily on the contemporary individual, their condition and relational experience in/with the digital world.

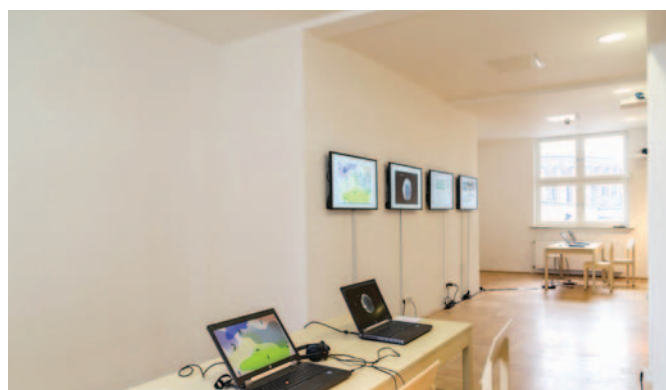
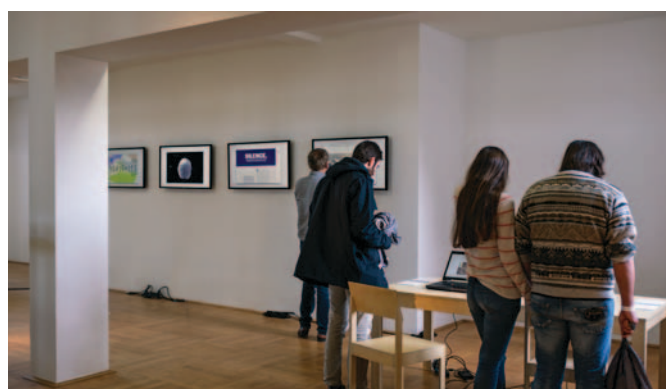
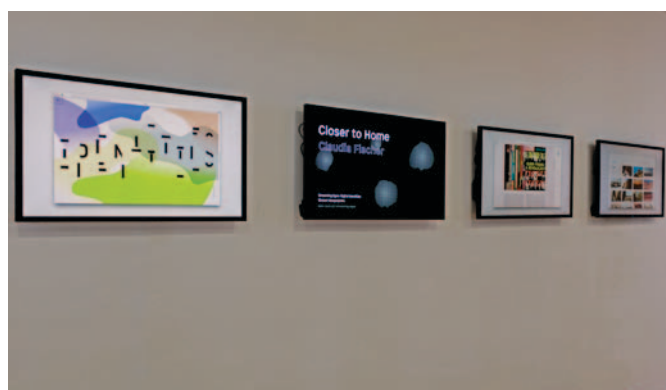
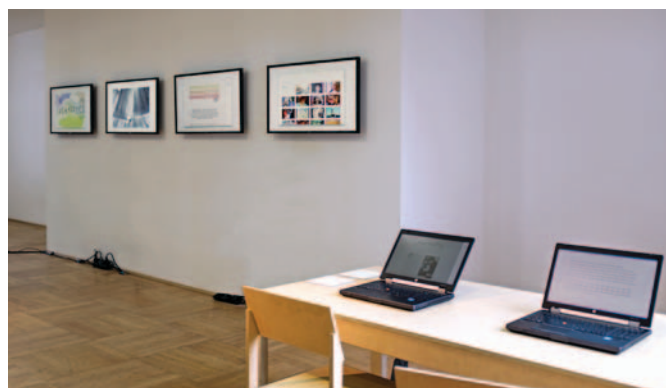
Although each individual project represents different, unique perspectives, all used resources and tools provided by the web. This involved the appropriation of images and video from an unlimited data bank, with a clear tendency for editing images and text fragments in contemporary artistic endeavour, such as the construction of narratives through the selection, treatment and creative organisation of material based on the proliferation and dissemination of images that distinguish the digital media scenario.

The work of the four artists will be presented on the **raum: online artistic residencies platform**, which hosts artistic residencies and changes the original meaning of fixed and temporary residency spaces; extending it into the virtual world, trialling new forms of artistic reflection and intervention, with various types of research associated with digital arts. The work of the **v-a Studio** (Lisbon – Portugal) was key to the final result.

This communication design studio helped produce the artists' projects and was responsible for the consistency and coherence of the visual identity, graphic and web design of these *Mutant Geographies*.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/ncNPVf>



Installation of "Mutant Geographies" in Streaming Egos Convention.
photo 1 & 2 © Paulo Mendes
photo 3 & 4 © Melanie Stegemann

PAULO MENDES

POLICY OF THE PEOPLE, PROPOSALS FOR ATEMPORAL TOURISM IN PORTUGAL

This project is about the construction Portugal's identity – identities, iconographies, codes, symbolic rhetoric from the Estado Novo era up to the democratic present: the geographical sphere, marked by a pattern; the percentage changes of a curve on a Cartesian plane intended to make explicit the properties of a function; history sold as deceptive advertising, lost in an email spam folder, historical lies reduced to electronic rubbish. National

monuments of patriotic incontinence! Political identity, touristic identity, international identity: "Portugal is not a small country".



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/Og3esE>



PEDRO PORTUGAL

EUROPA AUGEN

In 1955, BBC staffer George Campey proposed the name EUROVISION to the Corporation's management as a snappier alternative to the initial title "Continental Television Exchange Song Contest". The BBC accepted the name, although it continued to use the longer version in official documents. EUROPA AUGEN is a project in which the images used to introduce the songs from the EUROVISION contests from 2004 to 2015 are combined and edited to

create a record in the likeness of the flag proposed by Koolhaas and the digital standardisation employed in bar codes and data storage.



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/rIha2f>

The graphic features a light blue background with a faint, stylized map of Europe. Overlaid on this is the text 'Europa Augen' in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below it, 'Pedro Portugal' is written in a smaller, black, outlined sans-serif font.

Europa Augen
Pedro Portugal

Streaming Egos: Digital Identities
Mutant Geographies
www.raum.pt/streaming-egos

CLAUDIA FISCHER

CLOSER TO HOME

Closer to home is part of the research project investigating concepts of periphery and deals with our perception of the world as a grid of parallels and meridians. The viewer becomes something of a traveler, moving between the familiar and the strange, and between the self and the other, a reciprocal relationship in which identity is constantly reinvented.



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/Cyr3yM>

Closer to Home

Claudia Fischer

Streaming Egos: Digital Identities
Mutant Geographies

www.raum.pt/streaming-egos

ANDRÉ ALVES

IDENTITIES

Identities was born of an interest in the relationship between contemporary subjects and the status of words and text, their importance and the evolution of their potential in the new media landscape. Foregoing solutions of a visual nature, Identities began as a collection of written poems, aphorisms and thoughts surrounding these relationships. These purely textual/poetic interpretations quickly turned into acoustic and visual

explorations using simple resources and the collaborative opportunities provided by the internet, becoming in the process a commentary on the impact of these devices.



Link to the project
<https://goo.gl/n17M1V>

Identities

André Alves

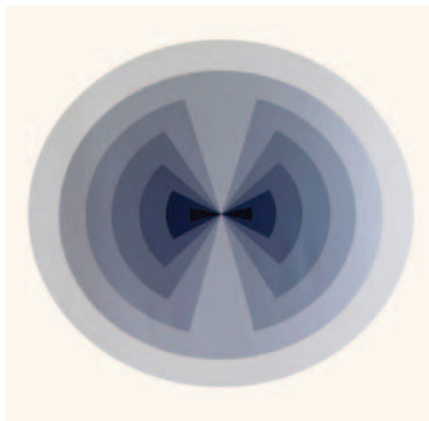
Streaming Egos: Digital Identities
Mutant Geographies
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HOW IT STARTED: “THE STATE OF THE ART”

SANDRA VIEIRA JÜRGENS

In artistic creation, the transition from the analog to the digital era has engendered a significant transformation of production tools available, some of which are out of the ordinary. We now have new digital devices and new forms of art, including net art and digital art, which are only the most visible parts of the profoundly changing technical environment within the artistic world.

Indeed, the most remarkable sign of this shift towards the electronic era was the upsurge, during the 1990s, of new ways of making and exhibiting art, associated with artistic practices developed using new media and genres, especially net art, and which create great expectations of change, including the idea of changing the status of traditional media for visual arts, painting and sculpture. And therein surely lies one of the most interesting utopic aspects of these new creative paradigms. Furthermore, as in previous times, the most recent transformations in the means of producing and distributing artistic creations have led to a project of emancipation and democratic aspiration that goes beyond the purely instrumental objectives of increased formal freedom.



Quarto Minguante, 2014
© Mafalda Santos

Just like avant-garde Soviet cinema, or Walter Benjamin's perspective, written in the form of an essay – according to which the unlimited technical reproducibility of a work of art will tend to reduce or weaken the “aura” of the original – the transformations produced in the art world due to the emergence of new technical forms of communication have a wider reach. It is also important to mention the importance of the use of video in the fields of neo-avant-garde, mail art, magazine projects and artists' books, along with interventions via other means of communication, which are the historical precedents of a critical direction towards developing new means and channels for electronic sending (distribution) and receiving. By personifying the emergence of a new culture in the global era, net art positioned a critique of the political and economic spheres, of the ways in which artistic institutions and the market function, as well as the logic of art production, distribution and commercialisation. Digital communities are

very active and tend to be based on cooperative organisation. They are committed to promoting the creation of online platforms for the production and exhibition of net art community projects, and have been developed with the aim of expanding the public space and creating an alternative means to the traditional broadcasting channels. This was a time of gloriously unbounded and autonomous territory, inaccessible to the institution-art duality and its stabilized forms of intervention. Net art did not

need museums in which to be showcased, and this new culture created an open and decentralized panorama, based on principles of multiplicity and plurality, rather than uniformity, under art production and disclosure regimes that are flexible rather than uniform or centralised. Intangible media made commercialisation difficult and challenging, and the technology opened up new possibilities for experimenting and sharing work in a free network along with direct communication with the public.

In Portugal, there has not really been a shared Internet art practice, nor a tradition of art projects or structures associated with digital culture in the world of art. Not even in the period known as the “heroic”

period of net art (1994-2000), during which its presence in the artistic panorama was residual. In the field of contemporary art, the Virose Project was the most striking. Begun in 1997 by Miguel Leal, Fernando José Pereira and Cristina Mateus, this collective project engendered, among other things, the creation of a virtual platform and community, which can still be accessed today (at www.virose.pt): a production support, presenting and showcasing art made using both old and new media, focusing particularly on influences between art and technique and digital art. By proposing theoretical and practical dimensions as preferential approach axes, this project involved numerous participants, artists, programmers, architects and creators in other fields, in developing and managing a server that provides various software tools and participative and collaborative possibilities targeting various fields, in particular an E-zine (www.virose.pt/vector): a database comprising projects and written and electronic documents

focusing on knowledge, exchange and sharing and transferring of experiences and skills among the many actors involved in the arts world.

However, in retrospect, we see that once again the dream of being on the front lines of many of these recent trends in the arts world has never really come true. Despite the impact of digital and rhizomatic procedures in the panorama of arts, the development of specific projects on the Internet has not really been legitimized in the circuit and has not weakened the position of traditional media. On an international scale, new institutions have emerged, such as the Zentrum für Kunst und Medien-technologie (ZKM) and communities such as Rhizome, which still remain references in this field, but the museums and galleries – if they ever were open to such practices – have lost any interest in exploring these avenues.

Even more defining for the arts world have been the communication models used within these community networks and cultural changes in this electronic distribution era. Regarding the dissemination of images, IT resources have created new possibilities for archiving, managing albums, incorporating images in documents and broadcasting images and historical video artworks or new artworks on various online platforms and channels. New alternative platforms for exchange and presenting videos and images that break from traditional types have emerged, such as MySpace, YouTube, Flickr and Instagram, along with social distribution platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr, which now work as means of publicly exhibiting artistic practices.

Consequently, the appearance of the term “post-Internet art” seems entirely natural to distinguish a new situation linked to a historical moment affirming net art. Today, there is less definition and more diversity and complexity in the convergences between resources and media. Even when artists use traditional means of creation to express themselves, this does not prevent them from working within production contexts that are characterised by the most recent technological advances. Digital technologies have been shown to be essential tools used in working conditions and relations, as they provide access to information, knowledge and a limitless bank of images. In some cases, we can observe the use of tools that imitate traditional techniques, such

as David Hockney’s digital paintings or the works of Portuguese designer Jorge Colombo, who uses iPhone or iPad software (apps) to develop his sketches. It is also possible to take photos with a computer or mobile phone, or to make a video with a digital camera, to cite but a few of the various new ways to paint, photograph and film.



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/6nPLa7>

SPAIN

MATEO FEIJÓO (CURATOR)
MONOPERRO
SONIA GÓMEZ
CARLOS ROD
DR. KUROGO
VIC SNAKE
PLASTIQUE FANTASTIQUE

THE BODY, TERRIBLE TOOL OF THE DIGITAL PROCESS

We are supernatural, a prosthesis of the “I”, a supplement to our incapacity to build something definitive. The Streaming Egos platform is a gyrating device, making visible the flexible, circular, reversible quality of digital, but also social and political norms imposed as identity.

A process of thought, experimentation, asking about ourselves and the net – who are we in the public space, under the eye of state moral, and who are we in private, subject only to our own mistreated conscience.

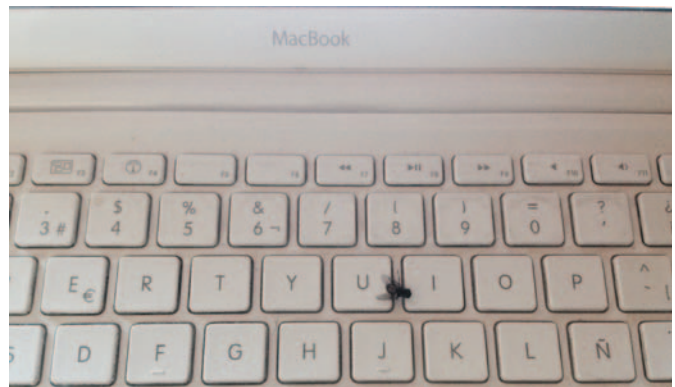
INTRODUCTION

MATEO FEIJÓO

I try to look back and think about the development process of Streaming Egos in Spain. But it's not easy. The feelings rush forward, like a rollercoaster of images happening at great speed. I try to stop the machine, look ahead, the computer screen white and blank, with barely two lines of text in Cambria font size 12.

Suddenly, a thought. What was my identity throughout this process? I do not know. I do not recognise my identity as a curator of the Streaming Egos project. I try to see through the skin of my typing fingers on the white keyboard of a white MacBook. Could the white colour be my identity? Could white be the colour of my identity? Could that be the reason why white is so present on Streaming Egos? Could I, as a curator, have transferred white to the project, contaminated it with white? The white colour in things... This phrase has haunted me for years. The white colour in things... to which I sometimes add: and the blood. The white colour in things and the blood.

We actually produce contents in a manner that is pornographic, disproportionate, uncontrollable, in a way that exceeds the capacity of the media outlets. This forces us to find new media: traditional ones such as a museum or a gallery are not useful to us, and in many cases they do not accept many new works due to a lack of critical consensus, lack of market demand, lack of will... For all these reasons, many artists and their projects are forced to find new means of producing and presenting art, whereas the media contribute to the technological development by stressing the tragedy and the grotesque, by bombarding us with images which are purely media-oriented or artistic, without any distinction. Javier Panera describes the situation as follows: *"Today, tragedy is subject to overexposure, it is in fact omnipresent in the media, and this prevents the process of emotional catharsis which for a certain period of time some attributed, as a nigh on miraculous power, to the arts: the continued vision of tragic events and the overexposure of said events has anesthetised our emotions*



© Mateo Feijóo

and forced us all (both creators and the audience) to escape by rushing headlong in search of 'fireworks', 'retinal masturbations' and special effects as a crude compensation strategy."

A fly buzzes around me as I paste Panera's quote from his book *Las emociones como arma de resistencia* ("Emotions as a weapon for resistance"). The whole business with the fly is just absurd. You may not understand it, but right now the fly is absolutely the main character, and has appropriated identity in its entirety. It forces me to perform a dance of arms and hands, perhaps I unconsciously wish to catch it mid-flight, as if by chance; but I also know it is not possible, because, while I have not stopped typing, I also cannot stop thinking about it. It traces circles, does pirouettes, lands on the upper right corner of the screen, its wings making that fluttering sound so characteristic of its kind. It looks so black against the computer's white corner! It envelops me in a wide circle and lands on my right shoulder. I involuntarily raise that shoulder and the fly takes flight with a certain grace, lands on the window, comes back to me. It lands on my left forearm. I have paused a while, focussed on the fly, slowly moving

my left forearm forward, then my right hand approaches it and with a sudden jerk, almost a spasm, SLAP! the fly is brought down, falls on my white keyboard, moves its legs, I continue to type by pushing it aside, I take a picture of it, I pick it up by one of its wings between my thumb and my index finger and I chuck it in the bin. I think that the picture/digital art piece could be entitled *Fly brought down over white keyboard*.

I stop again and wonder if there's any sense in what I'm typing. I tell myself: I am talking about the process. I type and imagine I am Sonia articulating a text/choreographic writing of a moment in time. Sonia imagines scenes for a possible art piece based on drawings by Monoperro. Dr. Kurogo is an obedient artist; like the rest of the Dada movement, he creates his pieces following instructions. In the early 1960s, the Fluxus movement and conceptual art emphasised a series of variations on instructions and focussed on the concept, the event and the participation of the audience, as opposed to art conceived as an item in and of itself. As a curator, I follow previous instructions by Anna Maria, and then focus on searching for artists to discuss identity, and create with them an event where the audience can take part. Streaming Egos Madrid is where the event has come full circle. All of us, both audience and creators, have taken part. All of us are depicted in the white space that is *Plastique Fantastique*, a uterus-like space where, one by one, all the layers have been left as if they were sediments: The "anal identity" drawings by Monoperro, Sonia's dance/writing, Anto Lloveras's videos, Dr. Kurogo's sounds, Vic Snake's triptych with the white Three Graces who watch disengaged from the rest, but always present from behind, feeling like someone's breath on the back of our heads. Carlos Rod returns and becomes present, invites us to talk, talks to us about that solitary team that is Streaming Egos, a group of strangers who work solo and make their thoughts public on the blog. Carlos watches from the shadows, from a grey, slippery nowhere which allows him to see how time gradually wears away and

reconfigures new spaces, other consequences. He navigates and penetrates social media, but goes unnoticed by the group. He watches us from the cloud. He is there, but at the same time he isn't. Only I know of his silent presence.

Digital tools, such as a PC connected to the Internet, give you a capacity for action which is very much along the lines of Hegel's view of individualism. As unique individuals, we have delved into the white bubble, the inflatable uterus; some decided to get makings, some tattoo a spot or a cross based on Vic Snake and the presence of his tattooed Three Graces. We all take pictures, small works of art that we then circulate on social media. Maybe we are fighting to show what is not visible amidst the confusion that surrounds us; the range of artistic expressions is immensely varied and rich and I wonder whether critics, video and the Internet help us in the process to build our identity.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE SPANISH WORKS

A PROCESS BY MONOPERRO, DR. KUROGO AND SONIA GÓMEZ, WITH A PHOTOGRAPH BY OPHELIA AND TEXTS BY ANGÉLICA BECKETT.

MONOPERRO - 1



I don't notice it, I know about it because other people have told me, but I don't feel like that. And I only notice it when I try to delve, organise, make a final decision, it is then that I am aware of how difficult it is for me to really make it, because, if it were up to me, I'd still be going over the materials in my head, over and over again, and I could never finish anything.

Procrastination, they call it.

It generates an enormous amount of energy. This happens, for example, at shows where the audience believes there is improvisation, but there isn't, there's a script and, though I sometimes ignore it for a moment, I always come back to it. All that energy comes from my personal chaos and my characteristic spontaneity and, as a result of that, real accidents always happen.

These accidents cause the show to pause for a moment; with the time sequence on stage suspended, the show needs to find a link to the present moment in order to solve the issue, and to be able to continue with the script and the time on stage as established beforehand by the team. These digressions create an atmosphere of light, casual entertainment, as if anything could happen. And, needless to say, I love that. Although it can make for very stressing moments, even for the audience, they are so real, so beautiful, so present-moment, so necessary. I've always had this kind of thing happen to me, at the beginning it felt more like a conspiracy of the gods, but over time I have come to realise that it happens naturally, as something implicit in the show, and therefore related to my own personality.

My nature is pretty emotional, visceral and intuitive rather than mental, reflective, analytical or systematic.

And that's how the pieces have gradually come to be, with many elements either interconnected or disconnected from each other.

In everyday order and disorder, chaos is dynamic and linked to searching and researching, to intuition, freedom, emotion and muscle.

DR. KUROGO - 1



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/VXzJ1m>

SONIA GÓMEZ - 0

CHAOS AND ACCIDENTS

This is what happens in my everyday life, in those moments when I need to decide whether to do this or that, when I need to decide what is best... do this or that or what...

It's being in a constant state of chaos, but unaware of it; because

MONOPERRO - 2



DR. KUROGO - 2



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/Aasmbt>

SONIA GÓMEZ - 1

CLIP-RESPONSE-POSITION 1-MONOPERRO

This position is a vibrating bundle that slowly moves under a piece of fabric while a dog eats some sausages. When he's done eating, he pulls the fabric and we see the position.

The dog and his trainer come out of the space.

The uncovered body remains in the exact position proposed by Monoperro.

.Other bodies gradually arrive; some are clothed, others are not, all are in that position.

Let's call it position 1.

From position 1 the following are formed:

- Individual figures with different parts of the body, for example: hands behind their knees, legs together covering their face, hands covering their ears, their eyes, in their hair etc.; folded arms, hands on hips, one leg up, another leg going off to one side, one arm dancing gracefully, hands clapping in rhythm. Different possibilities without leaving position 1:
- In the previous positions, the bodies attempt to move with difficulty. It is awkward, but we have to do it. We still don't know why, but we have to do it, that's just the way it is.
- As they move, the bodies meet in pairs, trios, quintets, etc.
- After these encounters, the bodies come together and form an impossible figure where no part bears any relation to an anatomical structure and nothing connects with anything.
- The position is untenable: they can't stay like that. It's been too long, the bodies are stiff and numb, as if they'd taken a beating.
- They all gradually come out of the aching body, each of them at their own pace. They can't hurry it, as it hurts to go back to being upright. It is so hard, absolute torture.
- Once they've managed to more or less get back on their feet, the pain is less intense, but it is still there. They find it hard: they drag their feet, stretch, bump into each other, yawn, stop, walk aimlessly, etc.

And, at one point, their bodies stop aching altogether.

TO BE CONTINUED...

MONOPERRO - 4



DR. KUROGO - 6



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/S1gLgu>

SONIA GÓMEZ - 3 & 4

CLIP-RESPONSE-POSITION 3 and 4 -MONOPERRO

Marshall and Carla talk offstage. We can't see them, but we can hear them.

Marshall: Carla... Carla. What are you doing here? What a surprise...! What's with all the tattoos...? I can hardly look at your face.

Carla: Well, this is all very special, you know; after all, it's what we're looking for... I'm doing this thing about the body, the affected body. <<My use of this concept is mainly derived from Spinoza, who discusses the body as regards its capacity to affect or be affected. These capacities are not different: they are always united. When you affect something, you are at the same time exposing yourself to be affected, and in a slightly different way to how you would have been affected a moment earlier. >> (Brian Massumi in Ejercicios de ocupación („Occupational Exercises“), page 23)

Marshall: Carla, Bío is here.

Carla: Where?

Marshall: Look, here he comes.

Bío is the dog. He comes barking and jumping over Carla, knocking her down. They can be partially seen on stage. Carla strokes him madly, Bío goes mental, they both look very happy.

Carla and Bío keep displaying their affection to each other on stage, Marshall is half visible.

Carla talks to the dog as if he were human. She says: - Mummy's back and has brought those treats you like best. As the dog licks her face, it looks like they're kissing, they're loving it, they're all absorbed in their own little world. Marshall looks at them and smiles. He is speechless, spellbound by them... He goes to get a couple

of beers... He comes back and offers one to Carla, who is rudely awakened from her moment of joy with the dog.

They go offstage.

Marshall: Carla, my dear, dear Carla, you look just like a little girl, I am so glad to see you... but tell me, what are all these images on your body?

Carla: Everything is here, Marshall... everything that's important, what has happened and what is still to come, too.

Marshall: And you?

Carla: I have split into three bodies: first, the inner body, everything comes from it and arrives into it; then there's the canvas body, ready to be transformed; and finally there's the copy body, which holds all three together by means of images. It is wonderful.

Stage mechanics:

Carla speaks to Marshall, they are offstage, we hear what they are saying but we can't see them.

On stage something strange happens: we can't actually hear what Carla's saying because she speaks in a very low voice, we perceive the sound but we can only hear certain words.

We hear (voiceover) or read (projected on the stage) Marshall's thoughts.

The three bodies react to Carla's unintelligible text. The bodies move in an impossible way; what they do is hideous, horrible shapes, noises, unpleasant stimuli.

The three naked men enter the stage. Monoperro's drawing no. 4.

Carla: <<What the body is, says Spinoza, is what it can do as it moves forward. It is an absolutely pragmatic definition. A body is defined by the capacities that it carries along with every step; the precise nature of those capacities changes constantly. The capacity of a body to affect and be affected, its affective load, is not constant.

So, depending on the circumstances, there's a gentle ebb and flow movement, it may just rise and crash like the waves or it may simply hit rock bottom; because all this is linked to the movements of the body, it cannot all come down to emotions [...]

Spinoza says that every transition is accompanied by a feeling of the change in capacity. The affect and the feeling of the

transition are not two different things. They are two sides of the same coin, just like affecting and being affected. That's the first sense in which affect is about intensity - every affect is a doubling.>> (Brian Massumi in Ejercicios de ocupación („Occupational Exercises“), page 23)

Marshall finds Carla's account suspicious and does not want to say anything, but pretends to listen.

Voiceover or subtitles projected on the stage:

Looking at Carla... I can't actually see her, she's not there... I can't understand her.

This woman that I loved so much... no longer has any connection with me...

How's this possible... something so cruel...

Not that I care too much though...

I'm gonna pay attention... see if any of her tattoos say anything about us...

Carla: <<Like I said, the directness I'm talking about isn't necessarily a self-presence or self-possession, which is how we normally tend to think of our freedom. If it's direct, it's in the sense that it's directly in transition – in the body passing out of the present moment and the situation it's in, towards the next one. But it's also the doubling of the body in the situation – its doubling over into what it might have been or done if it had contrived to live that transition more intensely. A body doesn't coincide with itself. It's not present to itself. It is already on the move to a next, at the same time as it is doubling over on itself, bringing its past up to date in the present, through memory, habit, reflex, and so on>>. (Brian Massumi in Ejercicios de ocupación („Occupational Exercises“), page 26)

Voiceover or subtitles projected on the stage:

Nothing about us... it says nothing... Only Spinoza...

I would like to interrupt... and ask her: How do you live? Are you happy?

The past, the future...

Carla... I only want you to talk to me about what's tattooed on your skin...

I want to know why you have an adansonia on your stomach...

Why a dagger looks like it's being thrust into your heart...

or those shapes half-concealed by your underwear... pomegranates... or are they artichokes?

Marshall begins to curdle and, remembering Deleuze, thinks: We need a way to <believe in the world> again.

Marshall is twisting, he cannot get back into shape, he feels elastic...

Due to the torsion, he is partially visible on stage and remains as if frozen.

Carla continues talking as if nothing had happened.

Carla: <<In his whole way of living and of thinking, Spinoza projects an image of the positive, affirmative life, which stands in opposition to the semblances that men are content with. Not only are they content with the latter, they feel a hatred of life, they are ashamed of it; a humanity bent on self-destruction, multiplying the cults of death, bringing about the union of the tyrant and the slave, the priest, the judge, and the soldier, always busy running life into the ground, mutilating it, killing it outright or by degrees, overlaying it or suffocating it with laws, properties, duties, empires – this is what Spinoza diagnoses in the world, this betrayal to the universe and to mankind.>> (Gilles Deleuze. Spinoza: Practical Philosophy, page 12)

TO BE CONTINUED...

MONOPERRO - 6



DR. KUROGO - 8



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/Vj77h7>

SONIA GÓMEZ - 18

CLIP-RESPONSE-POSITION 18-MONOPERRO

This man is working on Harmony Korine's new film.

He's not an actor, he's part of the cast because he has an oddly diverse body.

Why does he have such a body? What's happened to him?

When he was 15, while on an end-of-year school trip, an enormous chandelier hanging from the ceiling in one of Rome's Capitoline Museums fell on him.

Due to the impact, his adolescent body stopped growing. He never had a growth spurt.

In this image by Monoperro, the man is wearing a women's swimsuit and smoking marihuana, which causes him to move very little by little, similar to the slow-motion effect on music video clips, where images are suspended in time.

Today's his day off, so he's visiting this most chic of marihuana smokers' associations not expecting anything horrible or unpleasant.

He goes to the bathroom to look at himself in the mirror and, as his lips look very full and pouty, he moves his tongue sensually and in slow motion, again trying to achieve that slow-motion effect so typical of video clips.

He then lights a flare and this makes him think that we sometimes make wrong decisions, the results of which are inevitable, and with that thought buzzing in his head he moves off to the bathing area.

At Isla Bonita, the marihuana smokers' association, you can buy and smoke their products on the premises or just spend the day there.

The place is designed as a spa, with water streams, saunas, swimming pools with extreme temperatures, sulphurous salts, Turkish baths, volcanic sensations, a restaurant with minimal food and other features not mentioned in the brochure available at reception.

The man has arrived at the Turkish baths and feels his flesh is being slashed by several thin-bladed knives, he can't stand the thought that those knives could have a serrated edge.

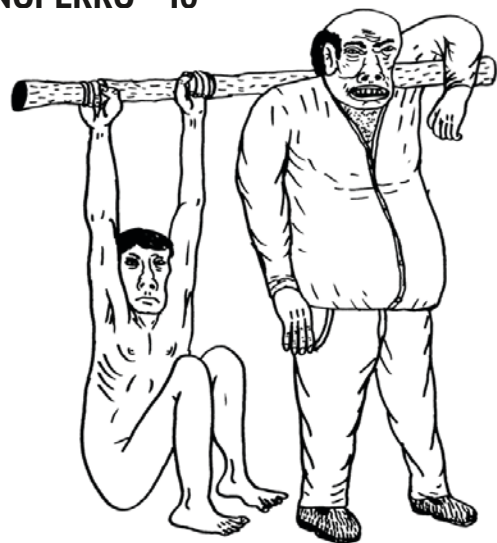
It's funny, because these thoughts that are typical of a mentally ill person give him great pleasure, he finds they're a perfect combination between the Arabic masseur and his own power of abstraction at that particular moment. Ever since his accident, one of the consequences he has to suffer is playing a game that he calls „keeping wholly focused at all times no matter what happens“.

The strategy, based on being connected to the present, is very intense for him, so much so that he cannot do too many things in one day, because he does everything, however simple the activity, as if there was no tomorrow.

This attitude has led to a sort of forced isolation because normal people do not understand him and he does not do too much to correct this... He thinks it's better this way.

TO BE CONTINUED...

MONOPERRO - 10



DR. KUROGO - 13



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/MDu2GJ>

SONIA GÓMEZ - 21

CLIP-RESPONSE-POSITION 21-MONOPERRO

Marshall walks feeling the soles of his feet, noticing every step, paying full attention to them. He is naked. Due to health issues, he's lost a lot of weight and looks taller. He feels better than ever, bursting with energy.

In Monperro's image 21, Marshall is accompanied by two men dressed in very large black tunics covering their heads. All we can see are their faces, hands and feet.

They have travelled with Marshall to a monastery in Nara to meet a group of Japanese experts in nanotattoos.

Marshall has just gone to the bathroom and comes back surprised because the place is separate from the main building, surrounded by nature. Traditional Japanese toilets are designed to seek spiritual peace. These ones are in a little forest where you can smell the greenness.

Master Soseki* is one of the most important novelists in early-20th-century Japanese literature. He says that nothing compares to the morning pleasure of defecating whilst looking into the blue sky and letting the clean smell from the green fields fill your lungs.

It's all about the balance between nature and refinement, although on a winter's night you might catch cold, but, as Saito Kyoku* **says?** <<refinement is cold>>.

Marshall stretches out on the tatami-covered floor.

Wiki note: There are different rules on the number and ways to arrange the tatami. It is said that, if not placed correctly, they attract bad luck. They must never be arranged in a grid.

The process to get to know the stories about the nanotattoos is divided into three parts.

The first days are an adaptation period. Very strict routines are followed to help with mental and physical preparation: a vow of silence, meditation, fasting, domestic chores.

Once the guest has adapted to the daily routine, the fast is replaced by long walks.

And once body and soul are balanced, the guest is not disturbed for 48 hours before the big day.

Marshall no longer bites the skin around his nails, his nervous system has shrunk, he has succeeded in not thinking of anything, he eats and sleeps very little, just enough to keep the highest degree of concentration and, most importantly, he is starting to grow hair on his head!

Marshall is ready to find out about the revealing stories hiding in Marta Ríos's body; she is one of the few people with nanostories etched into her skin. (More info at Sonia Gómez-16 <http://blog.goethe.de/streamingegos/archives/189-SONIA-GMEZ-16.html>)

Marshall enters the room accompanied by the people in the black tunics, undresses, puts a silk rope around his neck, and does only one turn, with two ends that are long enough to be able to pull them. During the session, the vow of silence is kept and the string is used to communicate with the nanotattoo experts, asking them to stop or repeat the texts.

Marta Ríos is stretched out with her eyes closed, as she also has tattoos on her eyelids and in any case bearers and guests are strictly forbidden from seeing each other. All remain with their eyes wide shut.

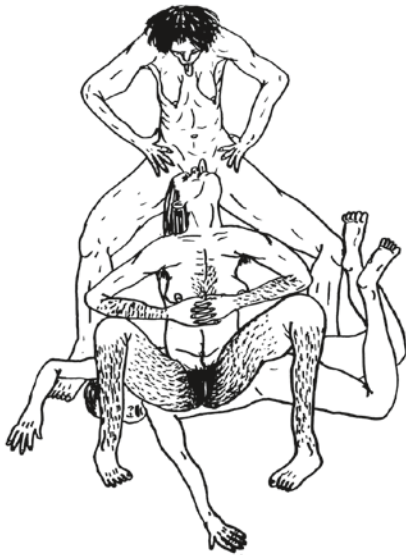
The sessions last between three days and a week, their nature is extremely delicate, everything is designed to facilitate the understanding and assimilation of the stories and the guests' reactions that those stories trigger. It has been proven that, after such an experience, people who've had access to these teachings will never be the same. The contents of the stories trigger a binary code that opens a communication channel between the conscious and the unconscious; that way, the potentialities of body and mind are guarded by ulterior control, variable flight and a universal centripetal dimension.

TO BE CONTINUED...

*Natsume Soseki (1867-1916)

*Saito Kyoku (1867-1904), novelist, critic and essayist.

MONOPERRO - 13

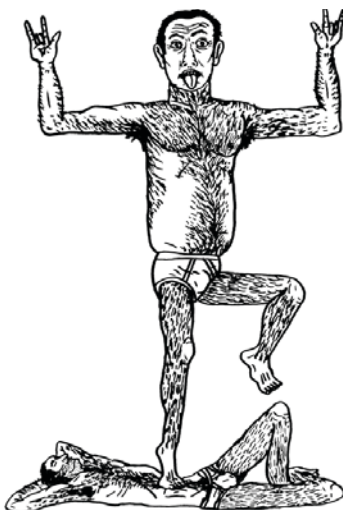


DR. KUROGO - 14



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/BlyoZL>

MONOPERRO - 15



DR. KUROGO - 16



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/JZ5USj>

MONOPERRO - 18



DR. KUROGO - 20



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/DBNXNh>

OPHELIA (6)



© OPHELIA

MONOPERRO-AB-22

Angélica Beckett was born on 13 July 1990. At least that's what it says on Facebook. But on Facebook she was born in September 2014. She doesn't remember the date exactly.

Angélica Beckett's name is not Angélica Beckett. But that's the name she goes by. She feels that's the name of her digital being. Her analogic being is an altogether different story. A very long story and social media is probably not the right place to hear about it. After all, Twitter does not allow more than 140 characters per message. But then again, they do say that Twitter is about to increase that limit to 10,000 characters. It makes no difference, in Angélica Beckett's opinion. Whatever the limit, nobody's going to read more than 140 characters. Twitter fans are accustomed to that number as a frontier. „It's as if the Twitter birdy's cage door (that little blue frame that is a like background to its silhouette) was opened and he was allowed to fly a thousand metres more. The furthest it would get would be the birdseed feeder“, adds Angélica Beckett.

Angélica Beckett was advised not to lead an active life on Facebook. „It's so out“, she read in an Internet blog. It is possible that Angélica Beckett is attracted by things that are positively down and out. Maybe she prefers cities with a firm penchant for the derelict, like Valletta or Havana, to others like Barcelona or Berlin. Maybe. Maybe, if given a choice between mooring at Genoa

or Bastia, she would not think twice and choose Bastia. Chi lo sa?

Angélica Beckett decided to make her debut on Facebook on 26 August 2015. She did it in private. In other words: in silence. It's fair to say Angélica had no „friends“. She doesn't have any now. But the important thing now is that, back then, when she uploaded her first image (with no words), she had no male or female friends.

Angélica Beckett realised that her Facebook account was chaos, confusion and darkness over the abyss. And she said: „Let there be light“, and Angélica Beckett updated her cover photo with an image of Jes Win Andersen that she found on the Internet. And Angélica Beckett saw that it was good. She now had a beautiful, enticing cover photo. And such was her enthusiasm that on that very same afternoon, on 26 August, she decided to update her profile picture. And so it was: she posted a picture of the roof of her house on a leaden-grey sky. And Angélica Beckett saw that it was good. She even saw that Facebook congratulated her. And not only that: she was also invited to look for more friends. And she decided that it was time to make friends on Facebook, its raison d'être. Angélica Beckett felt ready. And that's how she first saw a drawing by Monoperro at www.monoperro.com. And that, perhaps because Angélica Beckett prefers cities like Osaka or Oaxaca, which start with an „o“, to capitals like Paris or Prague, with that presumptuous „p“, is how Angélica Beckett came to be interested in becoming friends with Monoperro immediately. She quickly realised that Monoperro had his own little home on Facebook. And so, on a nice late-September afternoon, Angélica Beckett sent a friendship request to her future friend Monoperro.

SONIA GÓMEZ - AB - 7

Dear Sonia or whatever your name is:

Today I have gone as far as text number 20 and it will literally end with these words: TO BE CONTINUED...

Why? Tell me. Will she tell me? Will she tell me why?

His... forever

A. B.

SONIA 20: CLIP-RESPONSE-POSITION 20-MONOPERRO

LANDSCAPE: Brown Zone



© Sonia Gómez

DR. KUROGO - AB

AB: We build watches with all the minutes exactly the same so that time is not to blame for the change we see in things. But once again Senovilla bursts in to disturb the scientific community's slumber. Am I right in saying that „Time is dying“?

Dr. Kurogo: It probably goes without saying that time is the fundamental substance of music. And I say „substance“ in the sense of „essence“, of the „essential“, but also in the sense of raw material, juice, sauce.

On the other hand, music has always been closely linked to Mathematics and Physics ever since Ancient Greece. I myself, when I decided to work professionally with music, noise or whatever you want to call it, abandoned my piano studies and ended up doing a PhD in Physics, in Analytical Mechanics to be more specific.

Theories like Martín Senovilla's about time acceleration make me think of the *accelerando* that musicians have been using for centuries precisely to make time into something palpable.

If time finally disappears, as Senovilla suggests, music will have to find another fundamental substance.

When I hear your music, very powerful, almost iconic images come to mind. D'you know what I mean?

That is very sad. I don't like to talk about that. I think it's sad.

Are beauty, justice and harmony required in order to understand the world?

I think beauty and harmony are two constructs that are designed to cloud our vision and our judgment.

As for justice, it is but an ointment which barely soothes the sore. I doubt there is anything to understand in the world, but if there were, sensitivity would be the best tool to try...

D'you know what I'm talking about? That certain something which, in countries like Spain, we are denied from a very early age, and which in others, like the United States, is turned into

sentimentality and then exported to most of the planet.

It is all about simply keeping our eyes and our pores wide open to let in whatever needs to go in. After that, we can worry about whether there is anything to understand or simply anything to relate to in the best way possible.

I get the feeling that, in your music, love, sex and eroticism are countered by stench, unwarranted violence, and the tyrannical arbitrariness of authoritarian political leaders... How do you weave sexuality and eroticism into your music?

Eroticism... *(He takes out a cigarette, lights up, takes two long drags looking into the void and then proceeds.)*

If you understand that music, sound, noise, are no more than something that is vibrating and that this vibration enters your ear to make it vibrate accordingly, you've come a long way.

Music, like sex or food, triggers a physical reaction, a motion, a feeling in your muscles. A sip of wine warming your mouth, a speck of wasabi saturating your nostrils, someone passing a finger or their tongue down an appropriately exciting part of your body... sound and noise work on that same level (*"would you like some?," he says, offering me a swig from his hipflask*), like a pure vibration, like a pure muscle movement, like sex; I would even dare say, just like love. But not the idea of love that they try to instil in us from the cinema - love like frenzy, like a punch in your stomach.

So, when you shake off the idea of what we normally refer to as music, the theory, the notation, the rhythm, the melody, all those things that act like straitjackets we've used to tame sound, and you're left with just the noise and the way it vibrates, everything gets a lot more interesting. There's some stuff that vibrates and all you have to do is place them in a setting... configure a landscape which, if you're lucky, will accommodate them and vibrate in tune. It's like making love with someone simply looking into their eyes or whispering something into their ear... and then there's that moment when you display it, you expose it all in real time, and sexual tension escalates because you are now a body doing things that make noises that literally penetrate the bodies of those in the audience.

Do you go to musical composition workshops?

I did enough of that when I was young. In retrospect, it wasn't that bad, but at that time, if you let yourself go and became an obedient student, you would end up... actually composing!

Back then, I'd just discovered Cage -he saved me from late symphonic music and its mothball effect- and I listened to Miles Davis and Satie on my way to the conservatoire.

These days, if anything I would go to a musical de-composition workshop (*both laugh*).

I do mean it though. It would be a workshop where you'd experiment with the de-composition of traditional musical forms: a motet, a minuet, a fugue, a blues (even a symphony!) by reducing

them to their very essence.

That's what Cage did all his life (and hence, I think, his interest for mushrooms), but also Satie.

Talking about Satie, what are your main influences? What are the roots of your music?

I like Satie as a comedian and as a musician, and I still listen to him, although a lot less than when I was young.

Mentioning influences now... would be difficult, you know?

For example, I could say Cage, that musician that everyone has supposedly read about but nobody listens to. Cage was like dynamite on the 20th-century musical scene and he blew my mind and my understanding of what we call music. But I could also say Miles Davis, and Ligeti, and Stockhausen, and blues in general, and Eliane Radigue and Parmegiani and Cornelius Cardew or Autechre and Squarepusher, just to mention some more recent musicians, and it would be a never-ending list of names, one after the other until the end of time.

It's difficult because... to what extent can I say who has influenced me, or how?

There is a lot of music I listen to that has no relation with the music I do, but in a way, in a deep sense... How much AC/DC or Bach or Led Zeppelin is there in what I do? I can't possibly know, it's difficult to trace back. What influence did my first piano teacher have on me? He was terrible and slapped my hands every time my piano fingering was not correct. Was I more influenced by my one of my jazz teachers (this particular one was really good) when he had me dabbling with Bach for a year? How much was left in me of the two volumes of Schönberg's *Theory of Harmony*, which I worked on like crazy when I was eighteen? How about rap, *death metal* and *psychobilly*, all of them genres that I've listened to, and still listen to, with genuine passion? Has any of that filtered into, or adhered to, the noises I create? How can I know? How can I trace back their DNA in the things that I do?

Then there's the noises that surround me, or surround us, in our everyday lives. In my opinion, they are the fundamental and reflective substance of what I do. Noises I collect, listen to carefully and use as inspiration... or as raw materials... so much there! (*He lights up another cigarette, looks at me and smiles, takes another swig from his hipflask and passes it to me.*)

What I do feel is that my music is not rooted in anything in particular. I prefer to think of it as something like dust or clouds, light and ethereal, but not in a poetic sense... something changing, you know? Something that comes and goes, that is born and then withers. Or rots. Something like smoke, or the rubbish brought in by the waves as they wash onto the beach.

As a musician or noisician, I have always been very clumsy in terms of looking for my own personal sound, something that identifies me or what I do. As an artist, it is very important to find a style, something that people can identify as your thing,

something that will help them place you. But I've never known how to do that. I'm interested in ALL noises! I just can't use the same ones for a long time, I can't cook over and over again with the same recipe, regardless of how succulent the dish may be and how much me and my friends like it.

Finding your roots and using them to develop your work turns you into a tree or even a totem. You might be a nice tree, of course, a beautiful tree, I love trees in fact... But when you show the same kind of interest in a piano, sound recording or algorithm programming in Pure Data, you find yourself suspended in the air, moving to and fro... festivals don't know what to make of you, they don't book you because someone saw you a couple of months ago doing really crude noise music and now you carry around a *lap steel* to generate nearly inaudible harmonics so you just don't fit in, and then someone hears you're in this new situation but by the time they decide to work with you or publish your work you've moved on to something else...

So I am... a wandering guy, I have no roots, but I do have my feet firmly on the ground.

On stage, he turns up dressed entirely in black or with a long, dark grey raincoat, and he plays the piano barefoot. Why do you turn up barefoot?

Hahaha... Well, in my everyday life I always dress in black, it's purely for practical reasons: that way I don't have to choose what to wear, I simply take one black shirt from the pile and whichever clean trousers of the three pairs I have. Also, I always wear trainers, but on stage... I don't see myself with trainers on stage, it would look like I want to be cool, a contemporary dancer or something like that. So I just come out barefoot.

This comes with certain risks though: your feet get filthy and you end up looking like an actor from a 90s independent troupe.

What's your opinion on the trend to bring back classics like Albéniz?

If we decide to bring someone back from the dead, we should be willing to put up with their ghastly, sickening, nauseating stench, and to live with it.

Many of those who resurrect old authors always carry in their pocket a can of air freshener and spray it everywhere, only that air freshener is even more nauseating than the stench of the dead guy; if that stench is sniffed in isolation, without additives, I might see the point, there may be a certain interest to it.

Did you know they intend to close down Café Central?

A friend told me the other day that the local residents are fighting back to prevent it. I don't know if it will close down in the end, but it would be a real shame; when I was younger, I got fantastically drunk there on a regular basis! A well-played double bass and a triple gin are a great combination.

Lately you've been expressing your political ideas (not just about the industry) on social media. Can you summarise them with a musical piece?

I'd be glad to.

Here it goes:



Link to the audio file
<https://goo.gl/TgHbXi>



© Melanie Stegemann

HOW IT STARTED: “A FLOWING IDENTITY IN THE FACE OF SPECIFIC OBJECTS”

MATEO FEIJÓO

In his book *Mainstream*, first published in English in 2010, Frédéric Martel says that “entertainment is concerned with what people do when they are not working (what is known as leisure), which is why there is such a thing as entertainment industries. That is the origin for the idea of *soft power*, which in turn is at the heart of what we could refer to as “digital identities”. In this globalised era, many nations have realised that, in order to have an influence on international affairs and improve their image and their standing, they can use culture instead of military might. Military, economic or industrial power would be known as hard power.

Another way to approach this new form of perceiving identity and art in a digital era would be to take sides with the intellectuals, the brainy, the museum-oriented, to travel back in time and remember these prescient words by Nam June Paik (1932-2006): “One day, artists will work with capacitors, resistance elements and semiconductors, as they work today with brushes, violins and junk.” An interdisciplinary crossroads has existed at all times in the history of global art. If we add to this an exchange at the international level that was made possible by new technologies, we face a reality which is self-defined by the structural invention of the media it employs. Or as stated by Aldo Tambellini (1930): “Printed or electronic images are the components of our cultural evolution.” Nam June Paik perceived video as a way of life, and in 1980 Bill Viola wrote in his notes: “No beginning/no end/no direction/no duration- Video as mind”.

We build ourselves through the fragmented self-images that we piece together

At every step along the way, the role of image in society, culture and communication becomes larger. We build ourselves through the fragmented self-images that we piece together.

On 23 March 2011, Ingrid Guardiola published an interesting article in the *La Vanguardia* newspaper with the title “Los obreros salen de las fábricas: esbozo para una generación posible” (“The workers are leaving the factories: Sketch of a possible generation”). In it, Guardiola presented ten points, ten essential commandments which artists must follow in order to build their image, their relation with production spaces, with institutions...

Networks impose codes that are explicitly based on time. They are snapshots of a moment, recordings, creation and development of time-related constructions. The recipients will decide at which point they wish to give in to the message, how long they want to dedicate to it and when they will do so. The experience may be interrupted and revisited at a later moment.

An artist's work is not positioned as a finite product to behold, but as a guide, a portal, a generator of activity

In the 90s, digital technology made it possible to achieve a synthesis of the different media used up until that time. Life is part natural and part technological, high-tech means progress. From there on, the process is unstoppable: online life feeds back into itself, and any message takes on a value at the moment it is reproduced and mentioned by someone. An artist's work is not positioned as a finite product to behold, but as a guide, a portal, a generator of activity. After the work is produced, the possible combinations multiply, we navigate through sign networks. Works of art are the temporary completion of a network of interconnected elements. “Every exhibition contains within itself a possible script; every work has the potential to serve multiple scenarios and to be absorbed into a variety of agendas. It is no longer a conclusion. Rather, it is one of many moments in an endless chain of contributions.” (Nicolas Bourriaud)

Stephen Wilson, Professor of Art at San Francisco State University, artist, sociologist and keen observer of the impact of art on the media, says the following in his book *Research as Cultural Activity*: “This has been research's century. Our lives have been radically changed by the results of scientific inquiry and technological innovation”.

Every artist projects him/herself through his/her work, and the latter, in turn, is a stage which the artist projects onto culture as a whole. The artist's work configures his/her identity, through it he/she builds, mutates, transforms, enters a dialogue with similarly-minded creators or simply accomplices who are part of the global game, and creates links and relations between very different areas.

With *Streaming Egos* I propose to create a cascade of relations,

feelings, unmentionable desires which stem from emotions triggered by a creator's work in another creator and, at the same time, in the recipient. Or indeed in each person who comes to the web to check us out, observe us, comment on us, post us, link us...

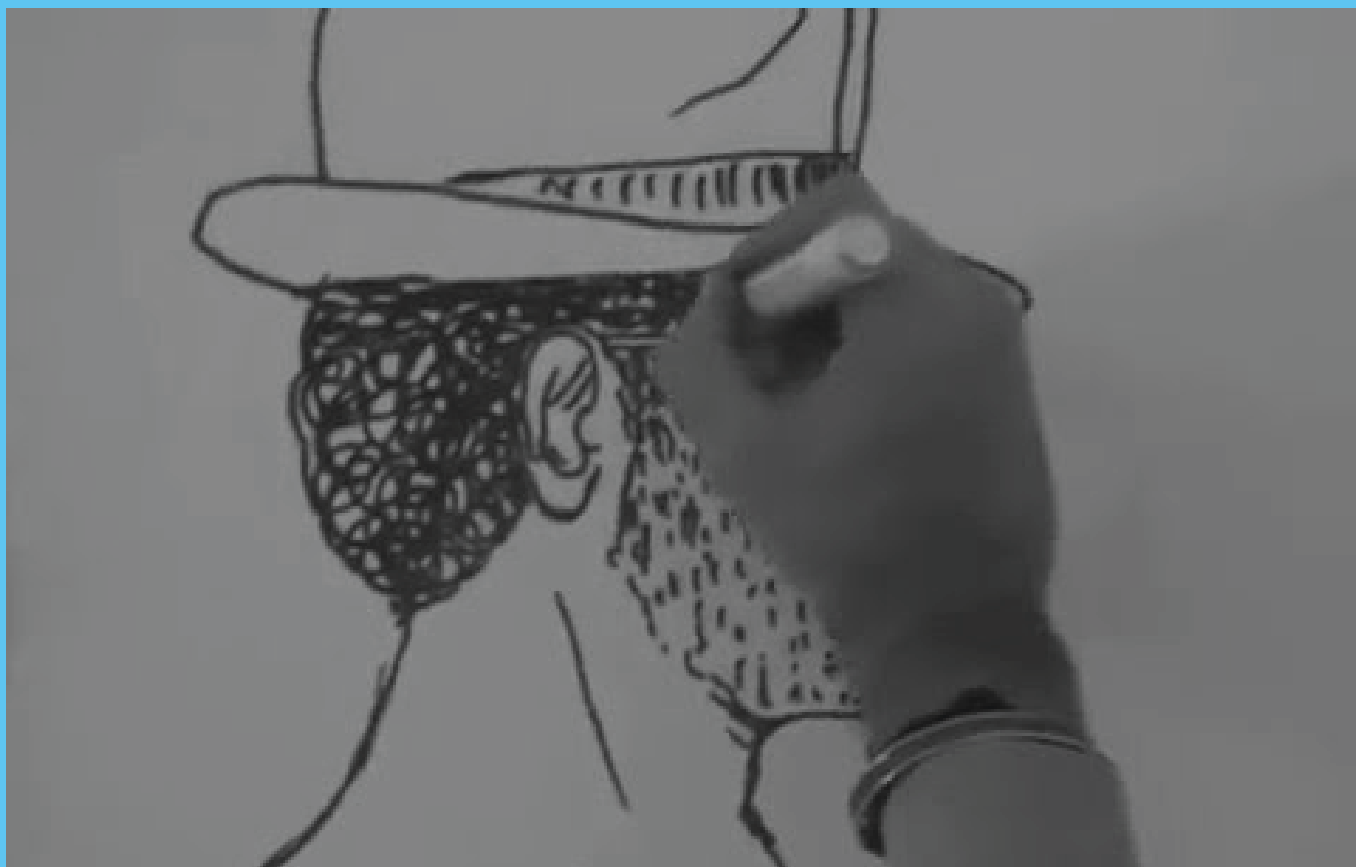
The artists who are part of *Streaming Egos* belong to very different areas (image, sound, movement, word) and create a discourse in process, an evolution in time where exchange and a quest for content prevails over a possible final idea. Work flows and those who look can be protagonists, active recipients. According to Guattari, "the only acceptable end result of human activity is the production of subjectivity such that its relation to the world is sustained and enriched".



Link to original version
<https://goo.gl/CpDXBU>

THE DIGITAL IDENTITY CONVENTION

**A VIDEO DOCUMENTATION
BY ANTO LLOVERAS**



© Anto Lloveras



Link to the videos
<https://goo.gl/kPKY3v>

THE DIGITAL IDENTITY CONVENTION

**AFTERTHOUGHTS
BY BERNADETTE WEGENSTEIN**



© Melanie Stegemann



Link to the text
<https://goo.gl/5UCr8Y>

PART 2

THEMATIC CIRCLE: ESSAYS ON DIGITAL IDENTITIES

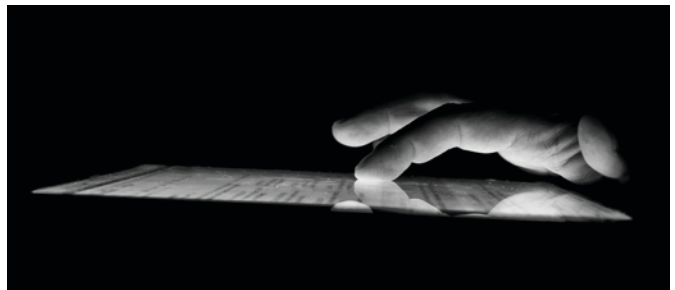
SCREEN IDENTITIES

TOMMASO MATANO

You are reading this text on a screen. Your gaze is moving from left to right, but it will jump to the next, more interesting part, cutting and cropping, assembling pieces of language and images. Dynamic, quick, implacable, your gaze will be distracted by pop-ups, notifications coming from applications, messages. This text has the property of establishing infinite connections between different types of media (writing, pictures, videos, sounds): to make sense of it, your reader gaze won't be enough. You *handle* this kind of texts everyday, everywhere, and you know that probably you will have to help your eyes with your fingers by scrolling, selecting and shifting from one content to another. You are not just a spectator, a passive audience facing a book, a picture, or a video. As a *user* you *use* these contents, both consuming and producing data thus, following the definition provided by Alvin Toffler¹, you are a *prosumer*. Eye and hand, gaze and handling: nowadays devices work through a dynamic interface that you can watch, read, touch, lock, split, use to enlighten, shut down. The screen.

Interactive screen

As pointed out by Errki Huhtamo² and reaffirmed by Mauro Carbone³, the word *screen* comes from the Langobardic *skirmjan*. *Screen*, as well as the Italian *schermo*, the French *écran* or the German *Schirm* refers in its etymology to the meaning of protection and separation. Originally, a screen is what *distinguishes* different spaces. Only when, in the 19th century, the screen began to be associated with entertainment, its meaning started to describe an instrument used to *access* a certain space from another one. Today we observe a massive spreading of screens, used to move from one *medial space* to another or to integrate reality with digital data ("augmented reality"). The most prominent feature of such screens consists in their *interactivity*. As Villem Flusser already noticed in the 1980⁴, information has ceased to flow straightforwardly from the medium to the audience, and has begun to stream in an open process, in which *prosumers* can modify, elaborate, hide or delete information. This is why, being



Interactive screen - Touch (CC BY-SA 2.0) by Hernan Piñera



Displays, Expo 2015, Milan

the doorways to such process, screens need to be made interactive. And they accomplish this task as far as they fulfill two functions: on the one hand they work as *displays* that *reproduce* data, and on the other they are fully equipped *work tables*, that allow us to *produce* data on the Net.

Personal screen

The reproduction-production stream of data flows from the Net to me, handling the screen, *and* from myself to the Net. *Screen interactivity* means *personalization*: a screen is no longer a screen, it's *my screen*, the channel where I can get the information I prefer (following the newspapers I "liked" or the opinion-makers I

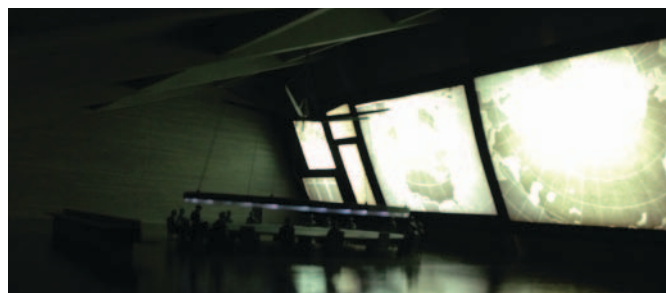
trusted) and the space in which I expose my identity (showing the community which newspapers I like or which opinion-makers I trust). On the screen we build our self-narration, we write, read and rewrite our stories, from a single Facebook profile to the broader identification with a cultural or political group. Names, pictures, data, audio-visual and linguistic footprints of the self are all scattered over the paths we cross everyday, like Tom Thumbs using our thumbs on the displays, as Michel Serres once pointed out⁵. Devices like social networks seem to be built specifically to trigger self-narration, giving us the illusion of having an audience (*followers* or *friends*) which is ready to listen to us. We use the Net – and the Net uses us – to identify ourselves⁶, to make our own voices audible. And this has *political* implications.

Political screen

In Italy, the European country with the highest number of hours spent on social media per day⁷, the political group *Movimento 5 Stelle* have made such implications straightforward. Precisely in order to make every voice equally audible in the political debate, *Movimento 5 Stelle* have based their agenda on the idea of giving citizens (*prosumers*?) a direct access to political space. This could happen through the double character of the screen. In fact, screens make available what is supposed to be the totality of information. This is the ideal of a *transparency society*⁸, in which the surveillance model of Panopticon⁹, where a few people can control the whole population (typical of totalitarianisms), has conversely become a *synoptic* gaze, where many people can control the power elite through devices of registration and monitoring. This *reproductive* function of screens is clearly exemplified by the live streaming of political summits and the publication of politicians' incomes and expenses carried out by the *Movimento 5 Stelle*. On the other hand, having access to allegedly sensitive information, people are supposed to inter-actively participate in the political debate. How? By means of the *productive* character of screens: web referendums, online elections, social media debates. This program seems consistent with a certain shift in the *participatory culture* from active political mobilization to web activism. Interestingly, we enthusiastically partake in the public debate on social networks in order to make our voice audible, while boycotting political elections more and more¹⁰.

Silent screen

Curiously enough, on the screen this voice is silent. Information, communication and contents remain on the interface. When the sound inadvertently comes out of the device, the equilibrium between the strictly individual experience of being interconnected (the paradox of being *alone together*¹¹) and the social situation we experience in the offline world is broken. Digital sounds break off in the offline world, causing a short circuit. Whose



Panoptic screens – Dr. Strangelove war room model (CC BY 4.0) by William Beutler



Panoptic screens – Dr. Strangelove war room model (CC BY 4.0) by William Beutler

voice is that? Where does it come from? We hurry to shut it down, we are contaminating our current environment with noise pollution. Today a screen is a matter of hands and eyes, not ears. This is why it is hard, among those voices that are talking one over the other on the screen, to distinguish those that deserve to be listened to. We are now used to seeing. We should begin to listen again.

1. Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, William Morrow, New York (NY), 1980.
2. Errki Huhtamo, *Elements of Screenology*, in *ICONICS: International Studies of The Modern Image*, Tokyo 2004, vol. VII: 31-8
3. Mauro Carbone, Lo schermo, la tela, la finestra (e altre superfici quadrangolari normalmente verticali) in *Rivista di estetica*, 2014, vol. 55: 21-34.
4. Villem Flusser, *Ins Universum der technischen Bilder*, Andreas Muller-Pohle, Göttingen 1985.
5. Michel Serres, *Petite Poucette*, Editions Le Pommier, Paris 2012.
6. See the notion of milieu associé theorized by Gilbert Simondon in *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*, Aubier, Paris 2012.
7. Digital in 2016 Report (<http://www.slideshare.net/wearesocial/digital-in-2016>)
8. Byung-Chul Han, *Transparenzgesellschaft*, Matthes & Seitz, Berlin 2012.
9. Jeremy Bentham, *Panopticon or The Inspection-House*, T. Payne, London, 1791; Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir. Naissance de la prison*, Gallimard, Paris 1975.
10. <http://elezionistorico.interno.it/index.php>
11. Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together*, Basic Books, New York (NY), 2011.

PETER GOBENS

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

“In any case, our philological home is Earth; it cannot be a nation anymore,” wrote Jewish Scholar of Romance languages and literature Erich Auerbach in 1952 from his American exile whence he had fled from Germany. He was an early voice to point out the invalidity of the concept of “nation”, which hadn’t imposed itself as a political concept until the 19th century, replacing cosmopolitan and transnational patterns of social interaction. From today’s point of view, where communicative and participatory possibilities are clearly driving social interaction towards a transnational perspective, I feel that the notion of being limited by nation, the insistence on politically motivated nationalist separatism (whatever the reasoning behind it) is obsolete.

«Jedenfalls aber ist unsere philologische Heimat die Erde; die Nation kann es nicht mehr sein», schrieb der aus Deutschland vertriebene jüdische Romanist Erich Auerbach 1952 aus seinem amerikanischen Exil. Und damit hat er schon früh auf die Hinfälligkeit der Vorstellung von ›Nation‹ hingewiesen, die sich erst im Laufe des 19. Jahrhunderts als politisches Konzept durchgesetzt hat und kosmopolitische und transnational orientierte Muster gesellschaftlichen wie sozialen Miteinanders ablöste. Aus einer heutigen Perspektive, in der sich das soziale Miteinander durch veränderte Kommunikations- und Partizipationsmöglichkeiten immer deutlicher auf eine transnationale Perspektive hinbewegt, scheint mir das Konzept nationaler Begrenztheit, die Behauptung eines (wie auch immer) politisch begründeten nationalistischen Separatismus obsolet.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

I think the question should rather be whether digital media even offer any added value when it comes to building identity patterns, or whether they just continue or complement established patterns of identity development in a new (faster, perhaps easier, but in a way, de-individualized) manner. Vital elements for building individual identity are a willingness to interact with the ‘other’ on the one hand and accepting one’s own cultural hybridity on the other hand. This notion of a subject’s openness for dialog is in no way limited to digital media, but rather a fundamental paradigm of cosmopolitan thinking, which is based on mutual respect and enlightened reason (as pointed out not only by Immanuel Kant, but also by European intellectuals such as George Steiner).

Die Frage ist doch eher, ob digitale Medien bei der Entwicklung von Identitätsmustern überhaupt einen Mehrwert bieten. Oder: ob sie nicht nur etablierte Muster identitärer Entwicklung auf eine andere (schnellere, vielleicht einfachere, aber in gewisser Weise auch entindividualisierte) Art fortführen bzw. ergänzen. Wesentliche Elemente für die Entwicklung von individuellen Identitäten sind einerseits die Bereitschaft zu Auseinandersetzung mit dem Anderen und andererseits die Akzeptanz der eigenen kulturellen Hybridität. Diese Vorstellung einer dialogbereiten Offenheit des Subjektes ist aber keineswegs auf digitale Medien beschränkt, sondern ein grundlegendes Paradigma weltbürgerlichen Denkens, das (und darauf haben nicht nur Immanuel Kant, sondern auch europäische Intellektuelle wie George Steiner hingewiesen) auf gegenseitiger Achtung und aufgeklärter Vernunft beruht.

IDENTITY. AN OBITUARY, PENNED BY A CYBORG

ENNO PARK

I've been repaired. To be more precise: A spare part was installed in me, almost like in a car. This part is a cochlear implant. It replaces my broken sense of hearing by stimulating my auditory nerve with electrical impulses, which my brain then processes as sounds. I and many other people find this very exciting. Others vehemently reject it. Not surprisingly, parts of the hearing-impaired community are outraged by the notion that they are "broken" and in need of repair. But how is it possible that two groups of people have the same organic anomaly – deafness – and have such contrarian reactions to an attempt to enable hearing?

From a medical point of view, this is easy to explain. To simplify it, human beings build certain brain structures in early childhood based on the stimulation their senses experience. If there is no stimulation, this development does not take place, and despite the brain's plasticity, it can only catch up to a very limited extent later in life. A person who was born deaf will never learn to hear really well later in life, even with a cochlear implant, while the brain of a person who became deaf later in life learns how to process the new signals from the implant with relative ease, and – as in my case – often cannot distinguish the natural hearing experienced earlier in life from the technologically-enabled experience.

Yet this explanation is mechanical and cannot sufficiently explain why people react so differently on an emotional level. For many people who were born deaf do appreciate their newly gained sense of hearing as an enrichment of their lives, even though it will always remain relatively undeveloped. The strong emotional response is mainly due to the fact that the implant constitutes an attack on a deaf person's identity. People who become disabled in the course of their lives will henceforth carry two different images of their own body: one before and one after. Such people will always sense the difference between these two images of their "self". They feel incomplete and strive to regain, or at least compensate, this incompleteness. People born with a disability



Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann

only have this one self-image from the start. They feel complete, while society keeps reminding them of their defect. From this outside perspective, the disabled person is not complete, but something less. This label of incompleteness automatically creates exclusion and discrimination – after all, identity is always defined by criteria. And this is the tragedy of identity. It senselessly creates hierarchies and exclusion. Because what exactly is

a “complete” human being? Isn’t every human a flawed creature who would need to be immortal to have enough time to attain perfection in every regard? This is an uncomfortable question, for it rattles the very concept of our identity. We are reminded of the figure of the cyborg. When technology and biology fuse in a cybernetic organism, boundaries blur: between nature and culture as well as between other dichotomies, even between male and female. Anything can be construed in new constellations, limited only by technological possibilities – a boundary that is constantly shifting and slowly approaching the limits of what we can fathom. Is there any room left for identity?

While in the past century, the cyborg was a fictitious notion used to question human nature, our society is now well on its way to making it a reality. While we focus on all the medical prosthetics and implants that really make us seem like “machine men”, we completely fail to see that the fusion of man and technology has become a matter of course in our daily lives. Tools that used to be employed periodically to perform very specific tasks are becoming permanent fixtures and extensions of our bodies. Wrist watches, for example, worn by everyone at all times ever since the industrial revolution, have sharpened our perception of time. In the digital age, we permanently carry our smartphones as an extension of our senses into the internet. Advanced industrial and service-based societies are so profoundly interwoven with their technological infrastructure that society as a whole can be viewed as a cybernetic organism: We are a cyborg society of individuals who do not consider themselves cyborgs yet.

Yet most importantly, the notion of the cyborg drives home just how much identity suffers from the dilemma of elusiveness. I’m not the same self I was ten years ago, and yet I’m convinced, as I assume most people are, to be *me* (unless I’m a little out of it at a given moment for whatever reason): A loss of identity occurs in times of crisis and is perceived as such. But identity is a back-and-forth between ourselves and others assigning labels. Fingerprints, the genome, language, likes and dislikes of certain music or literature, preferences and ticks, our demeanor, posture, mindset and attitudes, our body image and our self-image. Identity is a steady, gradually changing stream of all these characteristics. When it stops, there is immobility. Absolute identity only manifests itself when we stop existing; when we die. And at this point, we usually capture this identity in an obituary.

ANDRÉ ALVES

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

In any case, the notion of nation as an ideology is a belief phenomenon that manifests itself in the most minor and invisible forms. Instead of us thinking about whether we can forget nations, we ought to consider whether it makes sense to forget nations. The notion of nation is based on an explanation of theological nature in which the completeness of the subject manifests itself in the collective of humanity escaping it. Questioning the loss of the notion of nation exposes its ideological identity. An identity that colonizes and imitates practices and symbols instead of singular poetic experiences of sensitization. The nation – unlike the heritage of language – reduces the subject to an exercise of a nostalgia that never belonged to it and that is not “designed” to meet other subjects in the world.

Em todo o caso, a noção de nação como ideologia é um fenómeno de crença que se manifesta nas formas mais pequenas e invisíveis. Em vez de pensarmos em se podemos esquecer as nações, deveríamos considerar em que é útil esquecer as nações. A ideia de nação baseia-se numa explicação de natureza teológica, em que a completude do sujeito se manifesta no coletivo da humanidade que lhe escapa. Questionar a perda da ideia de nação expõe a sua identidade ideológica. Uma identidade que coloniza e leva a uma imitação de práticas e símbolos, em vez de experiências de sensitização poéticas singulares. A nação – ao contrário do património da língua – reduz o sujeito a um exercício de uma nostalgia que nunca lhe pertence e de nada serve ao encontro com outros sujeitos no mundo.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

Digital media enhance the flow of discourse and the production of meaning. This growth is violent and crude, and requires learning. This learning has an impact on one's own identity, not from trying to learn how to use the different opportunities presented by these new languages, but how to reduce, select, make these languages an articulation of one's self. Be it closely integrating opportunities for communication in the functional life of every one of us. This choice is an extension of self-caring, of the language the subject speaks best. In any case, digital media enable a subtraction of the idea of phenomenological proximity and, accordingly, they demand the most difficult choice of the means that define interaction mediating “proximity in absence,” spending time with, developing the habit of speaking a language, defining identity not in terms of being and not being, but in terms of paying attention to the contradictions.

Os meios digitais potenciam o fluxo do discurso e da produção de sentido. Este aumento é violento e tosco e isso pede uma aprendizagem. Esta aprendizagem tem impacto sobre a identidade própria, não por se tratar de aprender como utilizar as várias possibilidades destas novas linguagens, mas sim de como reduzir, selecionar, fazer dessas linguagens, uma articulação própria. Ou seja, integrar atentamente as possibilidades comunicativas na vida funcional de cada um. Essa escolha é necessariamente uma ampliação do cuidado de si, da linguagem que melhor fala o sujeito. Em todo o caso, os meios digitais permitem uma subtração à ideia de proximidade fenomenológica e nesse sentido, pedem uma escolha mais rigorosa dos meios que definem a interação que medeia a proximidade-em-ausência, passar tempo com, desenvolver o hábito de falar uma língua, definir identidade não em termos de estar e não estar, mas em termos de cuidado das partilhas.

WHO IS MY PROFILE PICTURE? A REFLECTION ON GENDER AND AGENCY IN THE (DIS)EMBODIED ENGAGEMENT WITH DIGITAL MEDIA

ARIANNA MAINARDI

“I feel confined, only free to expand myself within boundaries.”¹

Major Motoko Kusanagi

Using the cyborg as metaphor (as conceptualized by Haraway) – a combination of organic and inorganic, a figuration able to represent the hybridization of differences – studies on gender and technologies have highlighted two important reflections on the relationship between subjectivities and digital technologies. While the first focuses on the possible role of digital technologies in subverting normative developments of gender, the second refers to a transformation of the “body” where the new digital technologies become so pervasive that they result in an actual prosthesis of ourselves.

In the early 90s, referring to a performative idea of identity feminists perceived the Internet as a place of experimentation, a space in which it was possible to subvert the rigid and structured gender identity of “real” life. From this perspective, online identity construction offered an opportunity to play with assigned identities and social roles, breaking away from the heterosexual matrix that produces standardized conditions in everyday life, and thereby bringing to life new forms of social relationships.

The disembodiment hypothesis held that Internet users – freed from corporeal cues and constraints of flesh – could actively play with different gender identities, producing non-stereotypical identity performances. Gender experimentations seem to be the logical expression of post-structuralist identity theories, which refer to identity as a discursive and non-essentialist dimension. Therefore, the Internet – as an instrument and as a stage – opens up new spaces of agency and identity negotiation for women and transgender and homosexual people.

Nevertheless, the Internet and especially social media are sustaining an embodied presence in online interaction and becoming more pervasive than they used to be. This significantly reduces the space for body experimentation and gender play. New digital milieux – such as social network sites or other user-generated content platforms – together with the massive spreading of mobile technologies, are changing the way we interact with

anonymity, corporeity and creativity. Online life is hardly decontextualized and disembodied; at the same time, “virtual” experiences, or else online experiences, permeate our “real” everyday life becoming indistinguishable. This makes forms of experimentation overlooking body materiality more complex – although not impossible.

Several factors influence the possibility to express our identities through this type of media, first of all through the particular affordances of the medium which allow or inhibit in each specific case different kinds of digital practices and self-representation. Recent criticism targeting the 2.0 web highlights how the identities we build inside and through these types of media are inscribed in processes of normalization that inhibit the possibility of experimentation rather than experiencing a degree of agency, showing how online activities are strongly influenced by the politics of offline spaces both on a material and symbolic level.

Just consider the fact that Facebook policies ask users to log-in using their real name (although they are free to choose a nickname), to make personal data visible (date of birth, place of residence, school, family bonds) and maintain only one personal account. It is a concrete example of one of the varieties of forces that on a daily basis work against a fluid and multifaceted identity construction and in favour of a fixed and immutable self.

Understanding the relationship between online and offline dimensions in social network activities is further complicated by the request to associate a self-image to our personal profile. The wide range of practices demanded by social network sites like Facebook – which also require a huge mobilization of personal images – ensures that in our online self-representation the meaning of our gender identities is visually set up. Profile pictures are one of the central tools – along with names – used to

convey an image of ourselves to our Facebook contacts.

Since presence on Facebook is closely linked to the experience of bodies in “real life”, corporeality appears to be a key element in the construction of subjects within the experience of social network sites. Rather than constituting a disembodied experience – leaving behind the body and its associated gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, and so on – digital practices extend the experience of the body even to the online space, thereby reinforcing power relations.

Through the “mediation” concept (2012), Kember and Zylinska argue that we should move beyond our fascination with digital media and shift towards an examination of the processes of mediation that interlock technical, social, corporeal and biological dimensions. By doing so, as they say, we can reveal that life itself can be understood as a mediated subject by the same processes of reproduction, transformation, flattening and patenting undergone by other media forms. The ways we use social media in everyday life seem to exclude any space for self-reflexivity and experimentation. Nevertheless, if the Internet becomes a part of one material reality, the open question is: where are the spaces for free and creative action for the subject if life itself is completely involved in a process of mediation?

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Theory of images: Francesca Martinez

Extract of „Si ceci est un corps. Les images transforment-elles les corps ?“
a transdisciplinary project by Nina Greta Salomé © Valentino Bellini

1. Major Motoko Kusanagi is a character from the “Ghost in the Shell” anime and manga series. She is a full-body prosthesis augmented-cybernetic human.

LUCILLE CALMEL

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

Le partage des territoires par tous ses membres vivants

Electoral regulations may explicitly require candidates to be human, or may require candidates to do things which animals cannot. On some occasions, however, animals have been accepted as candidates, and have even won office.

The cute cat theory of digital activism developed by Ethan Zuckerman concerns Internet activism, Web censorship, and „cute cats" (a term used for any low-value, but popular online activity). It posits that most people are not interested in activism; instead, they use the web for mundane activities, including surfing for pornography and lolcats. The current internet platforms are very useful to social movement activists, who may lack resources to develop dedicated tools themselves. This, in turn, makes activists more immune to reprisals by governments, as shutting down a popular public platform could provoke a larger public outcry than shutting down an obscure one.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

As Bram Crevits was talking about the idea that a lack of identity could lead to some kinds of radicalities/vernacularities, I was unable not to think about the virality of animals on internet, and about the increasingly questioned frontiers between animals we humans are, and non-human animals.

« Il ne s'agit pas seulement de demander si on a le droit de refuser tel ou tel pouvoir à l'animal (parole, raison, expérience de la mort, deuil, culture, institution, technique, vêtement, mensonge, feinte de feinte, effacement de la trace, don, rire, pleur, respect, etc. – la liste est nécessairement indéfinie et la plus puissante tradition philosophique dans laquelle nous vivons a refusé tout cela à l' « animal »). Il s'agit aussi de demander si ce qui s'appelle l'homme a le droit d'attribuer en toute rigueur à l'homme, de s'attribuer, donc, ce qu'il refuse à l'animal... »

Jacques Derrida „L'Animal que donc je suis" (The animal therefore I am/ following)

Les ingénieurs de Google affirment qu'ils ont conçu un réseau informatique capable d'analyser, de classer et d'apprendre lui-même à reconnaître le contenu des images. Ainsi, le „réseau neuronal" a été nourri de 10 millions d'images à partir de vignettes vidéo YouTube et – sans qu'on nous dise comment – a créé son propre concept de chat.

CREATING REAL FICTIONS

SONSOLES HERREROS LAVIÑA & JAVIER CHAVARRÍA DÍAZ

People coming to see the “Streaming Egos. Digital Identities” exhibition at the Goethe-Institut in Madrid on opening day (8 June 2016) without really knowing about the project beforehand might find it surprising: the members of this artistic group put together by Mateo Feijóo do not convey a significant feeling of virtuality; the group, in fact, would not seem to be made up of “digital individuals” whose relations have been weaved on social media and whose communications have taken place without any physical contact whatsoever. They would probably give the impression of being a group of old friends who regularly get together to share their multidisciplinary artistic knowledge. This could be food for thought about what we expect to get when we buy into the “virtuality” label, and also about the use of that term in different contexts.

The curator’s approach has been extremely respectful towards the very complex and diverse disciplines in which the group members work: there are no specific guidelines, only a few general ideas, and that chasm of freedom has not been an obstacle for relations, contributions and replies to flow and generate artistic matter. These “digital identities” included a wide variety of disciplines and different proposals, which made it impossible to connect them online by means of several strategies to ultimately give a palpable impression of an “ego” which, although masked, would seem real, authentic and listening.

All this leads to a reflection of how modern technologies are integrated into art disciplines, especially in our everyday lives. In pre-digital Western societies, there was a time for fantasy in one’s life. At six years old, children lived in an in-between space, like the intersections on Venn diagrams, where reality and fiction merge. In their narratives, real, experienced events and dreams intermingle in a confusing way. After this stage, which could last more or less depending on the individual’s creativity, we move on to adult age: the individual assumes new responsibilities and both spheres (reality and fiction) become radically separated. Fiction is relegated to clearly marked spaces where we can indulge



Streaming Egos Madrid © Maruxa Monteserin Soto

in it (arts in general) and, outside those spaces, in the adult world, we refer to fiction as a lie. Children are told it is not right to tell lies, because lies are not reality and they create a conflict with fact-based information. But agreeing on what is real is rather more complex than it may seem at first sight. And that concept is even more complex in the realm of the arts. Paul Auster suggested that, in the process of thinking or creating from oneself, one

becomes another, and that phenomenon is not circumscribed to the field of writing; it happens generally in the arts.

When we talk about pre-digital societies, we mean that the breakneck speed at which technologies have been integrated into our lives has not only radically changed the relation models, but also, fundamentally, the way in which we tell ourselves about our own identity. Not so long ago, who we are was defined by our place in the world: our job, our work, our role in the family and in our community dictated our attitude and our behaviour. The fracture between the wishful ego and its obligations in the model imposed on us has been a recurring argument in the world of culture. It appears in so many films, plays, and artistic works of every kind. It is the basis for educational rites of passage such as the Grand Tours of old, and also for trips conceived as a great escape in search of idyllic locations not bound by Western etiquette. As a theme, it clearly shows the conflict implicit in renouncing a fantasy world in order to be accepted and take our place in the community.

The advent of digital devices has paved the way, almost accidentally, for a chance to be in the world without renouncing the complex fantasies of our identities. The good news is that we can be many different people. In a way, we can be anyone and everyone. The good news is that what we used to call art, that which appeared only in the controllable contexts of the market and the exhibition, can now occur in a simultaneous, schizoid way in many parts of the planet, and it does so, for the moment, without any clear labels pegged to it. Ever since the 1980s, artists have conquered what we now call the cyberspace¹ and a whole plastic production roadmap has been created which is linked to the possibility of inhabiting other worlds and other bodies and, consequently, to escape this world and this body.

In contrast to the landscape painted by the emerging technological arts, the eruption of networks and social media and the effervescence of the impossible have reached a level that was unimaginable in 1986. This is not a project that revels in the limitations of the “artistic” label, it is not tamed to be innocuous: it is life itself, redefining itself. It is not a parallel world that we can go into or come out of: it is our modern, hyper-connected, world of multiplicity. In texts from the 1990s written in parallel with the incipient creative exercises that were realigning what was then referred to as “real”, cyberspace and the virtual world were defined as something outside of reality², a different world where it was possible to dislocate one’s body and it was viable to live other lives, although in a way it did mean renouncing this life, our traditional life, the life that occurs in the world that we can refer to as “natural”. This is why Benjamin Woolley said in 1994 that “Geography is irrelevant” as the user was faced with a better world, a possible world where, using avatars and (back then)

very complex equipment, the dream of being others, of being many, came true. At present, however, by avoiding the punishment we would normally be given for telling lies, the reality is different: thirty years on, the normal state is this polysemic confusion we live in. The done thing is to share conversations and experiences in real time with people, whether known to us or not, all over the world. The done thing is for our fractured bodies to be here and there in a state of delirious multiubiquitousness.

When groups of friends get together, it is not uncommon for someone to whip out their mobile device with the excuse of checking a fact mentioned in the conversation, and at that moment effectively extricate him or herself from the group (even if he or she is still physically with the group). It is also not unusual for the entire group to succumb to this effect and for each of them to use their own device to continue the get-together by relating to each other, and to hundreds of others, virtually. Virtuality, then, is not another world; it is, in a peculiar way, a world that forms part of the physical spaces in which we coexist analogically.

At the same time, the world of art, formerly a realm where fantasy had a place, where we could tell our lies, even as adults, where we could split our personality and live dreams with different realities, a world whose *raison d'être* was to provide an escape route for creativity and feelings in the context of the normative world; all this seems to be less necessary now, after the advent (no more than five years ago) of a way of life in which technology as a tool, democratically within anyone’s reach, has created a veritable army of artists... or liars. It was back in the late 1960s that we first got a glimpse of this trend. Back then, most of the world of art showed a keen interest in the gradual technification bridging the gap between both areas (art and science) not just in terms of concepts, but also of plastic arts. For example, in 1969 Allan Kaprow said the following: “These days, artistic culture is so vastly sophisticated that it is difficult to negate the evidence: the lunar jeep is, in a way, patently superior to the endeavours of any contemporary sculptors.”³ But nobody would have anticipated that cosplayers⁴ would spend hours at their computers living a real life and dressed in hyperelaborate costumes of their mythological warriors (who, paradoxically, ended up coming true).

Art, traditionally the spearhead of creativity and imagination, has now been displaced by the busy online activity on social media. Wilde’s axiom has finally been reversed: it is now art that imitates life and we see how a simple user with a “simple” device can turn into a surprising creator. It is also worth pointing out that artists who have been trained in traditional fine arts and are not digital natives are finding it very difficult to integrate those new digital languages naturally.

1. The term cyberspace was coined by William Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer* (New York, Ace Books, 1986). Gibson defines it as a “consensual hallucination”, which is not a very precise description, but subsequently redefined it as an escape route from modern reality. “[...] with cyberspace as I conceive it, we can literally wrap ourselves up in the media and nothing would compel us to check the reality of our surroundings.”

2. On page 243 of his book *La violación de la mirada, la imagen entre el ojo y el espejo* (“The violation of the look, the image between the eye and the mirror”, Fundesco essay prize 1992), Josep M. Català Doménech defined virtual reality (recalling Scott Fisher, from NASA’s Ames Research Center) as the creation of a 3D space by means of a computer and stressed that “The viewer (...) allows you to perceive the virtual space generated by a computer as if it were a real space. The user is immersed in this new space where any visual reference point not within its coordinates is removed. A transfer of reality then occurs.”

3. Allan Kaprow in *El arte y la vida confundidos* (“Art and life, intermingled”), Paris, Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1996, as quoted by Joerg Bader in *Algunos enfoques de las propuestas plásticas de Michel François* (“Approaches to Michel François’s plastic arts proposals”), *Arte y Parte* magazine, no. 19, page 68, Madrid, 1999.

4. Cosplay (コスプレ or kosupure in Japanese), a portmanteau of costume play, is a type of representative fashion where participants use outfits, costumes and accessories representative of a specific character or idea. Cosplayers frequently interact to create a subculture centre around interpretation of roles.

MARTHE VAN DESSEL

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

Forget? Random Access memory? Erase? Delete? Retrieve from Trash. Read only memory. This rhetoric question only challenges a speculative conversation within a specific 'we', when reinforced in the world (global society) by the 'we', the trauma of power relations, protocol & territory continues.

Vergeet; Random Access Memory? Wissen; Delete; Leeg de prullenbak. Read only memory. Deze retorische vraag roept slechts een speculatieve gesprek op binnen een bepaalde 'wij'. Wanneer versterkt in de wereld (mondiale samenleving) door die 'wij', zal het trauma van machtsverhoudingen, protocol en grondgebied blijven.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

For sure digital media enable discourse and shape identity. After web 2.0, social media and web platforms offered any 'easy' access to non-literate coders, to use these networked technologies and digital media for representation, documentation and communication. But we are convinced that we have to emancipate from these platforms and their underlying protocols because they constitute discourse and identity - and when developed by a neoliberal, white male privileged class, they reproduce a proprietary and heteronormative approach to our (common) voice and (collective) identity. That is why in the current algorithmic paradigm it is important to insist on techno sovereignty and to develop and implement autonomous technologies in a networked solidarity, on all the layers of the OSI model (internet service providers, mesh networks, applications, ..).

Digitale media maken het discours mogelijk en vormen ook onze identiteit. Door de ontwikkeling van web 2.0, boden sociale media en online web platformen 'gemakkelijk' toegang tot niet-geletterde coders om deze genetwerkte technologieën en digitale media in te zetten: om zich te representeren, te documenteren en communiceren. Maar wij zijn ervan overtuigd dat wij hen moeten emanciperen van deze platformen en hun onderliggende protocollen, omdat ze het discours en identiteit bepalen en wanneer ze ontwikkeld zijn door een neoliberale, blanke mannelijke bevoorrechte klasse, reproduceren ze een heteronormatieve en bezitterige (gemeenschappelijke) stem en (collectieve) identiteit. Daarom moeten we in het huidige algoritmische paradigma inzetten op technosouvereiniteit en autonome technologieën ontwikkelen en implementeren solidair, vernetwerkt en in alle lagen van de OSI-model (internet service providers, mesh-netwerken, toepassingen, presentatieplatformen ..).

GUNNAR SOHN

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

Nationalism teaches you to be proud of things you didn't accomplish and to hate people you don't know. This hotbed of prejudice can only be eradicated by encouraging transnational dialog. Nationalists can only define themselves via the concept of their adversaries. French philosopher Michel Serres has captured this very well. Identity and community are being confused here. I belong to a community of competitive volleyball players. I belong to a community of people who work with live streaming. I belong to a group of people who love raspberry jam. I belong to a group of people who were born in Berlin. As I go through this list, it becomes obvious how little the fact that I pertain to this group or another says about my identity. I am me. That is all. Origin and fatherland are delusions that say nothing at all about an individual person. In Europe, only direct experience can counteract nationalist and racist distortions. When a racist teen falls in love with a local girl during an extended stay in another country, his racism will dissolve. The racist construct will crumble and the person will have enough first-hand input to rethink his previous, distorted view.

Nationalismus lehrt Dich, stolz auf Dinge zu sein, die Du nicht vollbracht hast und Menschen zu hassen, die Du nicht kennst. Dieses Vorurteilsbiotop kann man nur mit der Förderung eines transnationalen Dialogs durchbrechen. Nationalisten können sich nur über Feindbilder definieren. Der französische Philosoph Michel Serres hat das sehr gut auf den Punkt gebracht. Es geht um die Verwechslung von Identität und Zugehörigkeit. Ich gehöre zur Gruppe der Volleyball-Vereinsspieler. Ich gehöre zur Gruppe, die sich mit Livestreaming beschäftigt. Ich gehöre zur Gruppe, die gerne Himbeer-Marmelade mag. Ich gehöre zur Gruppe, die in Berlin geboren wurde. An dieser Aufzählung merkt man sehr schnell, wie wenig die Zugehörigkeit über meine Identität aussagt. Ich bin ich. Das ist es. Herkunft und Vaterland sind Chimären, die nichts, aber auch gar nichts über den einzelnen Menschen aussagen. Nationalistische und rassistische Zerrbilder kann man in Europa nur durch direkte Erfahrungen abbauen. Wenn sich ein rassistischer Jugendlicher bei einem langen Auslandsaufenthalt in ein einheimisches Mädchen verliebt, bricht jeder Rassismus zusammen. Die rassistische Konstruktion wird brüchig und man bekommt genügend Anregungen aus erster Hand, die bisherigen Zerrbilder zu überdenken.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

The dialog formats presented by digital media facilitate a democratized form of salon conversations that used to be led only in higher circles of society – today it is a phenomenon accessible to anyone. The internet can make conversations a political force to shape our lives together. What's decisive is a willingness to engage in dialog and participatory formats. Those who just put out content unilaterally will not build any identity online.

Die Dialogformen der digitalen Medien ermöglichen eine demokratisierte Form der Salonkonversation, die früher nur in elitären Kreisen geführt wurde – heute ist es ein Jedermann-Phänomen. Das Internet kann das Gespräch als politische Kraft zu einem Instrument der gemeinsamen Lebensgestaltung machen. Entscheidend sind dabei immer die Bereitschaft zum Dialog und Formate der Mitmachkultur. Wer im Einweg-Modus flötet, stiftet im Netz keine Identität.

LIVING AND WORKING AFTER FAILURE

IOCOSE

I'm writing from a laptop, using a weak WiFi signal in a flat in Rome, Italy. Right now, at the time of writing, it is difficult to say where the other members of IOCOSE are. One should be in Berlin, one in Brescia, and the third one around London or New York, or maybe in Rome as well? They are not picking up my WhatsApp messages, and I have to deliver this text without consulting with them. But that's fine, it is business as usual. We are a collective that works together and individually, contributing to each other's work sporadically, intermittently. We work cohesively in special circumstances. There isn't a written rule on how we cooperate; neither there is an individual author in our projects. The outcome is always the result of thinking through as both individuals and a collective. It is a work mode that emerges from the ways in which we live, and from the tools we use to communicate.

Since we started working together in 2006, we IOCOSE have never lived in the same city. Most frequently we have been split between three or four European cities. On special occasions we gather in the same place for a weekend, when we are asked to arrange exhibitions, give public talks or for our own internal meetings. The outcomes of our meetings are usually collected and organised as Google drive documents, shared among us and edited until the next meeting. The 'To Do' lists that we create help us keep track of what we have got to do. We usually keep these lists updated on Trello, although we are considering using Slack in the near future.

For a very long time, at least until 2013, we had regular video conversations on Skype. We tried to do this on a regular basis and had long discussions about having such conversations once a week. But we could never find a day of the week that worked for all of us, and Skype never works properly for video conferencing. We switched to Google hangouts for a while, which seemed to work much better than Skype and has more emoticons and face filters - which we love. But then we simply stopped having regular online conversations. Talking via the Internet is a tedious experience, and 50% of the time is spent on setting up camera



Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann

and microphone, reconnecting with the other speakers, repeating what the others could not hear, and so on. The digital divide divides us all.

We do emails, too. A lot of emails. We set up a mailing list via Autistici/Inventati in 2006, a platform which provides 'activists, groups and collectives with platforms for a freer communication

and digital tools for privacy self-defence' (<http://www.autistici.org/en/index.html>). Through our private mailing list, we share announcements, opinions, ideas for upcoming projects, links to documents that are relevant to our work in progress and so on. Emails can generate immediate chats on the topic, and trigger new works and inspiration, or simply get lost within the communication flow. Throughout all these years we have learnt how to communicate via email; we are slowly starting to understand when it is not appropriate to send an email, how to keep track of discussed topics for future reference and so on.

Recently, we started up a WhatsApp chat group, too. WhatsApp is really the best context to lose information and not understand each other. We only use it for useless information, silly stories, sharing photos or just to say something stupid.

The daily lives of IOCOSE as artists are scattered and fragmented. Our work management has more hiccups than flows and it happens at different times and timings, across different places. For instance, while I'm writing this piece I know that it will be edited by at least one member of IOCOSE before submission (unless everyone is really on holiday). However, I have no idea what the next IOCOSE member will be thinking of while looking at this piece, where he will be at the time of writing and what his mood will be.

Such a schizophrenic way of working is perfectly consistent with the tools we use, and with the Internet in general, since it promised to let us work from wherever and whenever, collaboratively and yet never together. It is the dream of the collective intelligence (as intended by Pierre Levy in 1994, in *Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace*) or maybe the idea that we will all be teleworking from a seaside town in the Mediterranean. We are living this '90s dream as an art collective, with a 20-year delay. The experience of IOCOSE demonstrates that this dream is, of course, just a dream, and also that even if it does not work it keeps going on. Maybe it is a bit like capitalism itself: it does not work, yet it goes on.

We are often asked how it feels to have such an identity, as an Internet-based art collective. We are aware that we are probably the first and only art group that uses the Internet to such an extent and completely relies on Internet connections to think, make and share artworks. The truth is that it does not feel great. After ten years of working this way we can now say that the Internet, and the collaborative work it promised to facilitate, is a failure.

However, working with and within such failure does not stop us from thinking, doing and sharing art. In fact, we are quite happy with the failure that we have prepared for ourselves. We think

that a big part of our identity as artists lies in such incapacity to speak, to think, to make things fluently. We make art just as Skype makes phone calls: hardly, and struggling.

Please do not misunderstand this as a complaint on how technologies have evolved (or failed to evolve). We IOCOSE would never be able to do any better with a more effective management practice. The masturbatory project outlined in publications such as *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity* (David Allen, 2001), and other self-help texts, does not interest us. We are not looking for smoother and more functional manners to organise online-communication. Our artist practice, completely dependent on this thing we call the Internet, dwells on its failures.

In other circumstances (IOCOSE, 2015) we have called this approach PostFail: a way of looking at the undoing of the narratives of our collective engagement with technologies, while taking care of this after-failure momentum. Being PostFail is a way of expressing our approach to making art and to say something about our identity as a collective. It is also a gesture towards a mode of thinking and making art that is not concerned with making things work, making a point, fixing reality or just simply with 'being right'. We can only partially understand what we do and say, and the things we use and that shape our world, but as part of our work we keep feeling the pressure to say and do something, despite its necessary failure.

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ENNO PARK

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

Identity is a difficult notion. It's constantly fluctuating and never really palpable. This fluctuating identity consists of language, culture, attitudes, self-image etc.: There are so many characteristics by which identity can be construed. If you want to define just for definition's sake you need other criteria.

Nationality by birth is one such criterion that seems factual - and makes about as much sense as a horoscope. Nationality isn't identity, but it does create it, shrouding all the other characteristics that actually make up a person's identity. The nationalized human being is given privileges that are denied to people of other nationalities - all the way to human rights. Nationality is a surrogate for identity and its very perversion at the same time.

Identität ist ein schwieriger Begriff. Sie ist ständig im Fluss und nie so ganz greifbar. Identität im Fluss ist Sprache, Kultur, Geisteshaltung, Selbstbild usw.: Es gibt so viele Merkmale, anhand derer eine Identität konstruiert werden kann. Wer abgrenzen möchte um des Abgrenzens willen, braucht daher andere Kriterien. Die Nationalität qua Geburt ist so ein Kriterium mit dem Nimbus des Faktischen und der Sinnhaftigkeit eines Horoskopes. Nationalität ist keine Identität, sie stiftet welche und macht dabei all die anderen Merkmale unsichtbar, die die Identität eines Menschen ausmachen. Der nationalisierte Mensch erhält Privilegien, dem Menschen anderer Nation werden sie entzogen - bis hin zu Menschenrechten. Nation ist ein Substitut für Identität und zugleich ihre Perversion.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

Digital media transcend space and time. They create simultaneity - everywhere. Digital communication has much fewer barriers than any other form of communication. Despite the fact that it is written, it offers an immediacy that would otherwise require long physical journeys. And immediate interaction is necessary to get your interlocutor to come out from behind his or her veil of prejudice and compartmentalized thinking - for better or for worse. As we recognize the other, we hone our own identity - at the same time we allow the other to shape his or her own identity. What is new about this is the range of people we can now choose to interact with, well beyond our random, immediate local community.

Digitale Medien heben Raum und Zeit auf. Sie schaffen Gleichzeitigkeit - und das überall. Digitale Kommunikation ist wesentlich barriereärmer als alle anderen Formen von Kommunikation und hat trotz ihrer Schriftlichkeit eine Unmittelbarkeit, für die sonst beispielsweise eine Reise mit ihrem hohen Zeitaufwand nötig wäre. Unmittelbarkeit von Interaktion ist nötig, damit ein Gegenüber hinter dem Schleier der Vorurteile und Denkschubladen hervortritt - zum Guten wie zum Schlechten. Im Erkennen des Anderen schärfen wir unsere Identität - zugleich erlauben wir diesem Anderen, die eigene Identität mit zu formen. Neu ist das Ausmaß, dies mit selbst gewählten Menschen statt der lokalen Zufallsgemeinschaft zu tun.

SANDRA VIEIRA JÜRGENS

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

I agree that we can “forget” nations and work on a trans-national basis with thematic aspects. It would be best to find and develop related thematic aspects with the potential and the evolution of notions such as archive/memory, private/public, written/narrative/narration of stories, appropriation/fragmentation of images and texts in the digital universe.

Concordo que podemos “esquecer” as nações e trabalhar numa base transnacional com aspectos temáticos. Seria óptimo encontrar e trabalhar aspectos temáticos relacionados com o potencial e a evolução de noções como a de arquivo/memória, privado/público, escrita/narrativa/narração de histórias, apropriação/fragmentação de imagens e textos no universo digital.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

In an era characterized by a trans-national and relational culture, we invited artists André Alves, Claudia Fischer, Paulo Mendes, and Pedro Portugal to conceive projects of a digital nature that in some way reflect their points of view on the question of identity. If every individual project represents different, singular points of views, as a whole, everyone used the resources and tools the web offered them, applying images and videos from an unlimited database, the preponderance of the practice of editing images and fragments of text in modern artistic practices being clear, such as the construction of narratives by means of selection, treatment, and creative organization of material starting with the proliferation and dissemination of images that mark the stage of identity of digital *media*.

Numa era caracterizada pela cultura transnacional e relacional, convidámos os artistas André Alves, Claudia Fischer, Paulo Mendes e Pedro Portugal a conceber projectos de natureza digital que de algum modo reflectissem os seus pontos de vista sobre a questão da identidade. Se cada projecto individual representa pontos de vista diferenciados e singulares, no conjunto todos usaram os recursos e as ferramentas que a web lhes oferece, a apropriação de imagens e de vídeos de um banco ilimitado de dados, estando patente a preponderância da prática de edição de imagens e fragmentos de texto nas práticas artísticas contemporâneas, como a construção de narrativas através da selecção, do tratamento e da organização criativa de material a partir da proliferação e disseminação de imagens que marca o cenário identitário dos media digitais.

REORALISATION: REVIVING ORAL CULTURE IN DIGITAL AGE

SABRIA DAVID

"Print, as it were, translated the dialogue of shared discourse into packaged information, a portable commodity."
Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962)

Digital change is a profound transformation that impacts our societies at a structural level. Disruptive business models and phenomena permeate all disciplines and areas of life. Within just a few years, Wikipedia has replaced iconic mainstays of static print such as the German encyclopedia Brockhaus and the Encyclopedia Britannica; journalists and publishers are at the verge of losing their role of gate keepers; copyright is being questioned.

Why is that? Cultural history reveals just how fundamental this change really is: Digital media have brought forth a new written culture that unites aspects of oral and of written tradition. My formula for what I call "reoralization" is:

The internet is a written medium that operates according to the rules of oral communication.

The most well-known products of oral tradition are popular fairy tales. Like myths and sagas, there is no single author. They are created by the "people" who interweave materials and motives and retell them over and over, generating new stories, condensing them into an ever tighter form. They were created by a collective of authors that included anyone who listened to, contributed to and retold them – until eventually, the Brothers Grimm collected, annotated and thus fixated them in their current form for the purpose of ethnological documentation.

Fairy tales stem from a bygone (at least in our culture) era of oral tradition where production and reception of contents were combined. Book printing launched an era of written communication which, on the one hand, democratized reception. Books were read everywhere now, not just at royal courts and in monasteries (even the Bible, after Luther's tour de force of translating it into Early New High German). On the other hand, production was split from reception; anyone (literate) was now allowed to read, while writing remained the privilege of a select few. It was the hey-day of the content-producing author. Digital technologies are now melting this fixed order of static writing. Many people are now



The famous digital campfire © Geert Lovink

Source: <https://twitter.com/glovink/status/646414796720615424>

able to access one and the same content simultaneously. They can not only read, but also edit it. They use it; they leave their own mark on it. Basically, Wikipedia or Open Source Projects are undergoing the same process as fairy tales did back in the day; except that it isn't happening along a vertical timeline (over the course of generations), but almost simultaneously, horizontally.

Another characteristic of digital technologies is the two-way channel, which makes it possible to converse back and forth in real time, to be sender and receiver at the same time. Someone who speaks, tells and talks is speaker and listener at once. In the context of written language, that means: reader and author.

So while works of static print culture are fixated and structurally closed, writing in the digital space is mobile, dynamic, immediate and changeable – characteristics that used to be the hallmarks of oral tradition only.

The internet liberates this “shared discourse” we mentioned earlier from the boundaries of book covers. Conversation, discourse, interaction and participation are making their entrance in written culture. A visible and commonly known consequence of this break in cultural history is the quasi-oral format of social media: Today, we talk on Twitter, WhatsApp, in chats and on Wikipedia discussion pages. We speak, chat and interact in writing and in images. The media have become social. And people are loving it.

What if we used this potential to drive forward social as well as transnational discourse? Digital media enable formerly excluded people to participate in social debates. They easily cross national borders and connect people who never would have met otherwise.

“Human communities are based on discourse,” as the authors of the Cluetrain Manifesto wrote. Those who foster dialog also foster community, and thus individual and collective identity. Dialog, which used to be associated with oral tradition and forms of communication only, is gaining new significance thanks to digital transformation.

We can now harness this cultural-historical oral heritage of digital change to shape our future. Phylogenetic studies have recently shown that our popular fairy tales are 4,000 to 6,000 years old and have been passed on in oral tradition long before they were put in writing. This means they date back to the time of the Indo-European language – a protolanguage from which Germanic, Romanic, Celtic and Iranian languages evolved over the course of thousands of years. We should be happy that the power of oral culture is now making its way into our written world. We ought to welcome digital change as a great opportunity. We should seize every chance that digital infrastructure offers us to engage in transnational conversations and discourses.

Let’s use our pre-national, Indo-European heritage to once again enter into a conversation across language barriers and other frontiers. Let’s shape our digital societies together and give the Europe of our future a chance.



Oral tradition: everyone is both narrator and listener
Image.: Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1508) © public domain

Or – to spin out the quote by Marshall McLuhan cited above:

Let’s translate the packaged information back into a dialog of shared discourse!

SONSOLES HERREROS LAVIÑA & JAVIER CHAVARRIA DIAZ

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

We are very much restricted by inherited behaviour patterns, so discarding the concept of nation would imply a re-signifying of individuals in their place and their community.

Although, at present, nation and identity appear to be inseparable realities, the way in which new social relation codes (from working at home to social media) are becoming commonplace makes us think that the individual, in his/her contact with others, places him/herself in a shared non-place; and yet, it is difficult to think of that individual as dissociated from his/her cultural heritage and his/her other reality.

Despite being in that globalised non-place, our memories and our intimate links still belong to an analogic register.

Ligados como estamos a modelos conductuales heredados, olvidar el modelo de nación partiría de una resignificación del individuo en el lugar y en la comunidad. Aunque actualmente nación e identidad aparecen indisolubles, la manera en la que se imponen nuevos códigos de relación social, desde el teletrabajo hasta las redes sociales, nos hace pensar que el individuo en su contacto con el otro se coloca en un *no lugar* compartido, y sin embargo parece difícil pensar en ese individuo desvinculado de su acervo cultural y de su otra realidad. Aun estando en ese no lugar globalizado, nuestros recuerdos y nuestros lazos íntimos siguen perteneciendo a un registro analógico.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

Digital media recontextualise the individual in a globalised world and allow him/her to dream or design other identities, self-created beings which are projected and freed from their physical circumstances. It is, we could say, a technology leap in a personal project that allows the subject to become independent of his/her specific physical situation.

Los medios digitales recontextualizan al individuo en un mundo globalizado y le permiten soñar/diseñar otras identidades; seres autoproducidos que se proyectan liberados de sus fisicidades; ese es el salto de la tecnología en el proyecto personal, que independiza al sujeto de un estado físico concreto.

IOCOSE

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

Yes, we can. But we won't. Nations have been there for a very long time, we don't see them disappearing anytime soon, and it is difficult to really forget about their presence. We should ask ourselves whether forgetting about nations is a good thing at all. We seem to be living in an age in which discourses on both nationalism (the defence of one's own boundaries) and internationalism (the collaboration across nations) have been equally co-opted by the current dominant neo-liberal agenda. Maybe we shouldn't forget about nations but try to imagine if they can turn into something good.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

There are many attempts nowadays to enable citizens to decide collectively and be directly represented in political decisions. Whether these systems work is a different matter. Digital democracy seems to be the dominant theme when talking about the use of digital media and representation, which is of course directly related to identity. But then, does identity still hold up as a valid concept? Does it really matter, in an age in which most Western citizens can be anyone they want on the Internet? Shouldn't we think through different concepts? Digital media can potentially empower people to speak and express themselves, but to what extent can we talk freely when users are profiled and identified whenever they write, say or search something?

NEW IDEAS FOR EUROPE. TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND POP CULTURE IN LIEU OF WESTERNISM

GUNNAR SOHN

How excited would Johann Wolfgang von Goethe have been to harness the boundless, real-time World Wide Web for his transnational dialog. The Prince of Poets was limited to snail mail, with one special privilege: Mail service was in the hands of a private authority and considered the cornerstone of pre-industrial modernization. The clout of its “inventor” Franz von Taxis was on par with that of Christopher Columbus. Provider “Thurn und Taxis” granted Goethe free postage for life. “Goethe did not have to pay for any letters sent or received,” literary expert Peter Goßens mentioned in his interview with Sabria David, curator of the “Streaming Egos” project.

The Prince of Poets as a Social Web Enthusiast

Goethe could write as many letters as he pleased. With this free communication tool, he evolved into the networking agent for European discourse. This was the driving force behind his cosmopolitan Humanism. Populist right-wing politicians would be well advised to take a leaf out of Goethe's book. Today, Goethe would be using Facebook, Twitter, Periscope, Hang-out on Air and a blog. Back in his day, he mainly used his own journal “On Art and Antiquity” to enter into a dialog with Europe's literary minds. “In addition to his prolific correspondence, his visitors and the conversations that were part of his daily life in Weimar, it was mainly his journal project that enabled an aging Goethe to cast his web of communication (which was virtual, yet manifest in its printed format), and to share his views on significant matters of world literature,” Goßens writes in his habilitation thesis *Weltliteratur* [World Literature], published by J.B. Metzler-Verlag. Goethe sought to engage the erudite classes of his time in a debate on how old knowledge can be preserved for new times and how to develop a new social model: “When we dared proclaim a European, even universal, World Literature, we didn't mean that the various nations take note of one another and their cultural products; for in that sense, World Literature has been existing for a long time, more or less perpetuating and renewing itself. No, what we are talking about is rather that the living and ambitious literary minds get to know each other and, united by their shared inclinations and a sense of community, feel compelled to work together,” universal scholar Goethe wrote in a greeting to the Assembly of Naturalists and Physicians in the year 1828.



Streaming Egos Convention © Melanie Stegemann

An Action Plan to Overcome Nationalist Delusion

Goethe created a small, but highly influential European public sphere. He sought and found allies for his world-literary endeavor to create a transnational communication system. Goethe does not define World Literature as a canon, but rather as an action plan to overcome nationalist delusion. It was not primarily about reading works of literature, but gaining a basic

knowledge of other countries' cultures. The Prince of Poets saw himself as a catalyst to build a European readership. One of his own favorite reads was "Le Globe", which took a stance against national prejudices and quests for cultural supremacy.

Nationalist observers interpreted his cause as an un-German mindset. AfD ("Alternative für Deutschland", German right-wing / populist party; editorial note), Pegida („Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes“, German xenophobic and islamophobic organisation; editorial note) and the like would probably put it exactly the same way today. With his strong international network, Goethe was able to drown out these bawling populist voices. Günther Rüther hopes that the intellectuals of our day will do the same. In the 19th and 20th centuries, it was mainly wars that rekindled the European idea. Intellectuals strove to overcome nationalist stereotypes, control hatred and intolerance and, above all, re-forge the lost friendships between peoples, as Rüther writes in his new book: *Die Unmächtigen – Schriftsteller und Intellektuelle seit 1945* [*The Non-Powerful – Writers and Intellectuals Since 1945*], published by Wallstein Verlag. Europe now needs the voices of the intellectuals. They must decipher the language of power and politics of expertise in order to relaunch the European idea.

Pop Culture Instead of Backward-Looking Westernism

As early as the 1990s, Rüdiger Altmann, former advisor to Minister of the Economy Ludwig Erhard, condemned the slow poison of backwards-looking "surrogate ideologies" in the guise of Westernism. It is up to Europe to battle this cultural conflict out in a changing world, and to overcome it with new ideas. Which are those European ideas that make Europe what it is today? It cannot be the idea of a Europe that isolates itself from the rest of the world, a Europe that struggles for its identity, also in a historical sense. The decisive question is: Will Europe find the courage to formulate and live new ideas that are meaningful to the whole world; ideas which, in this sense, are not specifically European? This way Europe could, once again, attain the global relevance it once enjoyed.

Altmann emphasizes the power of pop culture. Our media-based culture voraciously demands and consumes new ideas. "In this, it starkly differs from the culture of old-school, class-based society. In a certain sense, it is free from ideology. At the same time, it generates a highly powerful playing field of communication in our mass societies..." This is exactly what European civil society should convey. Perhaps pop culture is a genuine tool to pull the rug from under nationalists and racists in European countries – in transnational, interactive formats. Goethe and the salon culture championed by Sabina David could serve as a model for transnational web discourse. The dialog-utopia of 18th- and 19th-century scholars was the foundation for reading societies, literary salons and debate clubs, which were, however, limited by local availability. The convergence of digital technologies gives rise to new forms of communication. What we are witnessing now is a departure from closed media formats. Kurd Alsleben and Antje Eske have been experimenting with networked dialog for

more than 30 years using HyperCards. They say that the vital element here is the cultural depth of the conversation. Alsleben and Eske want to sound out the artistic qualities and political dimension of social networks on the web. This is about arduously negotiating one's positions. It is about overcoming resentment and nationalist prejudice. An enlightened European public is necessary in order not to concede any ground to the simplifiers and seducers who agitate using simplistic slogans, who instigate and polarize so they won't have to offer complex solutions for complex problems.

SABRIA DAVID

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

I care about community. But I feel a deeper connection with the people in my life than with a nation – people I communicate with, who give me new ideas. Books I have read. Encounters and landscapes that move me. Language that has an impact on me. We have to address the question what unites us as a society. A sense of unity brings stability. Nation alone does not suffice to feel roots.

Zusammengehörigkeit ist mir wichtig. Aber eher sind es die Menschen, mit den ich lebe, denen ich mich zugehörig fühle als einer Nation – die Menschen, mit denen ich mich austausche, die mich auf neue Gedanken bringen. Bücher, die ich gelesen habe. Begegnungen und Landschaften, die mich bewegen. Sprache, die mich prägt. Wir müssen uns mit der Frage beschäftigen, was uns als Gesellschaft zusammenhält. Es bringt Stabilität, sich verbunden zu fühlen. Nation alleine reicht nicht, um Wurzeln zu fühlen.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

Digital media belong in the world of oral tradition – conversation, discourse, entering into contact is at their very core. In contrast to a real-life conversation, digital media are able to create vicinity across long distances. This is an incredibly valuable treasure which we are not yet exploiting enough. We know from *Heimatsforschung* that we feel connected with places where we have familiar, routine conversations. My wish is that we become familiar this way with the tools of globalization to re-familiarize ourselves with the world and others.

Digitale Medien gehören in die Welt mündlicher Tradition – Gespräch, Diskurs, Kontaktaufnahme sind ihr innerstes Wesen. Im Unterschied zum direkten Gespräch aber können digitale Medien Nähe auch über weite Distanzen herstellen. Das ist ein unglaublich großer Schatz, den wir noch viel zu wenig nutzen. Aus der *Heimatsforschung* wissen wir, dass wir uns dort verbunden fühlen, wo wir vertraute, alltägliche Gespräche führen. Ich wünsche mir, dass wir uns auf diese Weise mit den Instrumenten der Globalisierung die Welt wieder vertraut machen und anderen begegnen können.

MARCO MANCUSO & FILIPPO LORENZIN

CAN WE FORGET ABOUT NATION?

We cannot but look at Nations in terms of cultural and normative sets which are often centuries-old. If we refer to countries as bureaucratic and powerful bodies, it could be interesting to imagine a world - or a part of it - which is no longer circumscribed by political superstructures, social or gender gaps and identity aspects. In recent times, the spreading of the Internet has played a key role in the shaping up of theories promoting the creation of a liquid system allowing the exchange of people, economies, cultures and information.

Non possiamo non pensare alle Nazioni come insiemi di culture e norme spesso secolari; se ci riferiamo ai vari Paesi come enti burocratici e di potere, può essere interessante immaginare un mondo - o una parte di esso - non più delimitato da sovrastrutture politiche, divisioni sociali e di genere, dimensioni identitarie. La diffusione di internet ha giocato un ruolo importante negli ultimi tempi nella formulazione di teorie a favore della creazione di un sistema liquido di scambio di persone, economie, culture e informazioni.

HOW CAN DIGITAL MEDIA ENABLE DISCOURSE AND SHAPE IDENTITY?

However, the matter which is often overlooked in these formulations is that this type of flow without filters cannot be taken for granted on the Net, as it is limited and restrained by laws and customs which are strictly regional. This aspect leads users to behave with other individuals online accordingly, depending on communicative and social conventions laid down from above and/or imposed by the "community" in which individuals live and interact such conventions often serving as common ground. Identity results from the variance between the personal inflection of such worldwide Esperanto and the inflections of the other users.

La questione che viene spesso dimenticata in queste formulazioni è che tale circolazione senza filtri non è assolutamente scontata sul Web, limitata e costretta com'è da leggi, usi e costumi prettamente regionali. Questa dimensione spinge l'utente a relazionarsi online con gli altri individui partendo da convenzioni comunicative e sociali imposte dall'alto e/o dettate dalla "comunità" nella quale egli vive e interagisce, le quali spesso fungono da vocabolario comune. L'identità è data dallo scarto tra la flessione personale di tale esperanto mondiale e quelle degli altri utenti.

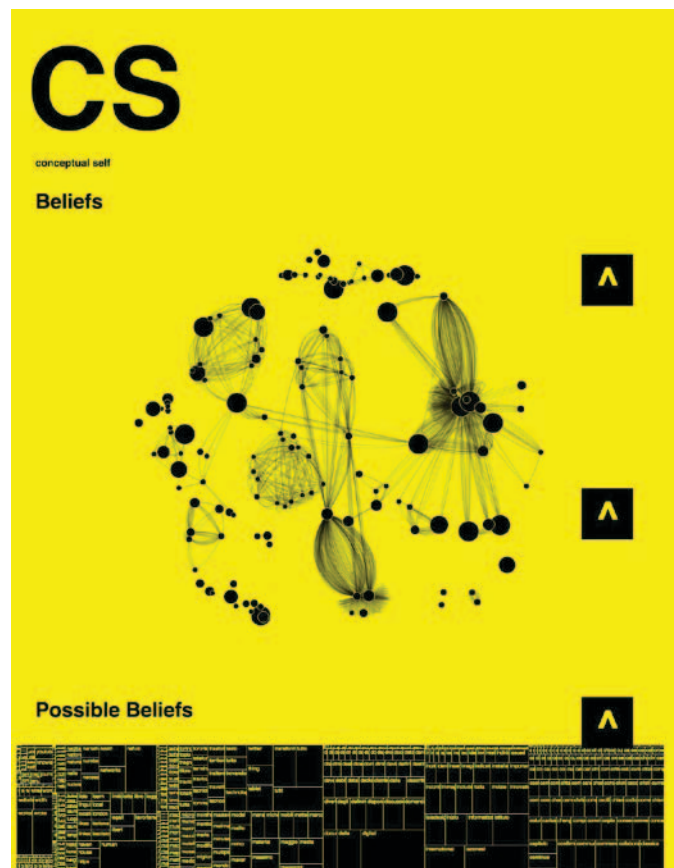
TELEPATHY? ALGORITHMIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY? DIGITAL SUPERPOWERS? INTER-SPECIES AUTOBIOGRAPHY? THE UNCANNY BOUNDARIES OF SELF IN THE AGE OF UBIQUITOUS TECHNOLOGIES

SALVATORE IACONESI & ORIANA PERSICO (AOS)

Lacan's Mirror Stage of development describes the formation of one's identity through the perception of imagery: ensuring who we think we are matches what we see in the mirror. This dual relationship is conflictual and has a twofold interpretation. Firstly, it underlines the relationship between Ego and body, and its illusions of similarity and reciprocity. Secondly, it highlights the relationship between the Imaginary and the Real: it is an illusion of „wholeness“, as counterposed to a fragmented experience of real. Both constitute a conflict: as a child recognizes the image of their whole body, this image comes into opposition with the perception of fragmentation and thus creates a rivalry between the subject and the image. This aggression triggers the identification with the image, with the Imaginary - thus creating the Ego and giving rise to a sense of joy and mastery.

This sensation accompanies us for all of our lives. Being able to bring together the fragmentation of self into an experience of wholeness is deeply satisfying, and it brings on a sense of achievement and completeness. It is interesting that this possibility comes as mediated through external factors, by looking in the mirror and recognizing oneself, or, later on, by looking at the mirrors which are the Others and relating, recognizing and finding similarities and reciprocities, while establishing correlations between the Imaginary and the Real.

When you add social media to this concept, a weird feedback loop forms: social networks, the place in which we curate and narrate ourselves, provide both the platform we use to build our identity as well as the mirror itself. Not only do the interface politics of these platforms steer and direct the ways in which we are actually able (and suggested) to perform the narration of ourselves, but they also select for us the imagery and narratives which we see (the mirror) and in which the fragments come together so we are able to see the „whole“: algorithms, curation, advertising, promoted contents and filter bubbles all create the mirror, as driven by the self and Others and as mediated by the algorithmic domain.



GhostWriter: the Conceptual Self, one of the elements of an algorithmic autobiography
© Salvatore Iaconesi & Oriana Persico

This represents a major transformation in the ways in which we conduct the narration, representation and performance of ourselves and our autobiographies in any form. We are not alone when we write our autobiography. We have never been alone. The Others have always been there through our perception of what is acceptable, expected, true, interesting or desirable.

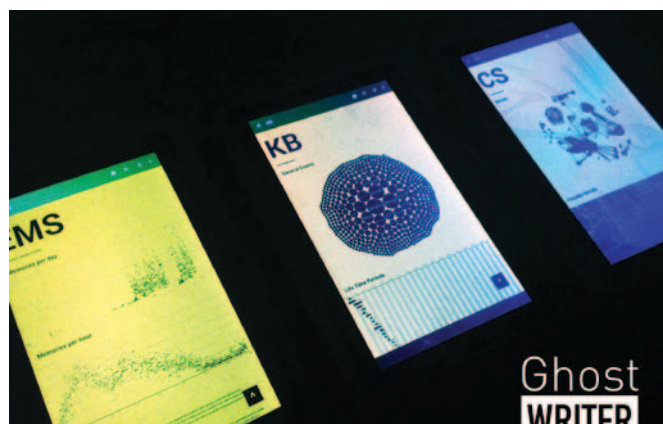
In our hyperconnected era, this fact becomes extreme in more than one way. Our lives are constantly tracked in the form of data, information, expressions, coordinates, signals and transactions - in both conscious and unconscious ways.

Platforms and algorithms analyze, classify and filter what is perceivable and known by others. This processed information is disseminated in the world, creating additional layers of reality as pervasive as dust, which deposits and floats around and which we perceive in multiple ways: as notifications on our smartphones, reviews of places and locations, geo-referenced content, the images of the place we are in, or finally as the understanding of ourselves and the world surrounding us which come to us through other people's interactions, actions and reactions. Our biographies become ubiquitous, through time and space, and interconnected as cybernetic ecosystems with all the other ones. And, at the same time, they are taken out of our control, as they are selected, filtered, interfaced and mediated for us, without the possibility of knowing/understanding how/why/when/what/who.

This opens up unforeseen scenarios. Because, at the same time, through technology we have acquired what would have been considered as super-powers just a few years ago, i.e. remote vision and presence, telepathy, telekinesis and a lot more. Thereby the data, information and expression we produce become accessible, situated in places, readable, interactive and interconnected. We can see things, know things, move things (for example through the Internet of Things), experience things, do things, remotely, virtually, magically, or as part of larger selves constituted by millions of people. We can witness the emergence of new forms of identity and subjectivity, by placing sensors on plants, animals, objects or in environments, which become able to „express themselves“ and thus generate their own autobiographies, participating in our relational ecosystems.

All this is happening while everything is tendentially becoming transactional, financial, encoded and classifiable, and while we face unforeseen issues about our rights, expectations and concerns. The boundaries of self-change become fuzzier, more confused and possibilistic and simultaneously problematic, dangerous and unstable. In this sense, we can start experiencing the flourishing of autobiographies by means of a potentially endless array of possibilities - algorithmic, generative, ubiquitous, disseminated, simultaneous, atemporal, inter-species, data-driven and collective. Unprecedented types of subjects (authors) can come into play.

What we see here is a shift from a concept of identity based on the compact vision of “individual” to a more fluid, polymorphic and recombinant structure: a “multividual”, as Prof. Massimo Canevacci Ribeiro calls it. This refers to us being capable



GhostWriter, the algorithmic autobiography. A novel literary genre: the expanded books © Salvatore Iaconesi & Oriana Persico

of imagining (and performing in) a world in which a variety of entities can become sentient and expressive in terms which we can grasp, understand and relate to, i.e. objects, animals, organizations, entire neighborhoods and cities. The most inevitable fact about this scenario today is its very inevitability. Ubiquitous technologies permeate our everyday and work lives to the point that our physical existence is soaked up by our virtual one, essentially causing a convergence and bringing on a fundamental shift to our perceptive domains. As a result, our state of hyper-connectivity produces new forms of closeness to others.

Going back to Lacan, this influences the concept of ‘reality’. Reality is complicated and refers to our experience of the world, which is illusory and therefore opposed to the register of the Real - the Imaginary and Symbolic taken together as mutually integrated. Reality is therefore a fictional and relationally defined construction of images and signifiers, which is a good definition of Facebook or of other forms of social media interactions. Our experience (of social media) is a collective fantasy produced by the mutual production and exchange of selective idealisations of our lives, which is also abstracted, taken out of our control and reassembled algorithmically in ways which are only partially within our control. We might also say that these ways not only produce the extension of sense and perception through the “super powers” which we mentioned, or the capability to form new human/non-human relations and bonds, but also a different conscious sphere, interacting with our other ones.

This leads us to Lacan's notion of “wall of language” – as a system which is abstracted from all subjects, social networks (like language) constitute an inhuman obstruction between us and our interlocutors. Which is, possibly, our main concern in exploring our freedom to determine, represent and perform ourselves.

BIOGRAPHIES

ALTERAZIONI VIDEO

is an artistic collective founded in 2004 and based in New York and Berlin. Their work has been exhibited at museums and international institutions, such as: 52th Venice Biennale, Manifesta 7, MoMA PS1 New York, Performa IX New York, Pac Museum Milan, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation Turin, Maxxi Museum Rome, Hamburger Bahnhof Museum Berlin.

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ANDRÉ ALVES

lives between Lever (Portugal) and Gothenburg (Finland). He is an artist and an associate researcher at Valand Academy - University of Gothenburg. His current research observes transitional spaces/objects/situations and the renegotiation of meaning of the concepts of instability by looking at the potentiality of the concept of impasse through an approach crossing visual and textual forms.

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ANTO LLOVERAS

is a Madrid, Mexico City and London based architect, conceptual artist and curator. He is co-founder of THE KIWI EXPERIENCE architecture office and founder of CAPA, a council on new hermeneutics and research in Madrid.

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AOS - ART IS OPEN SOURCE

Led by Salvatore Iaconesi and Oriana Persico, AOS is an international network exploring the mutation of human beings with the wide and ubiquitous accessibility and availability of digital technologies and networks. AOS moves across arts and sciences, using technology, communication, performance, art and design to instantiate emotional actions and processes that are able to expose the dynamics of our contemporary world in its complexity.

www.artisopensource.net

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completed her PhD in Information Society at the Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy. She spent periods of research at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, and at the Centre d'Analyses et d'Intervention

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With a background in visual arts and a focus on media-art and digital culture, Bram Crevits is lecturer at the design department of the School of Arts at the University College Ghent, Belgium. As a curator, programmer or maker he has been initiating or was involved in numerous conferences, exhibitions, and workshops on digital culture.

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CARLOS ROD

is an editor, playwright, writer and curator. Holding degrees in advertising / PR and dramaturgy / stage direction. Since 1996 he has co-managed the [La uñaRoTa publishing house](#). He has been a member of the Armadillo collective since 2005 and has created and developed three productions which have been staged in various festivals.

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lives and works in Lisbon and in Jena. She studied English and Russian linguistics and literature in Jena and Moscow, photography and media art in Rochester, Bournemouth and Leipzig. She holds a Master of Fine Arts at the Bauhaus University, Weimar and Brookes University Oxford.

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DIRK VON GEHLEN

is a Munich-based journalist and author. He is head of Social Media / Innovation at German daily Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ), author of "Mashup - Lob der Kopie" (Mashup - an eulogy of the copy) and "Eine neue Version ist verfügbar" (A new version is available). www.dirkvongehlen.de

ENNO PARK

major in Information Management and writes for media such as “Elektrischer Reporter” (The Electric Reporter). He studies the impact of digital change on society all the way to a fusion of man and machine. Since receiving his cochlear implants, he also refers to himself as a cyborg. Co-founder of the association Cyborgs e.V. in Berlin.

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FILIPPO LORENZIN

is an independent curator and critic of contemporary art. He works as author and commentator for several international magazines, i.e. Artribune and Digicult. He actively collaborates with many international magazines as author and commentator.

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GUNNAR SOHN

was born in 1961. He is a Berliner residing in Bonn, Master of Economics, free-lance economics writer, wayfarer between the worlds, blogger, moderator, columnist and passionate real-time communicator.

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GWENOLA WAGON

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gwenolawagon.com

IOCOSE

are a collective of four artists and have been working as a group since 2006. IOCOSE's art investigates the after-failure moment of the teleological narratives of technological development, in regards to both their enthusiastic and pessimistic visions.

www.iocose.org

JAVIER CHAVARRÍA DIAZ

holds a PhD in Fine Arts; his activity as an artist spans contemporary art and the performing arts. As a visual artist, he focuses on installations and drawings and is also an art

theorist with numerous published works. Besides this, he works as a scenographer and wardrobe artist for theatre and cinema. He combines both activities with his role as a university lecturer and his work as a manager and curator in the fields of contemporary art and the performing arts.

JEFF GUESS

is an artist and professor of digital media at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts Paris-Cergy. His work, be it in photography, expanded cinematic forms, or software-based installations and performances, is predominantly an investigation of the technical image and its multifarious entanglements with language.

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LUCILLE CALMEL

is a Belgian performer, professor and researcher. In Europe and worldwide, indoors and outdoors, physically and virtually, Lucille Calmel launches and participates in performances, workshops and events. In 2015 her digital work was presented as part of a retrospective at the Centre Puertas de Castilla à Murcia (Spain).

vimeo.com/lucillecalmel

MARCO MANCUSO

is an art critic and curator. He is founder of Digicult, an online platform that examines the impact of media technologies and science on art, design, culture and contemporary society. He teaches at various art schools and co-curated various art shows and exhibitions.

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MARIE LECHNER

As a journalist, Marie Lechner writes extensively about digital art and culture. Besides writing, she does research in media archeology at PAMAL (Preservation & Art - Media Archaeology Lab), organises conferences and co-curates exhibitions on digital culture.

MARIJKE DE ROOVER

lives in Ghent, Belgium. After having graduated in Fine Arts, she works as artist and performer. Her work was shown in several exhibitions and shows, i.e. with Bozar (Brussels), European

Media Art Festival (Osnabrück) and Museum Angewandte Kunst (Frankfurt).

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MARTHE VAN DESSEL

is an activist and performer who creates interfaces, devices and protocols to instigate our urban and institutional hardware. She engages in the administrative, cultural, political dimension of personal and collective identities. By triggering intersubjective alliances she confronts the 'self & other' to the commons, co-authorship and the redistribution into the public domain. She is the initiator of bolwerk:

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MARTINA PICKHARDT

Is working on Innovation, HoloLens, Business Models based on Data, Privacy. Former Microsoft Lead Architect – Future of IT, Strategy & Innovation Team.

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MATEO FEIJÓO

graduated in philology and theatre acting at the Royal School for Dramatic Arts (RESAD) in Madrid. He now teaches at the University Carlos III de Madrid (Master and Expert Theatre Creation) and at the National Institute of Public Administration INAP (Master of cultural management). Besides teaching, he works as artist, artistic director, curator and adviser.

MONOPERRO

is a self-taught artist whose work is based on the arena of consciousness. At the age of 33 he suffered a personal crisis that transformed all important aspects of his life. Since then he follows an esoteric spiritual path, exploring shamanism, alchemy, tarot, or other healing arts. He offers mentoring sessions and has published two books.

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NICOLAS MAIGRET

After having completed his studies in intermedia art, Nicolas Maigret joined the LocusSonus lab in Aix-en-Provence, France, where he explored networks as a creative tool. As a curator, he initiated the disnovation.net research, a critique of the innovation

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ÓSCAR GARCÍA VILLEGAS (ALIAS DR. KUROGO)

graduated in Stage Direction in 1996. He works as composer, music producer and stage director, as well as teacher, dealing with creation for the stage, interpretation, musicality and technology. In 2004, he co-founded the Gichi-Gichi Do collective. Currently, he has focused on his activity as a performance and sound artist.

PAULO MENDES

works in Lisbon and Porto. Trained plastic artist, curator of exhibits, and producer of cultural projects. Has presented his work individually and collectively since the early 90s. Over 20 years, he has participated in numerous exhibit-based and performance-based projects, having curated and produced over seventy exhibits.

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PEDRO PORTUGAL

studied painting at the Escola Superior de Belas-Artes de Lisboa and received his PD from the University of Évora. Along with Manuel Vieira and Pedro Proença, he is co-founder of the post-logical paradox movement "Homeostética" and co-founder of the neo-dada group "Ases da Paleta". Currently, he is director of the department of visual arts and design at the University of Évora.

PETER GOBENS

earned his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature with a thesis about Paul Celan's Ungaretti translations and habilitated in 2011 with his thesis "World Literature. Models of Transnational Perception of Literature in the 19th century". Since 2006, he is assistant professor at the department of Comparative Studies at Ruhr-Universität Bochum.

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RYBN

is an extra-disciplinary artistic research platform, funded in 2000 as a web entity, disseminated into several servers all over the

internet and physically present in Paris, Montréal, Berlin and Brussels. RYBN.ORG operates through interactive & networked installations, digital/analog visual cross-performances and pervasive computing.

rybn.org

SABRIA DAVID

is media researcher and co-founder of the Slow Media Institut. Researching and consulting on the digital change and its impact on society, working environment and the world of media, she co-authored the Slow Media Manifesto, as well as the Declaration of Liquid Culture. Besides this, she developed the Interaktionsmodell Digitaler Arbeitsschutz and is member of the board of Wikimedia Deutschland.

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SANDRA VIEIRA JÜRGENS

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SILVIO LORUSSO

is an Italian artist, designer, and researcher interested in the complicated relationship between technology and society. He took part in exhibitions and events such as Transmediale (Berlin, Germany), Impakt (Utrecht, Netherlands), Adhocracy (Athens, Greece). His writing has appeared in Prismo, Printed Web 3, Metropolis M, Progetto Grafico, Digicult, Diid, and Doppiozero.

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SONIA GÓMEZ

is a performer, dancer and choreographer. Thematic axes of her work are the construction of identity, but also the discovery of certain social deceptions across the art and the deceptions of the art across the performances, which in case of Sonia Gómez are open and public social acts.

www.soniagomez.com

SONSOLES HERREROS LAVIÑA

holds a degree in French Literature and a Master's degree in Cultural Management. She is head of the Arts Seminar at Madrid's Carlos III University and acts as coordinator of the Theatre, Music and Dance Seminars. She leads educational projects such as the School of Audiences and is in charge of the European project "Crossing Stages" within the EU's EACEA agency's "Creative Culture" programme since 2013.

TOMMASO MATANO

studies aesthetics, philosophy, narratology and new media. His main interests are the impact of technologies on self-identity, new forms of narrative as well as visual culture.

VIC SNAKE

was born in 1985 and studied Graphic design at Istituto Europeo di Design.

Several exhibitions

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lives in Ghent, Belgium. He is head of Sint-Lucas Beeldende Kunst, Ghent, curator and adviser at LUCA school of arts and lecturer at LUCA drama.

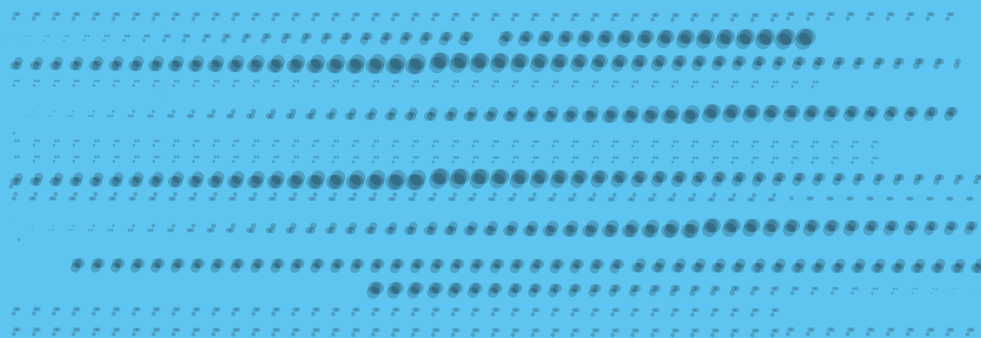
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Published by

Goethe-Institut Paris
17, avenue d'Iéna
75116 Paris
France
www.goethe.de/paris

Slow Media Institut
Forschung und Beratung zum digitalen Wandel

