



**REINHARD STORZ  
INTERNET-BASED ART IN MUSEUMS, PRIVATE ART  
COLLECTIONS AND GALLERIES**

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THIS STUDY GIVES INFORMATION ON LONG-STANDING AND CURRENT COLLECTIONS OF NET-BASED ART AND PRESENTS GALLERIES AND ART FAIRS THAT ALSO OFFER OR SHOW NET-BASED MEDIA ART. THE ONLINE VERSION OF THIS STUDY PROVIDES A DOCUMENTATION (SCREEN SHOTS) OF THE WEB INTERFACES OF ALL THE INSTITUTIONS DISCUSSED.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research collates information on the past and current status of net-based art in art collections, the art market and the exhibition practice of art institutions. Using selected examples, it describes new and old approaches to market offers and the collection of net-based art. Just like archaeologists search under the surface of the Earth for traces of past life in zones classified by era, in our web investigations, we consult the archive buttons of museums to find out about any net-based art they may have collected in the past. Sometimes only fragments of earlier online exhibition projects and collections can still be accessed, but it is often the case that old collections are still accessible even if it has been some time since they were set up or updated. As the research shows, it would be wise with the current examples to widen the focus and talk about the concept of digital media art rather than net art alone. The increasing bandwidth available for transmission of data via the Internet now enables us to publish audio and video art forms on the net as well. For instance, remix and samplings of existing material – which are concerned more with small picture formats, the formal meaning of loops and potential dissemination to a large and disparate net audience – create different types of content and aesthetic qualities in this genre to those seen in older video art. We will therefore include such movies and 3D animations in our investigation into net-based art.

We define a net art collection as a curated collection of works hosted on the server of that collection, or a collection whose website states that the art works are owned by that collection. With this type of collection, work is usually produced and financed as part of a contractual obligation (as a commission) or the finished work is acquired by the collection. Variations on such «collections» include curated themed projects or online exhibitions of net art works that are available via the project's own interface, with the exhibited works being hosted on the project's server. Net art collections have also been created on web platforms which serve to promote net art either independently or institutionally. In terms of their structure and aesthetics, these platforms are more reminiscent of archives than art collections and the works hosted on the platform server remain the property of the artist. However, these platforms still fulfill our requirement that the collection must be a curated collection of works with its own server. Another type of collection that can be distinguished from the types discussed above is «links list». These are compilations of titles created with or without the knowledge of the artists that link to selected works on other servers. Such lists are not collections of works in the strictest sense, and they also often have a problem with broken links within a short space of time. This type of collection is similar to the original principle of a hypertext and has produced some important examples. We will use the term «links list» for these examples, particularly when discussing early developments.

## 2 HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF NET ART COLLECTIONS

Various art institutions in the USA have promoted net art for a limited period of time or have organized exhibitions containing net-based works, with the exhibition interface still available via the museum's homepage.<sup>1</sup> From 1997 to 2003, the **Walker Art Collection Minneapolis** operated **Gallery 9**, an information platform and <link list> of the work of over one hundred net artists.<sup>2</sup> Within this framework, the Walker Art Center established the **Digital Arts Study Collection**, one of whose most prominent collection pieces was the net art platform **äda'web** containing online works by well-known artists.<sup>3</sup> The **Whitney Museum of American Art NYC** has a link to a so-called **Artport** on its website under «Special Exhibitions», which is defined as a «Portal to net art – online gallery space for commissioned net art projects». Alongside commissioned works, the **Artport** also contains a maintained links list to net art. Established since 2001, the inventory does not appear to have been further updated after 2006.<sup>4</sup> The **Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles** operates a digital gallery under the Collections section, where net-based works dating from 2001 to 2004 are available.<sup>5</sup> And the **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art**<sup>6</sup> has had a link on its homepage to an **e.space** till 2008, which links primarily to commissioned works from the **Art in Technological Times** exhibition in 2001.<sup>7</sup> Finally, there are links to two net-based works on the website of the **Guggenheim Museum New York** under «Collection > Art-work Type > Internet Art».<sup>8</sup> In 2008, the links to the works themselves were removed from the site and the works are now only documented with a picture. One of the works (**netflag**) is, however, still visible on the Guggenheim server.<sup>9</sup>

European net art collections were established at the end of the 1990s by the **Foundation Cartier**<sup>10</sup> in Paris and the **Stedelijk Museum** in Amsterdam, but they were only in existence for a short period of time. The **Capricorn** exhibition from 1996 is documented in the Stedelijk Museum's archive with links to some still intact net art works.<sup>11</sup> The **Centre Pompidou** in Paris also bought net art. Besides traces dating back to 2003<sup>12</sup> acquisitions of net art are linked on the information site of **Espace des Collections Nouveaux Médias**.<sup>13</sup> An offer from 2006 is summarizing the conditions: «We are willing to buy an unlimited multiple of the Internet work in a CD ROM format. The external links, if any, should be taken off. The Internet works are going to be presented at the Espace Nouveaux Médias and at the Internet site of the museum. The Centre Pompidou buys Internet works for approximately 500 euros.»<sup>14</sup> In Switzerland, the **Centre pour l'Image Contemporaine** in Geneva established a small collection of net-based works between 1997 and 2000, which were still accessible via the Centre website under «Projets Internet» in April 2010.<sup>15</sup> Only some fragments of the Net Art Section of **documenta X** in Kassel from 1997 can still be accessed. Together with the document interface, some of the works are now hosted on the culture server **ljudmila.org** in Ljubljana.<sup>16</sup> In Budapest, the **C3: Center for Culture & Communication Foundation** created the

**C3 Collection** with media art and net art by local as well as international artists between 1996 and 2003.<sup>17</sup> Financed by various private foundations, **C3's** aim is still to link the worlds of art, science and technology. In France, the **Espace Multimédia Gantner** based in the Bourgogne region near Belfort organized a **Collection d'oeuvres d'art numérique** which incorporated an offline version containing works by European and American net artists.<sup>18</sup> A small collection of net art works from 2001 can be found on the server of the magazine publisher **Heise**, which for some years had financed **Telepolis**, an influential online magazine for media culture. Works from six artists and artist groups were commissioned and exhibited here under the title «Shopping Windows».<sup>19</sup> For a long time, the **Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie ZKM** in Karlsruhe pioneered the way in which net art was defined and procured in Europe. Since the 1990s, ZKM has been developing a media art collection, but no net art works are included in the collection list.<sup>20</sup> However, the web interface for the historically important net art exhibition **net\_condition** (1999/2000) at the ZKM has been retained. Its concept is that of a links list, and the works displayed are located on the artists' servers.<sup>21</sup> Future exhibitions and dissemination of net art collections by internationally influential media art institutions such as the ZKM or at important festivals such as the **Ars Electronica** in Linz should not be ruled out, as it is possible that neither the artists nor the supporting institutions were aware of how these works would increase in value at the time when they were created.<sup>22</sup> A collection of historical net art items is currently being worked on at the **Ludwig Boltzmann Institute für Media.Art.Research** in Linz. The research project **netpioneers 1.0** is investigating materials from the art platform **thing.net** (NYC 1993–2002), **thing.at** (Vienna 1993–2004) and **public netbase** (Vienna 1994–2006), as well as a work by the Swiss artist group **etoy**.<sup>23</sup> Whether net-based works from the **thing** projects will be re-published in the form of an «art collection» or scientific archive remains to be seen.

### 3. CURRENT NET-BASED ART COLLECTIONS

#### RHIZOME AT THE NEW MUSEUM

In New York in 2003, the Internet platform **rhizome.org**<sup>24</sup>, a platform known worldwide for promoting and displaying digital and net-based art works since 1996, entered into cooperation with the **New Museum**, which was founded in 1977 as the **Museum of Contemporary Art** on Bowery Street in New York.<sup>25</sup> As a so-called «affiliate» of the museum, **Rhizome** remained an independent project but was able to take advantage of material and logistic advantages and – thanks to the museum context – was also able to present its collection of media art to a wider audience of art enthusiasts. In return for a comparatively low financial contribution, the **New Museum** acquired a high level of specialist competence from its new partner concerning issues related to digital media art, as well as a rich

information archive and the opportunity to network with the world-wide media art community. With the **ArtBase** and annual commissions, **Rhizome** has accomplished important work in terms of promoting and procuring net-based art, but it remains unclear which projects **Rhizome** hosts on its own server and which it merely links to from the website. In an e-mail dated 2/3/09, the project's self-conception as an «online art collection» was at least clear: «Rhizome is pleased to announce that the 2010 Commissions cycle is now open. Founded in 2001, the Rhizome Commissions Program is designed to support emerging artists with financial and institutional resources. In the seventh year of funding for the Program, Rhizome will award grants, with amounts ranging from \$1'000 to \$5'000, for the creation of significant works of new media art. Artists who receive a commission will also be invited to speak at **Rhizome's** affiliate, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and to archive their work in the ArtBase, a comprehensive online art collection.»

#### DIA ART FOUNDATION

The **Dia Art Foundation** NYC has been regularly commissioning artistic web projects since 1995<sup>26</sup>. As of May 2009, the collection comprised 34 works, some by famous artists from the international art world. This collection is indexed on the **Dia Art Foundation's** homepage under the heading Artist's Web Projects and is given equal status alongside the other five collections and the foundation's funding program. Since the **Dia Art Foundation** was established in 1974, the promotion of contemporary «risk-taking» art projects has been part of its remit. It is thus equally committed today to collecting net-based art projects as it was to supporting prominent land art projects (**Spiral Jetty**, **Lightning Field** and **Roden Crater**) in the 1970s.

#### TURBULENCE.ORG

The NYC-based funding program **Turbulence** is not a net art collection per se but does fulfill the criteria of being a curated collection of works with its own server, in a way that hardly any other platform does. **Turbulence.org's** aim and current self-conception is stated on its website in the top left-hand corner: «turbulence - commissioning and supporting net art for 13 years: 1996-2009».<sup>27</sup> As a subsidiary project of New Radio and Performing Arts Inc.<sup>28</sup>, **Turbulence** supports up to twenty projects a year with resources of between \$2'000 and \$4'000 - as of spring 2010, a total of approximately 160 works have been awarded financial support. The works are exclusively hosted on the **Turbulence** server for the first three years. This hosting policy is advantageous for the public because it means that **turbulence.org** has no broken links. Along with **Rhizome**, **Turbulence's** funding program is vitally important for the support of net-based art. And as a net art collection based on its own server, **Turbulence** remains unrivaled, at least in as far as the extent of the collection and spectrum of ideas it covers. In contrast to **Rhizome**, which has an association with the New Museum of Contemporary Art, **Turbulence** remains a program with no link to the classic art business.

### COMPUTERFINEARTS.COM

The **Computer Fine Arts Collection** is a collection explicitly designed as a «net art collection and archive». <sup>29</sup> In 2001, the media artist Doron Golan began to build an online collection of art works published on the web. The collection was taken over in 2003 by the Cornell University Library and is part of their Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art, a Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections. Today, the **Computer Fine Arts Collection** is one of the most comprehensive collections of net-based art. With almost 100 artists represented, the collection seemed to follow an encyclopedia type listing up until 2007. As befits its intention of being both collection and archive, the list-like character of the collection's website is reminiscent of an alphabetically organized archive. Thanks to the **NETworking – Net Art From the Computer Fine Arts Collection** exhibition <sup>30</sup>, which took place in the Haifa Museum of Art from November 2007 until March 2008, the **Computer Fine Arts Collection** has a catalog of selected works available to download as a PDF file. <sup>31</sup>

### TATE GALLERY GB

Out of all the large European museum collections, only the British **Tate Gallery** is involved in net-based art. In Spring 2009, it offered a collection of thirteen net art works on its website under the heading «Intermedia Art». These works were commissioned by the museum from 2000 onwards. <sup>32</sup> The **Tate Gallery** stated that its aim in collecting these works was, «to support artists in applying new techniques and methods as well as providing more opportunities to distribute art work outside the exhibition room. The program will also address art that comments on the social and political implications of new technology and practices that challenge traditional ideas of the art object; including work that is process-driven, participatory or interactive.» The **Tate Gallery's** Intermedia Art website, which is sponsored by BT (originally British Telecom) also regularly uses the broadcasting possibilities of the web to publish so-called broadcasts, interviews, media art events and symposia from the various domains of Intermedia Art. The list for 2008 contains 14 online offers.

### MUSEO EXTREMEÑO E IBEROAMERICANO DE ARTE CONTEMPORANEO (MEIAC)

The Spanish Museo **MEIAC** in Badajoz has been collecting net art for several years under the title **NETescopio – Visor de Arte en Red** (English: **Net Art Viewer**) <sup>33</sup>. The collection today comprises 40 works by 36 artists, and between 100 and 7'000 euros was paid for each individual work. <sup>34</sup> The interface of the online collection contains two links to each work: a link to a copy of the work on the museum server and a link to the work on the artist's server. As part of the project **Museo Inmaterial**, the collection's catalog was described as follows: «NETescopio es un archivo en línea en continuo desarrollo destinado a preservar obras artísticas generadas para la red. Este nuevo proyecto del MEIAC, enmarcado dentro del concepto de Museo Inmaterial, tiene por objetivo el resguardo, la difusión y la catalogación de dichas obras utilizando para ello el

mismo medio de Internet, posibilitando de esa forma su crecimiento y actualización constantes.» An exhibition entitled **Netescopio – Desmontages** containing 31 net art works took place in the Museo MEIAC from November 2008 to February 2009, for which an online catalog was also set up.<sup>35</sup>

#### LX 2.0

**LX 2.0** is a curated online project by Galerie Lisboa 20 arte contemporanea. Although the gallery's sales program is focused on works created using older forms of art media, from paintings to videos, the **LX 2.0** project has commissioned net-based art since 2007 and archived these works on its platform<sup>36</sup>. According to gallery owner Miguel Nabinho's program notes, «new media art» is currently not a mainstream part of the commercial art world but it would be naive to think that this non-commercial status will last indefinitely. At the moment, the **LX 2.0** project concept does not have commercial goals for the works that have been commissioned. Galerie Lisboa 20 arte contemporanea's **LX 2.0** project looks like one possible option for the commercial future of net-based art. This means a combination of commercial work and curatorial practice like that practiced by [DAM] in Berlin, for example (see below).

#### WWW.NEEN.ORG / SUPERNEEN.COM

The **Neen** Project was exhibited in the Gagosian Gallery in NY in 2000, and was also credited as «the first Internet Art Movement». Founded by the internationally successful artist Miltos Manetas, who produces net-based art alongside paintings and videos, the website [www.neen.org](http://www.neen.org)<sup>37</sup> quickly became a platform for young artists from various countries who all provide links to their net-based works here. In 2001, Manetas wrote in the **Neen** manifesto that the newly launched term «neen» would come to be associated with an as yet undefined generation of artists and designers. In the meantime, a long links list of over 160 works has been compiled on [www.neen.org](http://www.neen.org). The list's quality is evidence of curatorial care and attention and group identity.

#### MANETAS COLLECTION

While [neen.org](http://neen.org) is merely a links list for a «virtual» collection, the **Manetas Collection**, which was established on the Internet in 2005 by Miltos Manetas, contained ten «web-based artworks» as of January 2009.<sup>38</sup> Manetas' way of listing artist, title of work and collection in the header of the html page (e.g. Elastic Enthusiastic, Angelo Plessas, Courtesy Miltos Manetas Collection, 2004) was a model for later collections. Other ideas, such as linking the work with a «title domain» (using the same example: [www.elasticenthusiastic.com](http://www.elasticenthusiastic.com)) were already being used as early as 1997 for Frieze/Kossatz's work [www.anworten.de](http://www.anworten.de)<sup>39</sup> and by the sales forum of the net gallery **Art.Teleportacia** in 1998.<sup>40</sup> The website [www.manetas-collection.com](http://www.manetas-collection.com) is not always accessible, and occasionally comes up with the message «Manetas Collection is closed for installation» with a request for a password.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4. ONLINE GALLERIES FOR NET ART AND EARLY INITIATIVES TO SELL NET-BASED ART

##### ART.TELEPORTACIA.ORG (JULY 1998 – 1999)

The first online gallery for net art was founded in 1998 by the Russian media artist Olia Lialina under the name **Art.Teleportacia**, but was wound up following little success in online sales.<sup>42</sup> The idea of establishing this gallery was motivated more by the intention to inspire discourse about the marketability and thus also the value of new media art for museums rather than by financial expectations. Reactions to **art.teleportacia** appeared in the New York Times and in the then authoritative German online magazine **Telepolis**.<sup>43</sup> Lialina named the gallery's offer of five works by well-known net artists «Miniatures of the heroic Period» which, with its ironic undertone, was understood as an art historical term for the birth of a new art form. The originals were made available for purchase as a web address (URL), the price per work was a maximum of \$ 2'000.<sup>44</sup> Today, a good ten years later, the gallery project and the five artists whose works were displayed, Heath Bunting, Jodi, Alexei Shulgin, Vuk Cosic and Olia Lialina, have already secured their place in the still early history of net art. The main aspects of the gallery project are documented on Olia Lialina's work platform.<sup>45</sup> Some further elements (texts) from the original project can be found in an «appropriation» by the Italian net artist group 0100101110101101.org, which turned the acquisition of others' projects into a form of art in 1999<sup>46</sup>, but still includes caricature-like contortions and anomalies in the copies. In the same year, Heath Bunting, one of the artists from **Art.Teleportacia**, fostered artistic commentary on the financial failure of the gallery project. Under the project name **Donate net.art to a collector**<sup>47</sup>, he invited artists to donate their online works to art collections via the Internet. However, art collectors have to pay fees of \$ 1'000 a month or \$ 5'000 a year to receive **net.art** for free.

##### GIZMOLAND.COM (2000 – 2001)

From May 2000 to June 2001, the French media art curators Isabelle Arvers and Jean-Christophe Mahé operated the Internet platform **gizmoland.com**<sup>48</sup> as an «outil de vente, de promotion et d'information». <sup>49</sup> The site was promoted as a «Boutique» for publishing and selling small digital works from the fields of «electronic music, graphic design, animation, games and interactive films». The prices were very low, ranging from 5 to 30 francs, and work was paid for by credit card (carte bleue). According to a statement by Isabelle Arvers, who later became «Commissaire Nouveaux Médias» at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and oversaw its net art program, the art market aspect of **gizmoland.com**, with its low prices and free parallel offering of daily cultural information and media-theoretical texts, remained more in the background.



### ARTCART.DE (2000 – 2002)

The online gallery for net art **Artcart** was founded in 2000 by Mainz artist Mario Hergueta.<sup>50</sup> The program comprised some 20 titles of works offered as multiples and listed prices of between \$ 50 and \$ 2'000. These were paid for online by credit card. The list of works was no longer updated or maintained from the end of 2001, and every third link to a work now produces an error message. As of 2009, the gallery's web files are no longer linked to the index site [www.artcart.de](http://www.artcart.de) and the following farewell sentence now comes up on the site: «If there is no system to guarantee reliable distribution, the work disappears.» After **Art.Teleportacia**, **Artcart** was the second gallery to be founded that specialized in net art, and like **Art.Teleportacia**, it was an artist-inspired initiative. A page documenting the **Artcart** project can be found on the founder's website.<sup>51</sup>

### EARLY SALES OF NET ART WORKS

Net art was already being supported financially by foundations and institutions as early as 1996. In 1998, the first net-based art works were bought by art institutions and collectors.<sup>52</sup> The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis bought the net art platform **ada'web**, which was founded in 1995, together with all its individual works and made it available to the Internet public via the Buttons «Collection» / «NET.ART» on its website.<sup>53</sup> According to the artist, the Fondation Cartier Paris bought the works **self** (1998) and **Longitude** (1999) by Valéry Grancher – a «Contrat de Vente» was received for the works.<sup>54</sup> German art historian and net art theoretician Hans Dieter Huber bought the work [www.antworten.de](http://www.antworten.de) by the media artists Holger Friese and Max Kossatz for DM 3'000, complete with hard drive, software applications and codes, not least to find out how such a sales transaction functioned and what a suitable contract would look like.<sup>55</sup> In a long article for the **New York Times** the art critic Matthew Mirapaul discussed the question of whether the monetary value of net art could be determined.<sup>56</sup> In 1999, the Russian online gallery **Art.Teleportacia** sold Olia Lialina's work **If You Want to Clean Your Screen** to the Belgian Design Studio **entropy8zuper**, which had designed its own collection website<sup>57</sup>. In the same year, Wolfgang Staehle, the media artist and founder of the well-known New York art platform **thing.net**, put the oldest **Thing** interface (from 1996) and **Thing** domain up for sale on ebay. Staehle considered a bid of \$1'000 submitted by a curator of the Guggenheim Museum to be unsatisfactory.<sup>58</sup> A number of other prominent investigations and tests concerning the market launch of net art should be mentioned here: in 2000, the New York artist John F. Simon Jr. offered personalized versions of his java applet work **Every Icon** online. These could be bought via Amazon for \$ 20 and put on the Internet via the buyer's own server.<sup>59</sup> A detailed license agreement regulates owners' rights<sup>60</sup>. In 2002, the Italian artist Carlo Zanni initiated a three-day online workshop entitled **2P\_\$: Peer to Peer Selling Processes for net\_things** dealing with the issue of selling net-based art. International media artists

and curators expressed their opinions on Zanni's question «Is it possible to sell networked based artworks?» In addition, in 2004 Zanni developed a series of portable server sculptures entitled **Altarboy**, which was aimed at facilitating the collection of net art.<sup>61</sup> In Germany in 2003, the Volksfürsorge collection bought a version of Cornelia Sollfranks **net.art generator** for its large contemporary art collection. The corporate director of Volksfürsorge took part in an interview with the artist.<sup>62</sup> In 2004, the Irish net theoretician Garrett Lynch wrote a summary of issues surrounding the sale of net art for the **Net Art Review**.<sup>63</sup>

## 5. NET ART AND DIGITAL MEDIA ART OFFERINGS IN ESTABLISHED GALLERIES AND AT ART FAIRS

In the USA and Europe, there are some galleries since the 1980s which have specialized in early forms of media art. Video art (tapes and installations) and electronic/computer-based interactive installations form part of their collections. The proportion of these galleries is very small when compared to the total number of galleries in existence. As many artists today use video as well as other mediums, video art works are offered even by many ordinary galleries for a number of years. It appears that the same thing may happen to net-based works: Since 2008, the Chinese gallery **Osage**<sup>64</sup> has been exhibiting the net-based work **Milk** by the artist Shu Lea Cheang alongside photographic and installation works, and in Spring 2009, the Zurich-based gallery **Nicola Von Senger** exhibited the work of Viennese artist Thomas Feuerstein, including his net-based installation **Manifest**<sup>65</sup>. The Italian gallery **Project Gentili** shows the net-based installation **GeoGoo** by the artist couple jodi.<sup>66</sup> And as part of its gallery program at the art trade fair **Art Basel** in 2009, the **Vitamin Creative Space** from Guangzhou marketed animations by the Chinese artist Cao Fei for 26'000 Euro. The animations were created as part of her Second Life **RMB City** project.<sup>67</sup> It is also interesting that digital media art focused offers were launched at various art trade fairs in 2008 and 2009. These initiatives still take the form of special exhibitions and off-program events rather than full-blown art fair offers.

### 235 MEDIA ART GALLERY, COLOGNE (SINCE 1982)

The Cologne-based company **235 Media GmbH**<sup>68</sup> led by Ulrich Leistner and Axel Wirths is one of the most important media art galleries in the world today and its catalog comprises video works and interactive installations by more than 120 media artists from 17 countries. **235 Media** also offers technical media and curatorial services for museums. Owner Axel Wirths discussed the decision not to deal in net art, saying, «Up to now, we have made a conscious decision to not become involved in this genre because we wanted to concentrate on our core aims. However, I consider the Internet to be the greatest and most creative medium for art and I see a lot of opportunities here.»<sup>69</sup> When it was founded in 1982,

**235 Media** was a pioneer in the field of media art. Although video art plays an important role in contemporary art development, and although interactive sculptures are now accepted as part of art history, the owners of **235 Media** have recognized that advisory and curatorial services must also be part of the remit of a specialized media art gallery. In 2006, 235 Media launched the **imai - inter media art institute foundation** together with the City of Düsseldorf. This foundation is a media art agency that now oversees the comprehensive video art collection built up by **235 Media** since the 1980s, as well as the distribution channels associated with this collection.<sup>70</sup>

#### **POSTMASTERS GALLERY, NEW YORK (SINCE 1984/1996)**

The **Postmasters Gallery**<sup>71</sup>, managed by Magdalena Sawon and Tamas Banovich, displays digital installations and screen-based works alongside paintings, sculptures and photography. Artists whose work includes web-based elements, such as Wolfgang Staehle, John Klima, etoy and Kristin Lucas are among those displayed in the gallery. However, with the exception of the installative webcam projections by Staehle, no net art works are listed in the gallery's exhibition catalog.

The **Postmasters Gallery**'s early commitment to new media art and the quality of the exhibited works and artists should be regarded as an international model. The online functionality of the gallery's website is limited to illustrations and information texts.

#### **BITFORMS GALLERY, NEW YORK (SINCE 2002)**

The New York art dealer Steve Sacks founded the **Bitforms Gallery**<sup>72</sup> in 2002, which specializes in the sale of digital and digitally created art. Alongside prints of digitally generated pictures, you can also find interactive 'Software Art' which is offered on CD-Rom in various editions, ranging from 10–250 pieces. **Bitforms** represents two artists, Golan Levin and Mark Napier, who have made an international name for themselves in the world of net art. Alongside fixed works by these artists, the Bitforms online catalog also contains links to three online works by Napier which are the only works in the catalog not to be marked with «inquire» or «purchase» buttons<sup>73</sup>. In an interview from 2003, Steve Sacks explained how he wanted to sell Mark Napier's online work **Waiting Room**: «Since there is only one piece that exists on a server, we sold this work in shares. 50 shares at \$1'000 per share.»<sup>74</sup> Although the **Bitforms Gallery** pays little attention to net art dealing, its focus on digital media art and the multimedia functionality of its web interface means that it should be considered a pioneering business for the purposes of our investigation.

#### **BRYCE WOLKOWITZ GALLERY, NEW YORK (SINCE 2002)**

Since its foundation in 2002, the **Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery**<sup>75</sup> has dedicated itself to the various forms of and connections between moving image, new media, sculpture and photography. With its program, the gallery intends to highlight «the growing influence of

technology on our lives and on contemporary art». The gallery offers both historic and current media art items, as well as conservational advice for institutions and private collectors – examples include questions concerning technical updates or archiving and upkeep. At the art trade fair **SCOPE Basel** in 2008, Wolkowitz displayed works by Lialina/Espenscheid and Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries on an offline wall-mounted screen. Online versions of these works are also available free of charge online.<sup>76</sup> The price for one of the ten copies of the offline version of the work **Traveling to Utopia** by Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries was set at \$10'000. The customer receives the work as a Quicktime movie on a Mac Mini and then only has to connect it to a wall-mounted screen. The same work is free to access in its online form. A similar situation can be found with John F. Simon's Java applet **Every Icon**, which Wolkowitz offers in regular gallery programs along with special hardware. Just a few years ago, you could buy personalized versions of **Every Icon** for \$20 from the artist (without hardware) and put it on the net via your own server.<sup>77</sup>

#### **[DAM] GALERIE, BERLIN (SINCE 2003)**

The gallery owner Wolf Lieser founded the **Digital Art Museum [DAM]**<sup>78</sup> as early as 1998. As a platform for digital art, it has the aim of bringing contemporary digital art to a wide audience through exhibitions and other means. In 2003, Lieser also opened the **[DAM] Gallery** in Berlin with young contemporary positions as well as pioneers of digitale art. The gallery presents digital prints, interactive series, generative works, transformation pictures and film-style collages in numerous group and individual exhibitions. The double concept of museum and gallery enables Wolf Lieser to present visitors with difficult-to-market digital media art works in the museum space while exhibiting a market-oriented range of works in the gallery. Thematic exhibitions can be realized within the museum context as well. The museum can react to the lack of knowledge of digital media art issues exhibited by most art collectors and curators with a long-standing range of information, which in turn promotes sales of works in the gallery. The **[DAM]** company promotes itself on its website with the following sentence: «We are your competent partner regarding exhibitions, building a collection, public art and virtual art projects on the Internet, in the field of Digital Art.» For the most part, it is difficult to see what the **[DAM]** gallery's commercial intentions and offers are from the website.

#### **DIGITAL & VIDEO ART FAIR DIVA**

The **DiVA Art Fair** is the oldest trade fair for digital art, which, according to its guidelines, requires participating galleries to offer mainly video and/or digital art works.<sup>79</sup> Works in traditional media such as drawing, photos or installations are only accepted if they are linked in some way to video or new media. «The exhibitor agrees to present primarily video and/or digital artworks. Exhibitors may present works of different media than video

or digital art as long as the work is related to video or new media. This includes traditional media such as drawing, photo or installation. However, there may be NO display of works that are not related to video or new media.» **DiVA** took place eleven times between 2003 and 2008 at the same time as traditional art fairs, and took on a new self-contained form each time, renting space in hotels or making ship containers available on the street for its galleries. **DiVA's** high point came in 2005 and 2006 when it was present in six cities. In 2008 **DiVA** reduced its presence at the art fairs in New York and Paris, and was present with a media lounge in the harbor basin for **Art Basel** in 2009.

#### **HOLY FIRE. ART OF THE DIGITAL AGE. «OFF PROGRAM» EVENT AT ART BRUSSELS 2008**

The curated exhibition **Holy Fire** took place as an «off program» event at the Belgian art fair **Art Brussels** in 2008.<sup>80</sup> It presented 27 items by international artists who have all made a name for themselves in the world of digital media art since the middle of the 1990s. All the displayed works came from collections or were made available by galleries. As is evident from the exhibition concept designed by curators Yves Bernard & Domenico Quaranta, the aim of the exhibition is to explicitly demonstrate to visitors at the art fair that the displayed works can be collected. Self-definition on the website: «Holy Fire is probably the first exhibition to show only collectible new media artworks already on the art market, in the form of traditional media (prints, videos, sculptures) or customized new media objects. Holy Fire presents contemporary artworks made with contemporary technologies and designed to be collectible.»

#### **KIOSK. ARTIFACTS OF A POST-DIGITAL AGE. EXHIBITION IN THE FRAME OF STRP, ART & TECH FESTIVAL EINDHOVEN/NL (2009)**

The following year, Bernard & Quaranta curated the Kiosk. Artifacts of a Post-Digital Age exhibition as a follow up exhibition to **Holy Fire**<sup>81</sup>. Incorporated into the art & technology festival **STRP** Eindhoven, this exhibition also presented 17 media art objects which were selected on the basis of their suitability for art collections. Self-definition: «Many people collect art while others collect technology. Then there are the pioneering types who look for a combination of art and technology. They collect art objects that are continually changing, or as Yves Bernard and Domenico Quaranta put it: «They love screens. They love bits with atoms. They love things that move and change, because they live in a world that moves and changes.»» There is a good summary of the exhibition on the art blog [www.we-make-money-not-art.com](http://www.we-make-money-not-art.com), including pictures and videos.<sup>82</sup>

#### **ARTO' INTERNATIONAL ART FAIR IN OPEN CITY, ROME (2009)**

For its 2009 outing, Italian art trade fair **ARTE contemporaneomoderna ROMA** announced its intention of inviting Marco Mancuso, the editor of **Digicult**, an internationally renowned online publi-

cation dedicated to digital art, to expand the range of galleries exhibiting at the art fair by selecting 6 galleries to display works by well-known artists from the new media segment.<sup>83</sup> Quotation from **Digicult** report: «Marco Macuso and the curators' team from Digicult, the web platform dedicated to art and new digital experiences, will complete the selection of galleries with a sector dedicated to research carried out by new media, which have gained a momentous access to the international art scene. A commission of 3 Italian and 3 international galleries complete the fair's selection board.» No information has been made available on how this idea panned out.

#### CONTEMPORARY ART RUHR, C.A.R. 2009

The media art fair that launched in the fall of 2009 as part of the art trade fair **Contemporary Art Ruhr** at the Zeche Zollverein will again take place in 2010.<sup>84</sup> In a letter to interested exhibitors, the theme appears to be art that goes beyond the boundaries of traditional presentation frameworks. The following is stated in the concept text for the Forum and Media Art Fair section: «amongst the excellent industrial architecture of the coke mixing plant, which houses huge coal bunkers and pits, innovative protagonists present art that goes beyond the usual frameworks. Themes are: media art, film/video, installations, sculptures, multimedia projects, light art, interactive & Internet-based works, electronic music, performances. A particular focus is the field of photography.»

#### E-ARTS BEYOND. SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL GALLERY EXHIBITION OF MEDIA ART 2009

In China, the art fair project **e-Arts Beyond** took place for the first time in September 2009 during the **Shanghai Contemporary Art Fair**.<sup>85</sup> It is an initiative of the Shanghai Cultural Development Foundation and **e-ARTS Shanghai**, which has organized the successful e-ARTS festival dedicated to electronic and digital art since 2007. At its first outing in September 2009, the art fair project **e-Arts Beyond** launched an exhibition organized by Zhang Ga under the title **base target=new** which will contain media art works from selected galleries. According to the program, only galleries that are considered leaders in offering new media art were invited to **base target=new**. Quotation from the concept: «base target=new is a highly select, invitation only exhibition presenting pioneering galleries in placing (new) media art at the forefront of the contemporary art landscape. On view will be seminal and recent works representative of a wide gamut of artistic positions and voices with media-specific formal approaches by an array of established artists and emerging talents.» Some documentary photographs taken at **e-Arts Beyond** are published on the website of DASTore.<sup>86</sup>

## NOTES

### 2. HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF NET ART COLLECTIONS

- 1 For developments in the USA before 2002, see Barbara Basting's article «Net art and museums - aspects of the institutionalization of a new form of art», 2002, at (<http://www.xcult.org/texte/basting/02/basting.pdf>).
- 2 <http://gallery9.walkerart.org>
- 3 Digital Arts Study Collection of Gallery 9/Walker Art Center: see (<http://www.walkerart.org/gallery9/dasc>).
- 4 See (<http://artport.whitney.org>) and (<http://www.whitney.org/bitstreams>).
- 5 <http://www.moca.org>
- 6 <http://www.sfmoma.org>
- 7 <http://010101.sfmoma.org>
- 8 <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/show-list/art-work-type/?search=Internet%20Art>
- 9 <http://netflag.guggenheim.org/netflag>
- 10 At the end of the 90s, there used to be a direct link from the homepage of Fondation Cartier to their net-based art collection which included the interactive work «Verbarium» (1998) by Christa Sommerer and Laurent Migonnet and the works **Self** (1998) and **Longitude 38** (1999) by Valérie Granher. All traces of this on the Fondation Cartier website seem to have been deleted.
- 11 In 1998/99, there was a button with the title «net art» on the Stedelijk Museum website. Details on the exhibition **Under Capricorn - The World Over** (1996), which included contributions of net-based works by various artists, are still available in the exhibition archive. Examples of work included **here** are here by Laurie Anderson and **Spring Thoughts** by Merel Mirage. See (<http://www.stedelijk.nl/oc2/page.asp?pageid=592&url=/detectflash.asp>) (<http://www.stedelijk.nl/capricorn/anderson/index.html>).
- 12 <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Musee.nsf/0/B0352D1466099CB3C1256DB300678F96?OpenDocument&Key=&L=1>
- 13 <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Musee.nsf/0/06B7B2F49213841BC125703700538FD0?OpenDocument&Key=&L=1>
- 14 E-mail (on 07.03.2006) to Shu Lea Cheang.
- 15 <http://www.centreimage.ch/projetsInternet.php>
- 16 <http://www.ljudmila.org/~vuk/dx>
- 17 [http://www.c3.hu/collection/index\\_en.php](http://www.c3.hu/collection/index_en.php)
- 18 <http://www.cg90.fr/partageonsnospassionsdansleTerritoire/Espace-Multimedia-Gantner/La-collection-belfort.html>
- 19 <http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/magazin/nk/shopping>
- 20 [http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader\\$2812](http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader$2812)
- 21 <http://on1.zkm.de/netcondition>
- 22 If you persevere, you occasionally come across websites that have been forgotten on otherwise well-maintained servers of prominent institutions, but these do not contain links to their content. One example is the website -wvdc on a ZKM server (<http://www1.zkm.de/-wvdc>). The letters wvdc stand for net artist and curator Walter van der Cruysen who realized various net-based projects for the ZKM in 1996/97. This page contains a link to the net movie **Deep Ascii** by the Ascii Art Ensemble.
- 23 <http://media.lbg.ac.at/de/content.php?iMenuID=97&iContentID=104>

### 3. CURRENT NET-BASED ART COLLECTIONS

- 24 <http://rhizome.org>
- 25 <http://www.newmuseum.org>
- 26 <http://www.diacenter.org/webproj/index.html>
- 27 <http://turbulence.org>
- 28 <http://new-radio.org>
- 29 <http://www.computerfinearts.com>
- 30 <http://www.hma.org.il/Museum/Templates/showpage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=841&FID=560>
- 31 [http://www.computerfinearts.com/Haifa\\_show/Networking\\_Catalogue.pdf](http://www.computerfinearts.com/Haifa_show/Networking_Catalogue.pdf)
- 32 [http://www.tate.org.uk/intermediaart/archive/net\\_art\\_date.shtm](http://www.tate.org.uk/intermediaart/archive/net_art_date.shtm)
- 33 <http://netescopio.meiac.es>
- 34 <http://www.desvirtual.com/category/exhibitions/>
- 35 <http://netescopio.meiac.es>
- 36 [www.lisboa20.pt/1x20](http://www.lisboa20.pt/1x20)

- 37 <http://www.superneen.org>
  - 38 <http://manetascollection.com>
  - 39 Informationen unter <http://h-friese.netart-datenbank.org>
  - 40 Information on the sales conditions for art.teleportacia gallery can be found at (<http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/copies/art.teleportacia.org/office/faq.html>) and at (<http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/copies/art.teleportacia.org/office/customer.html>)
  - 41 Screenshot from 28.03.2009
4. ONLINE GALLERIES FOR NET ART AND EARLY INITIATIVES TO SELL NET-BASED ART
- 42 <http://art.teleportacia.org/exhibition/miniatures>
  - 43 Articles on establishing galleries and the question of the marketability of net art was published in 1998 in the **New York Times** (<http://www.nytimes.com/library/tech/98/11/cyber/artsatlarge/19artsatlarge.html>) and in the German online magazine **Telepolis** (<http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/3/3276/1.html>).
  - 44 See note 40.
  - 45 <http://art.teleportacia.org>
  - 46 <http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/copies/art.teleportacia.org/art-mac.html>
  - 47 <http://www.irationa1.org/donate>
  - 48 Documents (Screenshots) of gizmoland.com: <http://iarvers.free.fr/pages/exposition.html>
  - 49 Quotation from the text «Sur la terre des Gizmos» by Isabelle Arvers, ([http://www.isabelle-arvers.com/pressreview/gizmoland\\_graphiland\\_2000.jpg](http://www.isabelle-arvers.com/pressreview/gizmoland_graphiland_2000.jpg)).
  - 50 <http://www.artcart.de/index4.html>
  - 51 <http://mario.hergueta.org/projects/curating/artcart/>
  - 52 See note 43 and 63.
  - 53 <http://collections.walkerart.org/item/object/10600>
  - 54 Granchers «Contrat de Vente» von 1998 (<http://www.nomemory.org/data1/contrat.html>)
  - 55 The price was DM 3'000. On Huber's purchases (<http://archives.arte-tv.com/heβδο/metropolis/dtext/19990123.htm>), contract: (<http://www.fuenfnnullzwei.de/hp2001/vertrag.html>), collection of materials: (<http://www.fuenfnnullzwei.de/press.html>) and (<http://www.fuenfnnullzwei.de/press/tagesspiegel/wahnsinn.pdf>).
  - 56 See note 43.
  - 57 <http://www.entropy8zuper.org/possession>
  - 58 Tilman Baumgärtel, Website auction: «The Thing unter dem Hammer», in: **Telepolis**, 12.05.1999. Online at (<http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/3/3372/1.html>).
  - 59 <http://www.xcult.org/digital/05-netart/everyIcon/eicon.html>
  - 60 For the License Agreement see the Quellcode of <http://www.xcult.org/digital/05-netart/everyIcon/eicon.html>
  - 61 <http://www.zanni.org/html/works/altarboy-oriana/altarboyoriana.htm>
  - 62 <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/rohrpost-0401/msg00133.html>
  - 63 [http://www.netartreview.net/logs/2004\\_02\\_01\\_backlog.html](http://www.netartreview.net/logs/2004_02_01_backlog.html)
5. NET ART AND DIGITAL MEDIA ART OFFERINGS IN ESTABLISHED GALLERIES AND AT ART FAIRS
- 64 <http://www.osagegallery.com>
  - 65 [http://www.nicolavonsenger.com/d\\_thomas.feuerstein/Feuerstein\\_Presstext.pdf](http://www.nicolavonsenger.com/d_thomas.feuerstein/Feuerstein_Presstext.pdf)
  - 66 [http://www.projectgentili.com/exhibition\\_images.php?id=47#](http://www.projectgentili.com/exhibition_images.php?id=47#)
  - 67 <http://www.vitamincreativespace.com>
  - 68 <http://www.235media.com>
  - 69 Interview with Axel Wirths in: Monika Fleischmann & Ulrike Reinhard (ed.): **Digitale Transformationen. Medienkunst als Schnittstelle von Kunst, Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft**. Heidelberg: whois, 2004, p. 188.
  - 70 <http://www.imaonline.de>
  - 71 <http://www.postmastersart.com>
  - 72 <http://www.bitforms.com>
  - 73 This online ordering function was no longer in operation when we last visited [05.2009].
  - 74 Steve Sacks, «bitforms», in: **Code**, catalog Ars Electronica Linz 2003, p. 221. Online unter ([http://90.146.8.18/en/archives/festival\\_archive/festival\\_catalogs/festival\\_artikel.asp?iProjectID=12510](http://90.146.8.18/en/archives/festival_archive/festival_catalogs/festival_artikel.asp?iProjectID=12510))
  - 75 <http://www.brycewolkowitz.com/www>
  - 76 <http://www.ooart.ch/recherche/pict/30-galleries/wolkowitz1.html>



- 77 <http://www.xcult.org/digital/05-netart/everyIcon/eicon.html>
- 78 <http://www.dam.org>
- 79 <http://www.divafair.com>
- 80 <http://www.imal.org/HolyFire>
- 81 <http://www.strp.nl/strp/artist/125>
- 82 <http://www.we-make-money-not-art.com/archives/2009/04/kiosk-artifacts-of-a-post-digit.php>
- 83 <http://www.digicult.it/En/2008/Artecontemporaneamodernaroma.asp>
- 84 <http://www.contemporaryartuhr.de>
- 85 <http://www.shearts.org>
- 86 <http://www.digital-art-store.com/news/earts/01.html>

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