

Introduction to net.art (1994-1999)

1. net.art at a Glance

A. The Ultimate Modernism

1. Definition

- a. net.art is a self-defining term created by a malfunctioning piece of software, originally used to describe an art and communications activity on the internet.
- b. net.artists sought to break down autonomous disciplines and outmoded classifications imposed upon various activists practices.

2. 0% Compromise

- a. By maintaining independence from institutional bureaucracies
- b. By working without marginalization and achieving substantial audience, communication, dialogue and fun
- c. By realizing ways out of entrenched values arising from structured system of theories and ideologies
- d. T.A.Z. (temporary autonomous zone) of the late 90s: Anarchy and spontaneity

3. Realization over Theorization

- a. The utopian aim of closing the ever widening gap between art and everyday life, perhaps, for the first time, was achieved and became a real, everyday and even routine practice.
- b. Beyond institutional critique: whereby an artist/individual could be equal to and on the same level as any institution or corporation.
- c. The practical death of the author

B. Specific Features of net.art

1. Formation of communities of artists across nations and disciplines
2. Investment without material interest
3. Collaboration without consideration of appropriation of ideas
4. Privileging communication over representation
5. Immediacy
6. Immateriality
7. Temporality
8. Process based action
9. Play and performance without concern or fear of historical consequences
10. Parasitism as Strategy

- a. Movement from initial feeding ground of the net
- b. Expansion into real life networked infrastructures

11. Vanishing boundaries between private and public
12. All in One:

- a. Internet as a medium for production, publication, distribution, promotion, dialogue, consumption and critique
- b. Disintegration and mutation of artist, curator, pen-pal, audience, gallery, theorist, art collector, and museum

2. Short Guide to DIY net.art

A. Preparing Your Environment

1. Obtain access to a computer with the following configuration:
 - a. Macintosh with 68040 processor or higher (or PC with 486 processor or higher)
 - b. At least 8 MB RAM
 - c. Modem or other internet connection
2. Software Requirements
 - a. Text Editor
 - b. Image processor
 - c. At least one of the following internet clients: Netscape, Eudora, Fetch, etc.
 - d. Sound and video editor (optional)

B. Chose Mode

1. Content based
2. Formal
3. Ironic
4. Poetic
5. Activist

C. Chose Genre

1. Subversion
2. Net as Object
3. Interaction
4. Streaming
5. Travel Log
6. Telepresent Collaboration
7. Search Engine
8. Sex

9. Storytelling
10. Pranks and Fake Identity Construction
11. Interface Production and/or Deconstruction
12. ASCII Art
13. Browser Art, On-line Software Art
14. Form Art
15. Multi-User Interactive Environments
16. CUSeeMe, IRC, Email , ICQ, Mailing List Art

D. Production

3. What You Should Know

A. Current Status

1. net.art is undertaking major transformations as a result of its newfound status and institutional recognition.
2. Thus net.art is metamorphosizing into an autonomous discipline with all its accouterments: theorists, curators, museum departments, specialists, and boards of directors.

B. Materialization and Demise

1. Movement from impermanence, immateriality and immediacy to materialization
 - a. The production of objects, display in a gallery
 - b. Archiving and preservation
2. Interface with Institutions: The Cultural Loop
 - a. Work outside the institution
 - b. Claim that the institution is evil
 - c. Challenge the institution
 - d. Subvert the institution
 - e. Make yourself into an institution
 - f. Attract the attention of the institution
 - g. Rethink the institution
 - h. Work inside the institution
3. Interface with Corporations: Upgrade
 - a. The demand to follow in the trail of corporate production in order to remain up-to-date and visible
 - b. The utilization of radical artistic strategies for product promotion

4. Critical Tips and Tricks for the Successful Modern net.artist

A. Promotional Techniques

1. Attend and participate in major media art festivals, conferences and exhibitions.

- a. Physical
- b. Virtual

- 2. Do not under any circumstances admit to paying entry fees, travel expenses or hotel accommodations.
- 3. Avoid traditional forms of publicity. e.g. business cards.
- 4. Do not readily admit to any institutional affiliation.
- 5. Create and control your own mythology.
- 6. Contradict yourself periodically in email, articles, interviews and in informal off-the-record conversation.
- 7. Be sincere.
- 8. Shock.
- 9. Subvert (self and others).
- 10. Maintain consistency in image and work.

B. Success Indicators: Upgrade 2

- 1. Bandwidth
- 2. Girl or boy friends
- 3. Hits on search engines
- 4. Hits on your sites
- 5. Links to your site
- 6. Invitations
- 7. E-mail
- 8. Airplane tickets
- 9. Money

5. Utopian Appendix (After net.art)

A. Whereby individual creative activities, rather than affiliation to any hyped art movement becomes most valued.

- 1. Largely resulting from the horizontal rather than vertical distribution of information on the internet.
- 2. Thus disallowing one dominant voice to rise above multiple, simultaneous and diverse expressions.

B. The Rise of an Artisan

- 1. The formation of organizations avoiding the promotion of proper names
- 2. The bypassing of art institutions and the direct targeting of corporate products, mainstream media, creative sensibilities and hegemonic ideologies

- a. Unannounced
- b. Uninvited
- c. Unexpected

3. No longer needing the terms "art" or "politics" to legitimize, justify or excuse one's activities

C. The Internet after net.art

1. A mall, a porn shop and a museum
2. A useful resource, tool, site and gathering point for an artisan
 - a. Who mutates and transforms as quickly and cleverly as that which seeks to consume her
 - b. Who does not fear or accept labeling or unlabeled
 - c. Who works freely in completely new forms together with older more traditional forms
 - d. Who understands the continued urgency of free two-way and many-to-many communication over representation

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March-April 1999