

AXEL STOCKBURGER

recent work

AXEL STOCKBURGER

* 1974

MA from the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Master Course For Visual Media Art, Prof. Peter Weibel.
PhD from the University of the Arts London (LCC). Between 2001 and 2004 collaboration with the
London based artist collective D-Fuse.

<http://www.stockburger.at>

EXHIBITIONS/SCREENINGS/PERFORMANCES

- 2010 **DaDaDa Academy**, Corridor Gallery, Plovdiv
Videorama, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg
Videorama, Gallerie Henze & Ketterer, Wichtrach/Bern
TALK TALK - Das Interview als künstlerische Praxis, Galerie 5020, Salzburg
- 2009 **World eater**, Galerie Winiarczyk, Vienna (Solo Exhibition)
Videorama, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna
Summer Reading, Invisible-Exports Gallery, New York
TALK TALK - Das Interview als künstlerische Praxis,
Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig
Kunstverein Medienturm, Graz
Galerie 5020, Salzburg
After the End - Faux Raccords, Rencontres Internationales 09, Tabacalera, Madrid
Austrian Film & Videoart, ritesinstitute, CCA, Tel Aviv
- 2008 **Multiplexed**, E:vent Gallery, London
It's all in the Game, AVECOM, Arnhem
Games, Kunsthalle Project Space, Vienna
Homo Ludens Ludens, Laboral Centre for Art & Creative Industries, Gijon
Real Life, Portman Gallery, London
Abstracts of Syn, arge Kunst, Galleria Museo, Bolzano
- 2007 **Zero Gamer**, HTTP Gallery, London
La Noche En Bianco - Video Dictionary, Matadero, Madrid
Images, curated by SPIKE magazine, Bauernmarkt 1, Vienna
Play Safe - Battlefields In The Playground, Project Art Center, Dublin
Fresh Trips, medienkunst.tirol, Innsbruck
Driven, Fieldgate Gallery, London
Rencontres Internationales Madrid, Film Festival, Madrid
Gameworld, Laboral Centre for Art & Creative Industries, Gijon
Video As Urban Condition, Lentos Museum, Linz
Videoabend, ILSA Projection, Motorenhalle, Dresden
Reboot, Works from the Jim and Mary Barr Collection, Christchurch Gallery, Christchurch
- 2006 **Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin**, Film Festival, Paris
Potential Dialogue - Facts and Fiction, RCM Museum, Nanjing
Grounded, E:vent Gallery, London
Gaming Realities, Mediaterra, Athens
Centrefold, ZOO Art Fair, London
Reboot, Works from the Jim and Mary Barr Collection, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin
V.I.V.A. Festival, de Stad als Theater, Zwolle
Marte e Aqui, Rua Simpatia 256, Sao Paulo
Simultan 02 - Festival, Live Performance with Mark Schreiber, Timisoara
Brilliant City, Starkwhite Gallery, Auckland, (Solo Exhibition)
Video Dictionary, Image Forum Festival, Tokyo

- 2005 **You are my torture/ i am your chamber**, V-art Festival, Sardinia
Video Dictionary, Impakt Festival, Utrecht
Fresh Trips, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Innsbruck
The London Connection, Galerie Lisi Hämmerle, Bregenz
Vanishing Point, Starkwhite Gallery, Auckland
What Sound Does A Color Make?, (with D-Fuse), iCI, Eyebeam, New York
1+1=1 Cannibalism in Popular Music, performance with N.I.C.J.O.B.
for Lebt Und Arbeitet In Wien, Kunsthalle, Vienna
Play It Again, Gallery 5020, Salzburg
Now's The Time, Kunsthaus Graz, Graz
Save The Day, Kunstbüro, Vienna
Shanghai Surprise (with D-Fuse), Lothringer Dreizehn, Munich
- 2004 **re-Visited**, Medienturm, Graz
D-Fuse vs. SiCut DB, Performance, Machina, Moscow
Austrian Video Selection, Belef, Belgrade
Light Turned Down, (with D-Fuse) Guggenheim Museum Bilbao
Video as Urban Condition, Austrian Cultural Forum, London
Brilliant City, (with D-Fuse), British Council Artist Link Program, Shanghai
- 2003 **25hours**, The Video Art Foundation, Barcelona
D-Tonate DVD (with D-Fuse), NowonDVD, Tokyo
D-Tonate, (with D-Fuse) OnedotZero festival, ICA, London
K-Remix, Fibla and D-Fuse, Sal de los Flores, Barcelona
Abstraction Now, (with D-Fuse), Künstlerhaus, Vienna
- 2002 **Scanner vs D-Fuse**, Jam Tokyo-London, British Council Japan, Tokyo
Wire-D-Fuse, Saatchi Gallery, Tokyo
D-Fuse vs. Burnt Friedmann, OnedotZero Festival, ICA, London
D-Fuse vs. NONPLACE DVD, London
D-Fuse GASBOOK DVD, Tokyo
- 2001 **Media Connection**, Pallazzo del Esposizione, Rome
Triennale di Milano, Milan
Life goes on, IGBildende Kunst, Vienna
Most Wanted, Secession, Vienna (Solo Exhibition)
Endeka, Filmfestival Diagonale, Graz
- 2000 **D-Fuse Art Space**, WIRE-Magazine, London
PDA-PGP-PSX, ARC Gallery, Vienna
We Accept, Kiasma, Festival, Helsinki
world information.org, t0, Bruxelles
- 1999 **Austrian Abstracts**, Diagonale, Graz
Among Others 3, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna
Synworld / playworld: hyperspace, Museumsquartier, Vienna
PSX-Stations, Art Music & Environment, Vienna
minimal 1, Kunstbüro, Vienna
Copy & Paste / Drag&Drop, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Innsbruck
Hotel Utopia, Film und Videofestival, Vienna
Homestories, Filmcasino, Vienna
- 1998 **Through-Video**, Basilica, Vienna
Cracks & Numbers, Kunstbüro, Vienna
o-o-o-o, Kunstraum Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck
Junge Szene 98, Secession, Vienna
Sincerely Yours, Sofia Municipal Gallery, Sofia, TED Gallery, Varna
Global Media, Steirischer Herbst, Graz
Modelle, Cult Gallery, Vienna

BIBLIOGRAPHY (selected)

Nestler, Gerald: Heavy Rotation System: Wie Zukunft Gegenwart schafft und Optionen sich als Kunst darstellen, Kunstforum Band 200, Januar 2010
Kunststück, Financial Times Deutschland, 08, August, 2008
Gerald Nestler, Heavy Rotation System, Kunstforum 200, Februar 2010
Isabelle Avers, "Player: One" Amusement 2, September 2008.
Catalogue: "Games", Kunsthalle Wien, Eds.: Ernst Strouhal, Mathias Fuchs, 2008
Catalogue: "Homo Ludens Ludens", Laboral, Centro de Arte y Creacion, 2008
Tim Stott, Review: Play Safe Battlefields in the Playground, Project, Dublin, July - September - Circa Art Magazine, No. 122 (Winter, 2007), pp. 67-69.
William Mc Aloon, "Jim Barr and Mary Barr", Contemporary, Issue 80, April 2006
Kunst und Spiel II, Kunstforum Band. 176, 2005, Ed. Matthias Fuchs
Copy & Paste, Drag & Drop (with N.I.C.J.O.B.) in Sample Minds, Materials On Sampling Culture, Stefan Bidner, Thomas Feuerstein (Ed.), Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004
Catalogue: Abstraction Now, Katalog, Künstlerhaus, Vienna, 2003
Catalogue: 25 hours, The Video Art Foundation, Manuel Saiz (Ed.), 2003
Catalogue: Media Connection, Libri Scheiwiller, Milan, 2001
Catalogue: Most Wanted, Matthias Herrmann, Armin Medosch (Texte), Secession, 2001
Catalogue & CDROM; Among Others 3, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Daniela Swarowsky (Ed.), Triton Verlag, 2002
Catalogue: Moving Out. Universität für Angewandte Kunst Wien (ed.) Wien, 2001
Catalogue: Junge Szene Kinder Arbeit von 9.7. bis 30.8.1998. Vereinigung Bildender Künstler, Wiener Secession (ed.) Wien, 1998
Catalogue: a box is a box is a box, Triton-Verlag Wien, 1997
Mathias Fuchs: Axel Stockburger: der akusmatische Weg. Eikon, 21-22/1997
Krumpl, Doris: Von Zwischenwelten und Paralleluniversen In: Der Standard, Wien, 28.07.1999
Aigner, Claudia: Quer durch die Galerien. Die Fantasien der Künstler In: Wiener Zeitung, Wien, 08.01.1999
Nussbaumer, Ingo: among-others 3. Intermediale Dialoge In: springerin. Hefte für Gegenwartskunst, Wien, 1999

COLLECTIONS/EDITIONS

Artothek des Bundes, Austria
Rewind / Fast Forward, Die Videosammlung, c/o Neue Galerie, Graz
Ursula Blickle Video Archive, Kunsthalle Vienna
Edition Medienturm, Graz
Collection Jim & Mary Barr - New Zealand
Video Edition Austria - Release 02
The Video Dictionary - London, Madrid
Austrian Video Selection Belef 2004
Austrian Abstracts 99

REAPER (2010)

Video, Single Channel, 16:9 Video, Audio, 3 min., Edition of 5+1

Das Video REAPER

The video installation SPELLBOUND appropriates codes from contemporary global culture, in the form of the entirety of magic spells from the Harry Potter universe. A Chinese magician is confronted with a Japanese magician, both deploying the translated versions of the spells. The protagonists are projected onto two opposite walls in such a manner that they appear to hover above the ground. Here the meaning of the magic spell as an ancient form of performativity based on language, which is directed towards a unique connection between self and world, is arranged as a poetic failure. The question is raised whether magic spells can be translated at all and which role encoding and decoding of meaning plays for the existence of magic itself.

Production Credits:

Production Credits:

Actors: Dan Dragschitz, Natsuko Okamoto

Camera: Lukas Heistingner

Sound Recording: Dominik Traun

Sound Postproduction: Sebastian Schlachter

Exhibitions:

Worlddeater, Galerie Winiarczyk, Vienna (Solo Exhibition)



SPELLBOUND (2009)

Videoinstallation, 2 HD Projections, 16:9 Video, Audio, 20 min., Edition of 5+1

Die Videoinstallation SPELLBOUND entwendet Elemente aus einer international erfolgreichen narrativen Struktur, dem Harry Potter Universum, um auf die Bruchlinien solcher globalisierter mythologischer Welten, die speziell in der Übersetzung in Erscheinung treten, zu verweisen. Hier tritt eine japanische gegen eine chinesische Zauberin an und beiden stehen sämtliche Zaubersprüche des Harry Potter-Franchises in der jeweiligen landessprachlichen Übersetzung zur Verfügung. Die Protagonistinnen sind dabei derart auf die sich gegenüberliegende Wände projiziert dass sie, scheinbar in der Luft schwebend, in Konfrontation zueinander stehen. Während die Verwendung von Zaubersprüchen auf den wesentlichen Zusammenhang zwischen Sprache und Performativität verweist, muss der Zauber an den Grenzen der Übersetzung scheitern.

The video installation SPELLBOUND appropriates codes from contemporary global culture, in the form of the entirety of magic spells from the Harry Potter universe. A Chinese magician is confronted with a Japanese magician, both deploying the translated versions of the spells. The protagonists are projected onto two opposite walls in such a manner that they appear to hover above the ground. Here the meaning of the magic spell as an ancient form of performativity based on language, which is directed towards a unique connection between self and world, is arranged as a poetic failure. The question is raised whether magic spells can be translated at all and which role encoding and decoding of meaning plays for the existence of magic itself.

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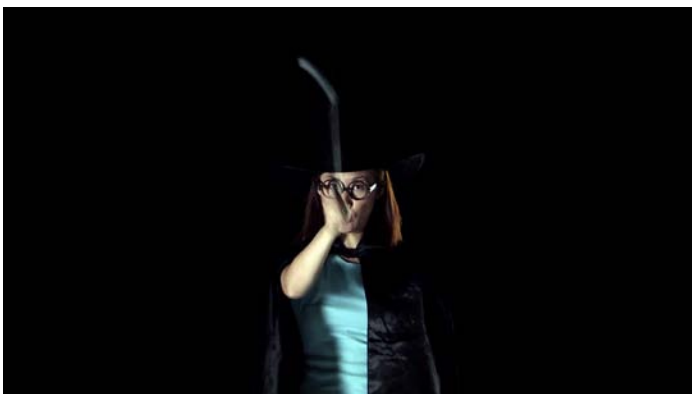
Camera: Lukas Heistingner

Sound Recording: Dominik Traun

Sound Postproduction: Sebastian Schlachter

Exhibitions:

World eater, Galerie Winiarczyk, Vienna (Solo Exhibition)







SPELLBOUND (2009), Installation View, Galerie Winiarczyk, Vienna



SPELLBOUND (2009), Set Photo

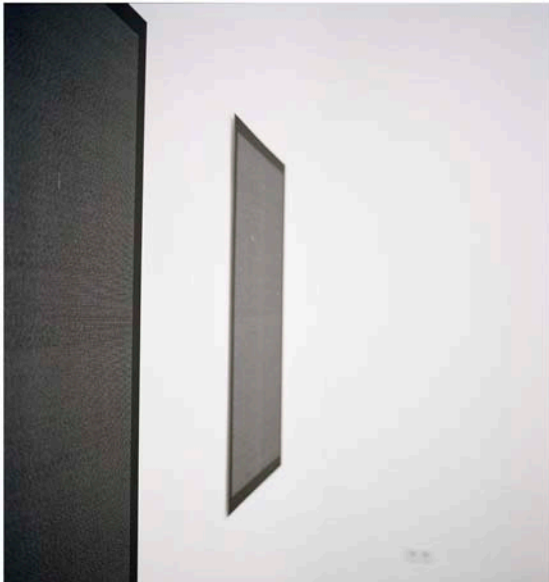
WORLDEATER

Exhibition, Galerie Winiarczyk, Vienna
OCT 21, 2009 - DEC 11, 2009

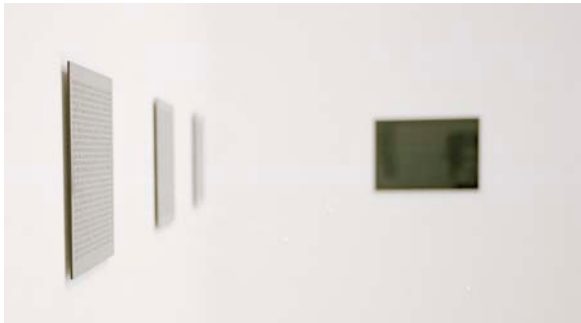
Die Ausstellung WORLDEATER vereint eine Auswahl neuer Arbeiten des Künstlers Axel Stockburger die sich auf unterschiedliche Weise mit dem Phänomen populärer globaler Narrationsuniversen und kultureller Franchises wie etwa Harry Potter, Herr der Ringe, Dune oder Pokemon auseinandersetzen. So wird man etwa in der Videoarbeit "Bestiarium" (2007) mit einer Person konfrontiert die sämtliche (deutschen) Eigennamen des in den 90er Jahren global erfolgreichen Pokemon Universums in die Kamera spricht. Diese Eigennamen, die sich aus onomatopoetischen Eigenschaften der bezeichneten Phantasiewesen, deren Bezeichnung im Japanischen, sowie Altgriechischen und Lateinischen Wurzeln speisen, letztlich aber das Ergebnis der Arbeit eines Kreativteams sind verweisen einerseits auf eine ältere sprachliche Tradition andererseits verwandeln sie sich in der künstlerischen Arbeit in eine Mischung zwischen magischer Beschwörung und fremdartigem lexikalischem Informations -korpus. Auch die Videoinstallation "Spellbound" appropriiert Elemente aus einer international erfolgreichen narrativen Struktur, dem Harry Potter Universum, um auf die Bruchlinien solcherart globalisierter mythologischer Welten, die speziell in der Übersetzung in Erscheinung treten hinzuweisen. Hier tritt eine japanische gegen eine chinesische Zauberin an und beiden stehen sämtliche Zaubersprüche des Harry Potter-Franchises in der jeweiligen landessprachlichen Übersetzung zur Verfügung. Während die Verwendung von Zaubersprüchen auf den wesentlichen Zusammenhang zwischen Sprache und Performativität verweist, muss der Zauber an den Grenzen der Übersetzung scheitern. Eine Serie von Textarbeiten versucht darüber hinaus in gewisser Weise narrative fiktionale Universen zu verschlucken und zu verdauen um schlussendlich deren informationelle Residuen in Form von Eigennamen zu bannen die wiederum zum Ausgangspunkt für die individuelle Verortung des Publikums in derartige industriell produzierte Fiktionswelten werden kann. Eigennamen werden so wieder zum Ausgangspunkt der Auseinandersetzung mit einer Welt die gegenwärtig von Diskursen geprägt ist die um die Bedeutung von sogenannten Informationsgesellschaften ringen und deren ökonomische Basis zunehmend im urheberrechtlichen Schutz von Namen und Begriffen verankert wird.

The exhibition WORLDEATER presents recent works of the artist Axel Stockburger that address global popular narrative franchise systems, such as Harry Potter, Dune or Pokemon. In the video BESTIARIUM (2007), for example, the viewer is confronted with a person who speaks all of the 500 different names of entities in the Japanese Pokemon universe that became hugely popular during the 90ies and branched out into computer games, films and books that were translated for a world wide audience. These names are derived from a mixture between the onomatopoetic qualities that these fantasy creatures display, Latin and Greek roots, as well as the respective national idioms (in this case German) and have been designed by dedicated creative teams. In the artistic work these appropriated names, spoken by a person who is trained in ancient languages, are transformed into an odd hybrid between magical incantation and concrete poetry. The video-installation SPELLBOUND similarly appropriates codes from contemporary global culture, in the form of the entirety of magic spells from the Harry Potter universe. Here, a Chinese magician is confronted with a Japanese magician, both deploying the translated versions of the spells. Here the meaning of the magic spell as an ancient form of performativity based on language, which is directed towards a unique connection between self and world, is arranged as a poetic failure. The question is raised whether magic spells can be translated at all and which role encoding and decoding of meaning plays for the existence of magic itself. A series of text-based pieces is presented as a gesture that aims at the act of devouring such narrative universes, in order to process them and to spit out the stripped leftovers. Here the individual process of referencing cultural signifiers is set in motion as a textual "bare bones"- operation. To be confronted with such lists of names that might or might not trigger recognition and memory for members of the audience, along with their economical role as copyrighted goods, leads right towards the core issues of so-called information societies, namely the creation, reception and trade with language as material.





SCHUMI SCHUPMANN SCHURER SCHUSTER SCHUTZ SCHÜTLER SCHWAAR SCHWABEN SCHWABHAUSE
A SCYTHIA SEABORG SEALFON SEAN SEANCONNERY SEANKEEFE SEANRAJ SEANWAHL SEARFOSS SEAR
FHSARIA SEKI SEKIKUKUTOJGE SEKINE SEKITAKAZU SEKORA SELVINSKI SELENE SELEUCUS SEL
RREBAUDO SERGEEY.CENSKIJ SERGEJ SERGERASIMOV SERGESTUS SERGILOZANO SERGIYANOV SERIO
VSKOU SHAKLAN SHAKURA SHALAMOV SHALILABAENA SHANAGARZA SHANAWOLFF SHANDONG SHAND
EENA SHEENAHAYES SHEIKH SHEILAWOLFFMAN SHEKHTELIA SHELTONMARKS SHELLY SHELLYHYNES SH
SHIKANOSIMA SHIKI SHIKOKU SHIKOKU-KARST SHIKOKUTENKYO SHILLING SHILOV SHIMADA SHIMANAI
ZEN SHIZUTANI-KOU SHKLOVSKIJ SHKODROV SHKURATOV SHMAKOVA SHNOLLIA SHOBBROOK SHOEMA
THI SHIVALOV SHIVAN SHUYA SHULIAI SIBATANOSIMI SIBELIUS SIBERIA SIBYLLA SICARDY SICHUAN S
YAKA SILLUS SILLY SILVA NORTICA SILVAIN SILVANOMINUTO SILVER SILVALONSO SILVO SILVRETTA SIMADI
I SINZOT SIPERSTEIN SIIPIERA SIRAN SIRATAKA SIRATAKAYAMA SIRENE SIRI SIRICHELSON SIRIWIN SIRI
VOV SLETTBEAK SLIPHER SLIVAN SLOAN SLOOP SLOTIN SLOJKA SLOVAKIA SLOVENIJA SLOVTSOV SMA
Y SOLLNERBERGER SOLNHOFEN SOLOKHIN SOLOMIN SOLON SOLOVYANENKO SOLOVAYA SOLOVJEV-SEC
BOROS SOSTERO SOSVA SOUCHAY SOULIE SOUSEKI SOUTEN SOUTH DAKOTA SOVA SOYUZ-APOLLO SPA
A SRINER SRINIVASAN SRINASTAMA STACEY STACEYRAW STACKPOLE STAEHLE STAHL STALNBROOK STAL
ILLER STEFANOVALENTINI STEFANOZAVKA STEFANZWEIG STEFFL STEFFLER STEGOSAURUS STERN
MITH STEPHENSTRAUSS STEPHICKS STEPHWERNER STEPLING STEREOSKOPIA STERKEN STERN STER
IG STIVELL STJERNEBORG STOBBE STOCKHOLM STODOLA STOFFLER STOHL STOKES STOLTE STOLZOVA
STROGANOV STROGEN STROM STROMBOLI STROMGRENIA STROMHOLM STROMVIL STRONCONE STROM
E SUGIHARA SUGIYAMA SUHANLI SUHHOSOO SUIO ZHONG SUISEKI SUJAYTYLE SUKAGAWA SUKUNABIKON
K SUSANLEDERER SUSANNA SUSANNEMOND SUSANOD SUSANRAGAN SUSANREED SUSANRING SUSAN
RIGE SVETSKA SVETA SVETLANOV SVETLOV SVIRELIA SVIRIDOV SVOBODA SVOSIK SVOREN SVYATRICH
TRIUMF TABELI TABELISSHI TABLE MOUNTAIN TABORA TABORSKO TACCHINI TACHIBANA TACHIKAWA TA
KARAJIMA TAKASAGO TAKASE TAKASHIMIZUNO TAKATAHIRO TAKATSUGUYOSHIDA TAKATSUKI TAKATUMI
TAMAGAWA TAMAKASUGA TAMAO TAMARA TAMARAKATE TAMARIWA TAMASHIMA TAMBLYN TAMBOV TA
NORMINA TAPIO TAPOLCA TARA TARANIS TARATUTA TARENDO TARKA TARKOVSKIJ TARN TARO TAROU
INES TAYLORNYTON TAZIEFF TCHAIKOVSKY TCHANTCHES TEA TEALDON TEBBUTT TECKMAN TECLA
IA TEODRESKU TELY TERAKADO TERAKAWA TERAO TERASAKO TERBRUGGEN TERBUNKLEY TERCIDIN
TETSUOKUJIMA TETSUYA TETUOKUJO TEUCER TEUTOBURGERWALD TEUTONIA TEVELDE TEWKSBURY
VREWK THIA THIAGOOLSON THICKSTEN THIELE THIELEMANN THIERRY THIONVILLE THIRSK THISBE
THURMANN THUSNELDA THYESTES THYGESEN THYMOITOS THYRA TIAMORRISON TIANHUI LI TIANJIN TI
N TINCHEM TINETTE TINGSTADE TINKAPIG TINKER TINTORETTO TINYACHENG TIPHENE TIPOGRAFIJA
TKIWAGZEN TOKUNAGA TOKUNAI TOKUSHIMA TOKYORIENTS TOKYOTECH TOLAND TOLDY TOLERANTU



GOLDFARMER (2008)

Video, DVD PAL, 16:9, 15 min., Edition of 5+1

Das Video Goldfarmer beschäftigt sich mit gegenwärtigen ökonomischen Transformationen indem ein sogenannter Goldfarmer, der Spieler eines populären Internet Computerspiels, der mit dem Spielen selbst ein Einkommen generiert, interviewt wird. Der Spieler wird dabei anonymisiert indem ihm der Avatar den er im Spiel verwendet digital über sein Gesicht gesetzt wird. Das Phänomen des Goldfarming, das speziell in Asien, zu einer ernstzunehmenden Form der Arbeit geworden ist, wird hier als Modell verwendet um eine Auseinandersetzung mit der gegenwärtigen Verschiebung der Grenze zwischen Arbeit und Freizeit und der Dominanz ökonomischer Paradigma über alle Lebensbereiche, zu ermöglichen.

The video Goldfarmer addresses contemporary economical and cultural transformations by interviewing a so called goldfarmer, the player of a popular online game who generates an income by playing. The player has been rendered anonymous by digitally adding the avatar he embodies in the game environment over his face. The phenomenon of goldfarming, that has become a viable form of work, specifically in Asian countries, is used as a model to engage with the transformation of the border between work and play that seems to be characterised by the current dominance of economical paradigms over all other areas of life.

Production Credits:

Concept, Camera, Editing: Axel Stockburger
Digital Animation and Motion Capturing: Franz Schubert
Sound Edit: Sebastian Schlachter
The interviewee wishes to remain anonymous

Exhibitions:

- 2009 TALK TALK - Das Interview als künstlerische Praxis,
Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig
Kunstverein Medienturm, Graz
Galerie 5020, Salzburg
- After the End - Faux Raccords, Rencontres Internationales 09, Tabacalera, Madrid
- 2008 Multiplexed, E:vent Gallery, London
- It's all in the Game, AVECOM, Arnhem
- Games, Kunsthalle Project Space, Vienna

Goldfarmer Press:

Gerald Nestler: "Heavy Rotation System - Wie Zukunft Gegenwart schafft und Optionen sich als Kunst darstellen" Kunstforum Nr. 200, Feb 2010.
Isabelle Avers, "Player: One", Amusement 02.09. 2008.
Judith Borowski, Kunststück, Financial Times Deutschland, 08.08.2008.
Katalog: Games, Kunsthalle Wien, Eds.: Ernst Strouhal, Mathias Fuchs, 2008.



GOLDFARMER

text transcription for subtitles

00:03:55

You get gold by slaying these foes - killing adversaries - and you can loot them afterwards and take all the gold they have on them - not players but in-game persons - and you get more and more gold - and then you get experience from killing and you slowly get to a higher and higher level and you can kill things that have an equally high level -

00:05:31

So the longer the game progressed the more gold there was in the game and the more value the gold had

00:05:40

I was in a strange situation in my life because I had no job i wanted to go to school but i dropped out and I had no way of getting any tuition from the state - so at that point I was basically living by stealing in shops - when i bought World of Warcraft all my time - and I mean all my time went into the game - It was my life for those months in the start - i mean there was no other thing - and I forgot about things like how to get money to pay the rent and how to get money to buy food and stuff like that ... and that's actually how I started selling gold on the Internet because there was a month were I got this reality check - I had to pay rent but I had no money for rent - and then i remembered that i had sold some gold to a friend for a pack of cigarettes or something - so there must me a value on it - and I went to ebay and right there on ebay there were listings of different people selling gold - and the prize was very very high - it wasn't a lot of money I had to raise but it was some money - and if you have none some is a lot - so i sold some gold on ebay - I got a fair prize - But when you try to calculate how much time you spend making the gold your wages become ridiculously low - really ridiculous ...

00:07:15

I remember logging in one time and I think it was just five days after the game started - One of my friends had levelled all night - He hadn't slept for more than two hours a night - we all laughed a bit about it because we thought it was a bit over the top - but seen in the back mirror it was ridiculous that we laughed about it because during the next week we all ended up like him - He reached level forty and he had to get this mount and he desperately wanted gold because it cost like a 100 gold but he didn't have it and there wasn't a lot of gold in the game at that time - So I said I really need some smokes and if he would buy me a pack of cigarettes I would give him some gold - I don't remember how much gold it was exactly but maybe forty gold - something like that - But he did - He bought me some cigarettes and the most insane thing about it was that he brought them to my dormitory and he lives thirty minutes away by bike - But he biked up with some cigarettes for me and I gave him the gold - That's one thing I remember - He was pretty desperate but he was also very happy afterwards ...

Kunststück! Was haben Sie sich dabei gedacht, Herr Stockburger?

„In meiner Kunst beziehe ich mich oft auf Spiele und Spielsysteme. Ich glaube, dass sich Spiele als Modelle komplexer menschlicher Handlungen lesen lassen. Auch ökonomische Strukturen stellen sich in Spielen dar, und mit der Entwicklung von Online-Computerspielen wird dieser Aspekt zunehmend wichtiger. Es scheint mir, als ob die klassische Trennung zwischen Spielen und Arbeiten immer mehr verschwindet. Der Beruf des Goldfarmers ist dafür ein hervorragendes Beispiel: Goldfarmer sind Menschen, die mit Online-Computerspielen wie etwa ‚World of Warcraft‘ reales Geld verdienen. Sie handeln mit den im Spiel erhaltenen virtuellen Wertgegenständen wie Gold, besonderen Schwertern oder Rüstungen. Spieler, die nicht die Zeit investieren wollen, sich solche Objekte zu erspielen, kaufen sie von anderen, die gegen Bezahlung spielen. Die Art, so Geld zu verdienen, tauchte zunächst in Europa und den USA auf und hat sich seither nach Osteuropa und China verlagert. Heute gibt es in China Firmen, die junge Männer anstellen, damit sie für 2 \$ die Stunde bis zu zwölf Stunden am Tag spielen.“

Mich fasziniert die Vorstellung, dass es einen Arbeitsalltag in Fantasieuniversen gibt. Diese Idee beschreibt den Grad der Abstraktion, den unsere von Märkten dominierte Gesellschaft heute erreicht hat. Für mein Video habe ich einen der ersten Goldfarmer in Europa ausfindig gemacht und ihn im März in Kopenhagen besucht. Um seine Identität zu verbergen, habe ich ihm im Film den Kopf der Figur aufgesetzt, die er im Spiel verkörpert, einen Ork-Krieger. Wenn er nicht spielte, arbeitete der Goldfarmer auf einer der riesigen Baustellen im Kopenhagener Hafen, deshalb fand das Interview in einem Baucontainer statt. Der Goldfarmer erzählte mir, wie er entdeckte, dass er mit dem Spiel seine Miete bezahlen konnte, welche Tricks es ermöglichten, schneller als andere an nachgefragte Objekte zu gelangen und wie schnell diese Arbeit nach China verlagert wurde. Danach gab er mir einen Helm, wir fuhren mit dem Baulift in den achten Stock eines im Rohbau befindlichen Bürogebäudes, blickten über den Hafen und sprachen darüber, was es bedeutet, wenn sich Arbeit in Spiel verwandelt und umgekehrt.“

PROTOKOLL: JUDITH BOROWSKI



AXEL STOCKBURGER produzierte den Film „Goldfarmer“ (DVD, Länge 15 Minuten, Auflage 5+1) 2008, er kostet 4000 € und ist für Abonnenten der FTD zehn Tage lang reserviert. Andere Arbeiten des in Wien lebenden Künstlers (Jahrgang 1974) kosten derzeit zwischen 2000 und 5000 €. Galerie Winiarzyk, Praterstr. 13, 1020 Wien, Tel. 0043/676/520 29 96, www.winiarzyk.com

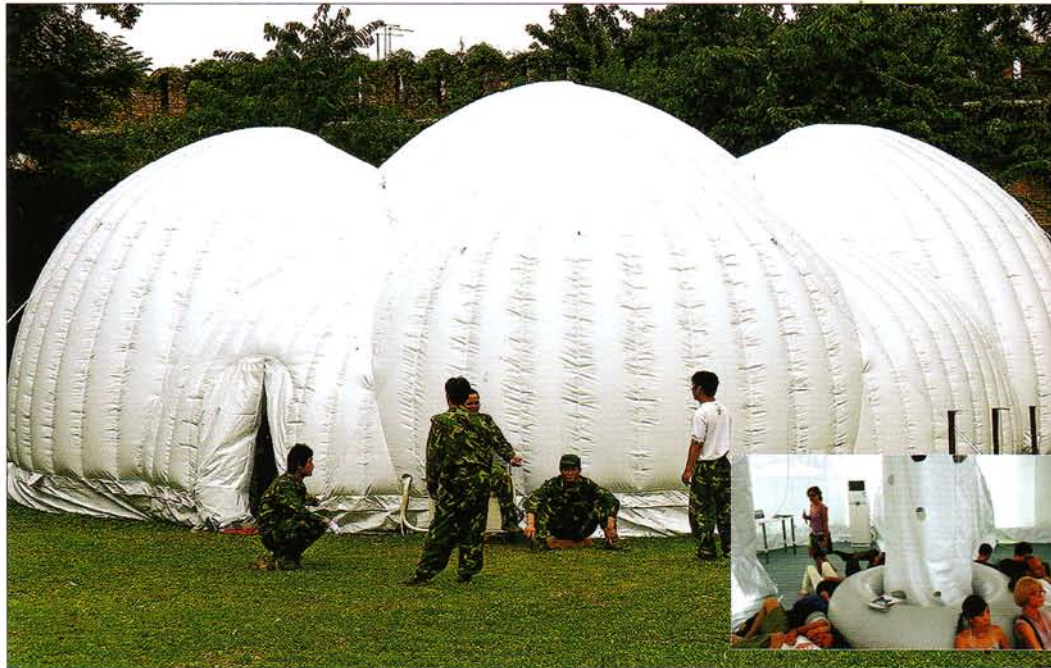
Sethley / Damien Hirst; Axel Stockburger / TUD/Hanna Knapp; FTD-Infografik

2008 : « Gold Farmers »

Cette confusion prend une toute autre dimension avec la dernière pièce d'Axel Stockburger, Gold Farmer, de 2008, exposée à la Kunsthalle de Vienne dans le cadre de l'exposition Games Kunst und Politik der Spiele. Cette vidéo montre en effet comment les frontières entre jeu et travail deviennent aujourd'hui de plus en plus floues en filmant ces jeunes chinois qui combattent pour de l'or virtuel à l'intérieur du jeu *World of Warcraft*, afin de le revendre ensuite à des joueurs européens ou américains. Une cohabitation entre joueurs chinois et occidentaux parfois difficile, entre mépris de l'Occident et acharnement chinois pour gagner sa vie, bien réelle cette fois... ❏

Judith Borowski, Kunststück, Financial Times Deutschland, 08.08.2008

Isabelle Avers, "Player: One", Amusement, Paris, 02.09.2008



CAO FEI, China Tracy Pavilion, Installation, Biennale Venedig 2009.

brid of communism, socialism and capitalism, RMB City will be realized in a globalized digital sphere combining overabundant symbols of Chinese reality with cursory imaginings of the country's future."

Axel Stockburger wiederum untersucht als Künstler, Dokumentarist und Researcher heutige Transformationen kultureller und ökonomischer Natur in Spielen und Spielsystemen. In seiner Videoarbeit „Goldfarmer“ interviewt er eine in der realen Welt anonymisierte Person, die sich als jener Avatar zeigt, der sie im Spiel ist. „Es scheint mir, als ob die klassische Trennung zwischen Spielen und Arbeiten immer mehr verschwindet. Goldfarmer sind Menschen, die mit Online-Computerspielen wie etwa ‚World of Warcraft‘ reales Geld verdienen. Sie handeln mit den im Spiel erhaltenen virtuellen Wertgegenständen wie Gold, besonderen Schwertern oder Rüstungen. Spieler, die nicht die Zeit investieren wollen, sich solche Objekte zu erspielen, kaufen sie [...] Die Art, so Geld zu verdienen, tauchte zunächst in Europa und den USA auf [...] Heute gibt es in China Firmen, die junge Männer anstellen, damit sie für 2 \$ die Stunde bis zu zwölf Stunden am Tag spielen.“ Dass die Märkte ihr Zeitregime durchgesetzt haben und damit Kontrolle ausüben, ist unbestritten. Sie destillieren weiterhin optimierte und optionale Zukünfte aus der Gegenwärtigkeit von Millisekunden. Das muss gerade auch in einer Zeit der Krise gesagt werden, in der unbedingter Glaube an die Märkte gebrochen scheint. Die Rettungsversuche der Politik sind keine Abkehr, sie sind eine Konsolidierung. Irini Athanassakis beschreibt dies in Bezug auf ihre Arbeit „Die Option (caught by the possible)“, (1999) so: „Das Mögliche triumphiert über das Reale, die Simu-

lation drängt in den realen Raum. Die Sensitivität Risikos, die Verteilung von Wärme im Raum, die thematische Erwartung der Spekulanten nehmen Raum und Zeit; es bleibt ein Gitternetz, eine idealmalverteilung, ein Flimmern einer Möglichkeit und Gefängnis des Geistes, der spekuliert, da er nicht glauben kann.“

Wir sehen gleichzeitig aber eine Basis des Konstruierens entstehen, die nicht dem diskreten Kalkül der Profits geopfert ist, sondern eher einer „Connection“ – einer Verbindung und Einbeziehung aller. Schlagworte wie Vernetzung, komplexe Systeme, Web 2.0, Globalisierung, Governance, politische Bestimmung stehen dafür. Die Initiativen sind vielfach an global angelegt – was die Notwendigkeit unterstreicht, die ökonomischen Muster unter dem Druck der immer stärker werdenden Globalisierung zu lernen. Die Betrachtung der Welt jenseits des kolonialen Blicks ist heute überfällig. Andre Gunder Frank hinterfragt in „ReOrient. Das asiatische Zeitalter“ (1998) eurozentristisches Denken kritisch und schlägt neue Sichtweisen, indem er die Hegemonie des Westens als sehr kurzes historisches Intermezzo sieht. Er wird dringend Zeit, dass wir uns selbst in einer breiteren Referenzrahmen erkennen und unsere Vorstellungen von Kapitalismus, Moderne, Kultur, Wirtschaft, Kunst und Individuum in neue Fahrwasser bringen.

Gerade in einer immer stärker von elektronischen Medien gekennzeichneten Welt scheint auch der Kunst in eine neue Phase seiner Identifizierung einzutreten. Hannah Wilke kann mit Arbeiten wie „S.O.S. Station Object Series“ als Vorläuferin gesehen werden.



AXEL STOCKBURGER, Goldfarmer, 2008, DVD Video, 16:9, 13 Min.. Courtesy of the artist und Jim und Mary Barr.



HANNAH WILKE, S.O.S. Starification Object Series, 1974, Zehn SW-Fotografien und 15 kaugummiskulpturen, Sammlung Verbund, Wien. Foto: Lisa Kahane. © 2009 VG Bildkunst, Bonn. Courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.

BESTIARIUM (2008)

Video, DVD PAL 4:3, 34 min., Edition of 5+1

In der Videoarbeit BESTIARIUM wird man mit einer Person konfrontiert die sämtliche (deutschen) Eigennamen der einzelnen Entitäten des in den 90er Jahren global erfolgreichen Pokemon Universums in die Kamera spricht. Diese Eigennamen, die sich aus onomatopoetischen Eigenschaften der bezeichneten Phantasiewesen, deren Bezeichnung im Japanischen, sowie Altgriechischen und Lateinischen Wurzeln speisen, letztlich aber das Ergebnis der Arbeit eines Kreativteams sind verweisen einerseits auf eine ältere sprachliche Tradition andererseits verwandeln sie sich in der künstlerischen Arbeit in eine Mischung zwischen magischer Beschwörung und fremdartigem lexikalischem Informationskorporus.

BESTIARIUM addresses the gap between specific audiences and contemporary narrative universes created by multinational companies. An old man speaks the german names of all the different entities present in the multimillion dollar brand universe of Pokemon. While he has no knowledge of the Pokemon phenomenon he is confronted with a series of names that have been created by an international creative team on the basis of several different languages (Greek, Latin, English, Japanese, French, German). It is at once an odd poetic incantation for the uninitiated and a very clear system of information and reference for all those who have come in contact with the Pokemon universe. In this sense the piece attempts to actively present the impact of cultural enterprises within different audience settings and demographics.

Production Credits:

Concept, Editing: Axel Stockburger

Actor: Hartmut Roch

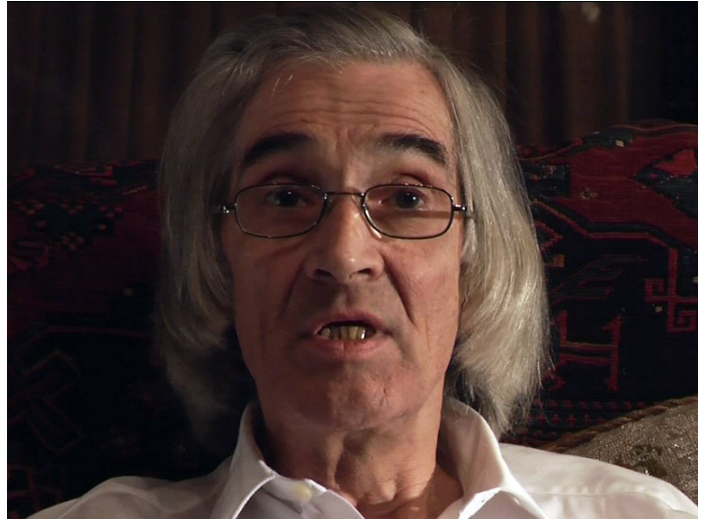
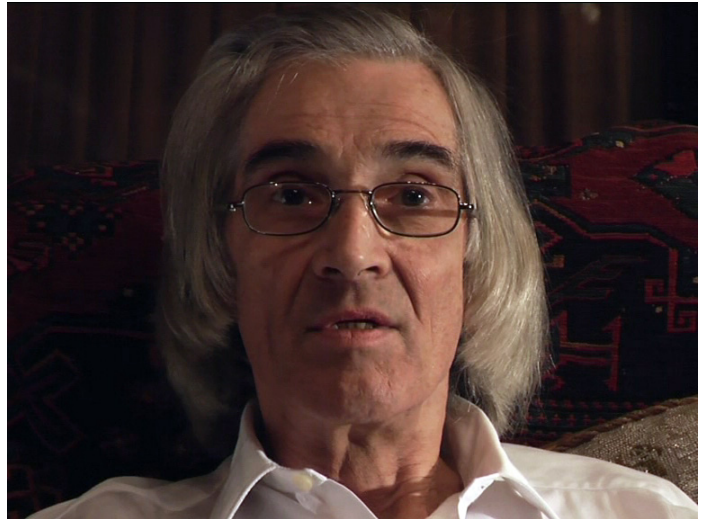
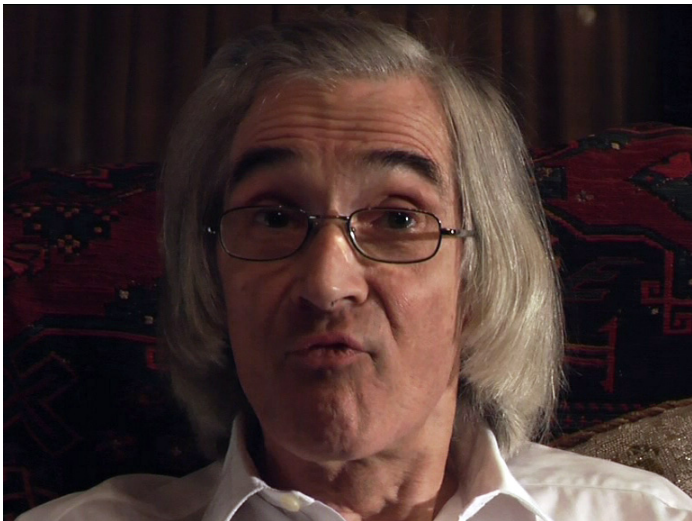
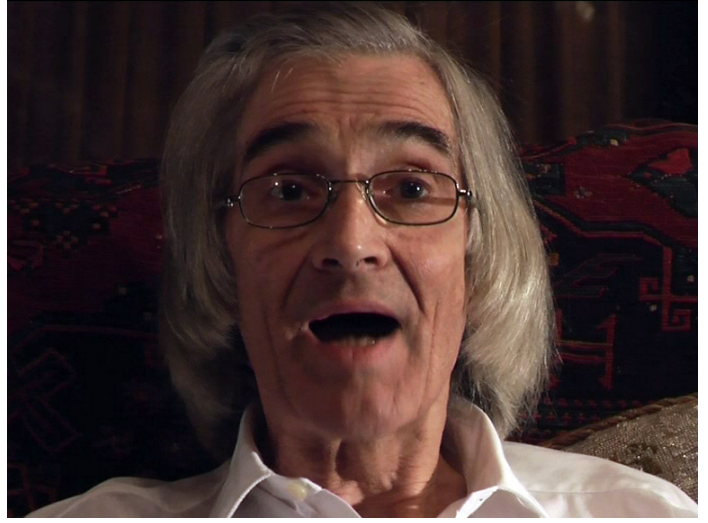
Camera: Franz Dude

Sound: Axel Stockburger

Exhibitions:

2009 Videorama, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna
Summer Reading, Invisible-Exports Gallery, New York

2008 Real Life, Portman Gallery, London
Abstracts of Syn, arge Kunst, Galleria Museo, Bolzano





Exhibition View, Galerie Winiarczyk, Vienna, 2009

KNUDELUFF	GEOROK	SMOGMOG	ZAPDOS
ZUBAT	GEOWANZ	RIHORN	LAVADOS
GOLBAT	PONITA	RIZEROS	DRATINI
MYRAPLA	GALLOPA	CHANEIRA	DRAGONIR
DUFLOR	FLEGMON	TANGELA	DRAGORAN
GIFLOR	LAHMUS	KANGAMA	MEWTU
PARAS	MAGNETILO	SEEPER	MEW
PARASEK	MAGNETON	SEEMON	ENDIVIE
BLUZUK	PORENTA	GOLDINI	LORBLATT
OMOT	DODU	GOLKING	MEGANIE
DIGDA	DODRI	STERNDU	FEURIGEL
DIGDRI	JUROB	STARMIE	IGELAVAR
MAUZI	JUGONG	PANTIMOS	TORNUPTO
SNOBILIKAT	SLEIMA	SICHLOR	KARNIMANI
ENTON	SLEIMOK	ROSSANA	TYARACROC
ENTORON	MUSCHAS	ELEKTEK	IMPERGATOR
MENKI	AUSTOS	MAGMAR	WIESOR
RASAFF	NEBULAK	PINSIR	WIESENIOR
FUKANO	ALPOLLO	TAUROS	HOOTHOOT
ARKANI	GENGAR	KARPADOR	NOCTUH
QUAPSEL	ONIX	GARADOS	LEDYBA
QUAPUTZI	TRAUMATO	LAPRAS	LEDIAN
QUAPPO	HYPNO	DITTO	WEBARAK
ABRA	KRABBY	EVOLI	ARIADOS
KADABRA	KINGLER	AQUANA	IKSBAT
SIMSALA	VOLTOBAL	BLITZA	LAMPI
MACHOLLO	LEKTROBAL	FLAMARA	LANTURN
MASCHOCK	OWEI	PORYGON	PICHU
MACHOMEI	KOKOWEI	AMONITAS	PII
KNOFENSA	TRAGOSSO	AMOROSO	FLUFFELUFF
ULTRIGARIA	KNOGGA	KABUTO	TOGEPI
SARZENIA	KICKLEE	KABUTOPS	TOGETIC
TENTACHA	NOCKCHAN	AERODACTYL	NATU
TENTOXA	SCHLURP	RELAXO	XATU
KLEINSTEIN	SMOGON	ARKTOS	VOLTILAMM

ABSTRACTION (2008)
Video, DVD PAL, 4:3, 05:10 min., Edition of 5+1

Einzelbildanimation

Single Frame Animation.

Exhibitions:

2009 **Videorama**, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna

2008 **Abstracts of Syn**, arge Kunst, Galleria Museo, Bolzano



Abstract-o-delica

Diana Baldon, April, 2008 - from the book: Abstracts of Syn, Medienturm Graz

One of the most memorable sequences of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) is a scene showing a sound and colourful light journey in which astronaut Dave Bowman travels to another place and time. In the moment he exits Discovery One space station in a pod to investigate the unusual alignment of a planet, its satellite moons and a large floating black monolith, he gets sucked into a tunnel enabling teleportation at cosmic distances away. Kubrick's 5-minute star gate sequence is perhaps one of the best cinematographic representations of the so-called "wormhole", a classic trope in science-fiction literature, whose trip of visual psychedelic effects and intense psychology has amazed masses of cinemagoers over decades.

At first sight, Stockburger's video Abstraction (2008), appears as the brainchild of the rainbow effects of the star gate. To be brought in the giant wormhole is not a "space gater" but 100,000 pictures found in the most comprehensive image search technology on the web: Google Image Search. Kubrick's abstract colour planes are here replaced with images outsourced from different engines by way of search by keyword approach. Reflecting upon a theme, that of "abstraction", Stockburger turns this topic of investigation into a methodological tool used to compile images tagged by internet users and following these engines' recommendations to what can denote "abstraction." Highlighting similarities and discrepancies of programmes of internet search technologies (for instance Google's ability to laser-focus on the tastes of consumers) and those in the human brain helping it to translate and recognise patterns, the visual content of Abstraction – whose title remains self-referential and nominal by nature – depends on pre-existing indexes of preferences expressed by millions of web users who decide for the artist what can be labelled abstract or not. And like him, while contemplating the flux of Abstraction, we come to realise that for many of them the notion of abstraction is representative of a compendium of references that can be reconciled into a database, an inventory of other subjects' suggestions.

It is nearly impossible to distinguish any singular image within this video's neat mechanical, objective system of organisation. They all flash in front of the viewer's eyes at light speed, spinning around pictures that don't follow specific logics of selection but arbitrary principles of association, in that they all contain non-figurative patterns and art historical references to paintings of currents in modern art such as Wassily Kandinsky's abstract works, 1950s American expressionist and colour field painting, or other movements in sculpture of Modernist lineage. Strongly preserving the plastic language of painting, Abstraction in fact appears to be a synaesthetic, immersive, even hypnotic experience that brings together movement, colour and noise at once. He draws on mannerist graphic effects of colour, combinations of forms and lines summoned by Clive Bell's views of the 1910s and 30s at the heyday of European modernism. At the same time 20th century artworks masters of Modernity are only vacuous quotations that repeat ad infinitum, and show the iconic impact that abstraction has had in many spheres of today's culture and society: from advertising pamphlets to Prada garments, from architectural features to IKEA furniture, from archaeological plates to election day polls, from astrologic charts to Bauhaus jewels. Stockburger is not interested in giving shape to a formal understanding of abstraction as an heroic art historical or philosophical category. In citing historical moments concerned with artifice (extending a strand of formalist concerns that were always mannered and self-conscious), hyperbolic emotionalism, the recycling of older touchstones of utopianism revisited by religious spiritual and socialist communes of the 60s, Stockburger acknowledges his distance from these fragile cultural epochs, and so do the subjects determining his image archive. While contemplating the brutally fast image flow of Abstraction, we come to realise that for many internet users the notion of abstraction is representative of a compendium of references: decorative patterns on ceramic dishes, Arabic carpets, underwear and stained glass windows and jewels; religious imagery (how can you symbolize the spiritual otherwise?); optical effects provoked by kaleidoscopes; graph-based diagrams of economic statistics, computer software; close-ups of medical studies. Stockburger makes no direct critique of other people's taste but his terms of inquiry are opened to the viewer solicited to reflect upon the billion possible associations to be drawn among pictures that, because of the speed they turn around, can be captured by the eye as afterimages only. According to Lithuanian linguist Algirdas Julien Greimas, whose theories have largely contributed to the birth of semiotics as a discipline studying communication processes, the production of meaning in language derives from patterns of recognition, repetition and invention. In his views, within each context of use, signifiers (words or images) and signified (meaning) can be socially and culturally recognised by way of translating signs articulated in deep structures (hidden agendas) and surface syntax (the way signs manifest themselves; in linguistic this happens thanks to grammar). In other words, we give meaning to the universe only by way of interpreting it, we construct it thanks to words designating images. Moreover, all signs stay in close relation among themselves through formal structures, or groups, which have great influence on who uses them. Functioning like in language, Abstraction attempts to map out the maximal possible results from a process of translation and denotation of word-image, the consequence of the simple action of tagging by an internet user which can open up a whole universe of definitions on the web. In resembling the functioning of digital databases, how these cross-reference and network files together according to naming, Stockburger's constant stream of abstract images is therefore an index of perspectives combined under an embedded shared understanding of the term "abstraction".

How does human perception work when there are so many subjects involved? Who decides what is to be defined "abstract"? And once all these viewpoints are unified, what is the resulting common denominator? Abstraction visualises the mental ability of web users to distinguish what can be learned as abstract. Its methods of inquiry resemble the founding principles established by Google search engine as a system indexing millions of web pages and estimating a site's importance, so that users can search for the information they desire by help of keywords and operators. It is a polyphony of connotations and reference systems closely interlinked that is at the core of this work, without the artist making his viewpoint predominant and at the same time making all other perspectives objective in the process of identifying what is "abstraction" as in Google's system (the pages with the most links to them from other highly relevant web pages must be the most relevant pages associated with the search). Disregarding hierarchies and registers of taste, Abstraction highlights a demographic, anthropological dimension connected to images, how these constituencies inform the collective psychology of millions of web users. Paradoxes, desires and obscure combinations resulting from a term whose complex definition insists on an imperceptible confrontation of the individually perceived value with the socially perceived value. "Abstraction" stands not for things we see as they are, but as we are, with our own cultural- specific investment of practical, aesthetic, symbolic decisions. In other words, abstraction is in the human mind, not in things themselves, it is a faculty, a set of different meanings as intended and experienced by different subjects.

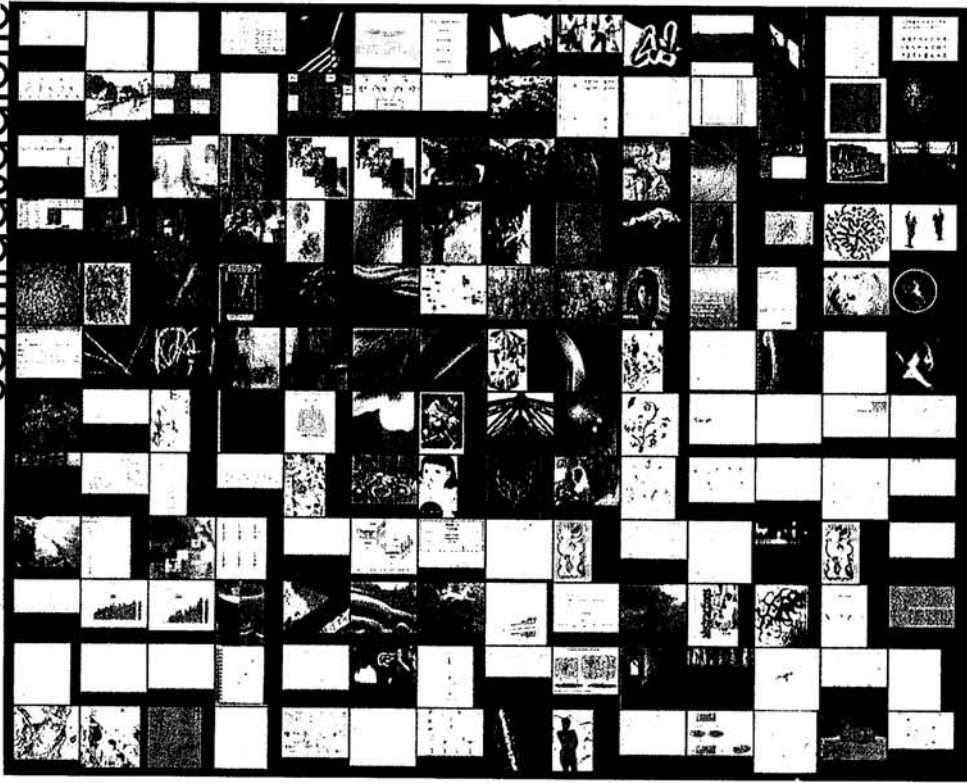
Stockburger's interest in translation, whether concerned with word-image interpretation or with media (transferring from the territory of internet to that of video), seems to be indebted to the legacy of conceptual strategies by Belgian artists René Magritte and Marcel Broodthaers. In particular, the methods of signification in Abstraction can be further explained in the light of some predominant aspects of Broodthaers's work. Focusing on how language mismatches words and images, Magritte's painting *The Betrayal of Images* (*This is Not a Pipe*), 1928-1929, or Broodthaers' *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*, 1968-72, are not mere illustrations of an object or a concept. On the contrary, they gently destabilize our mental habits of representation, elaborating didactic classifications, denying images through words, or representing familiar objects juxtaposing a name other than their conventional ones. Similarly to these, Stockburger questions whether the image "abstraction" actually represents what we think it should stand for, and to categorize the many possibilities of meaning, his video follows similar rules of database programs of search engines. However, unlike Magritte and Broodthaers, Stockburger is not interested in juxtaposing text onto an iconic image but in piling up on top of each other as many pictures as possible in order to open up a space for critical reflection for the viewer, him/herself required to make sense of the information accumulated. Developed in the late 60s in books and sculptural installations displaying organic materials such as palm trees or stuffed animals, chairs and shelves, Broodthaers's *Théorie des Figures* juxtaposed designations to objects, and introduced what he termed "musealisation", a phenomenon understood in connection with a range of meanings that objects can have in a given society and the ideological and economic context in which art appears. The mechanisms of signification of Broodthaers's objects didn't depend on the displayed object itself (a word or image didn't refer to anything else beside itself, without any hidden meaning) but on its context of appearance, in particular that of the museum and its multiple functions and conventions. Similarly, Stockburger's systematic execution in juxtaposing found images by web consumers reflects on their provenance, their homogeneity and, to some extent, populism, how their formal relations in choice transform abstraction into a dynamic and yet delusive process of image consumption.

While watching *Abstraction* we become "gateheads," to borrow a word from sci-fi fan clubs of the TV series *Stargate*. One of the most characterizing aspects of this video is the extreme, speeded up stream of pictures that, rigorously maintained in the original sizes, formats and resolution, draws the viewer from the centre out into another cosmos. We stare at a huge archive of pictures running at light speed, disappearing into a black background whose deepness and neutralising feeling of empty, negative space swallows them into a dark universe. The kinetic flicker of *Abstraction* results into a simultaneous convergence of the many pictures into a single inextricable one, recalling Jorge Luis Borges' description of *The Aleph* (1949) as the artifact revealing the entire universe. The rapid image flow guarantees no single image dominates on another, illustrating instead what abstraction means for about 10,000 internet users globally. A crucial aspect of this work is that it isn't concerned with a subjective perspective per se, we see something else than a singular image, an amalgamate instigating the viewer to examine his/her own visual perspective in browsing information. A critically-participant spectator is therefore essential for understanding *Abstraction* as its key analysis is addressed towards behavioural models of consumption over the time spent blogging, googling and making images available online. The puzzlement provoked by information displayed so quickly demands an active and alert visitor, made to question, not only in terms of social communication but also scientifically, which viewpoint to take (and asking "which one is the 'right' one?"). Consequently a phenomenological stance emerges: Stockburger solicits viewers to not be passive observers but become critical actors as the open-endedness of his video is structured for an audience predominantly, an effort close to that of conceptual and post-studio art practices interested in creating an apposite syntax for examining society and its systems. This underlying goal is something indicated in the early 1960s by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theories, which reclaimed an embodied type of perception of the world as what we perceive is dependent on our being at any one moment within a matrix of circumstances that determine how and what it is that we perceive. Therefore it could be argued that in this work, even though in a subtle manner, the viewer is inseparable from what s/he is watching, they become a single entity. Requiring psychological concentration and visual immersion, *Abstraction* also shifts the viewer's attention away from its content/subject matter to seduce him/her with

a sensation of motion straining the eye, the traffic of images being so fast it induces neurons to leave impressions of afterimages on the retina by way of retaining pictures that, even after being exposed for a fragment of a second never cease disappearing in the same moment they appear. This phenomenon tricking perception belongs to a long history of deceptive art that features, among many optical illusions, camera obscuras and lucidas, anamorphoses, peep- shows, dioptrical paradoxes, magic lanterns, phantasmagorias, stroboscopic discs, chronophotographic and, last but not least, cinematographic pictures. In cinema in particular, deception plays a crucial role in the development of abstract art, vigorously reverberated in the avant-garde work of the Italian futurists, Marcel Duchamp and the Surrealists. Such tradition reinforces Stockburger's knowledge of how the philosophy of perception and consciousness fuelled a quest to produce durable images of the world, set in motion from cinema to 3-D computer games. Kine is the smallest unit of filmic information, created when the spectator blends two consecutive images into a third inside the brain: Abstraction's persistence of movement enables us to enhance our vision to perceive the endless series of single pictures in rapid succession as a coherent, fluent film. As a counter-active effect to this, the video's soundtrack is instead completely slowed down to become a permanent, abstract, loud noise whose main function is to provide a fluid sensation of a collection of particles in motion.

Identifying a theme whose content is by nature "unmarketable" to explore the assumptions that dictate what abstraction is and who it is for, we understand, in conclusion, that the main concern of Abstraction is to define the politics of representation and cultural imperialism existing within the digital domain of technology. It functions like a plug-in to a cultural system of knowledge production in which an orchestration of cohabiting images represents internet's structural devices, how these, closely interlinked, are an influential apparatus conditioning the specific modes of reception, input and feedback generated by communities of web consumers. According to Stockburger, no single view should be elevated over another as a cultural signifier but it should be established a non-hierarchical organizational base for processing million of found images that, confronting us with all sets of codes and mechanisms, provide a context for critical negotiation among differences in taste, education, interpretation. The magical alignment of images relating to different aspects of a single theme, with the multiple, isolated perspectives of groups of online consumers, holds the key to this work, a fusion that makes complex and contradictory generalisations around abstraction flow like harmonic vowels in language.

„abstraction“ von Axel Stockburger:
„Versuch, das Meer auszutrinken“



ren Bezug zur Kunstgeschichte her, andererseits lotet er damit auf eine sinnfällige Weise die zeitgenössische Auflösung des Werkbegriffs aus. Die Vernichtung des Einzelbildes durch die Geschwindigkeit schafft neue Bilder jenseits der bildhaften Erinnerung und streift so nebenbei auch Fragen nach Autorenschaft und Copyright. Ein Mechanismus, der auch umgekehrt funktioniert, nämlich durch Dehnung eines Bildes ins Unendliche, wie Karo Gold auf ihrem sehr malerischen Video „SLANT“ zeigt.

Stockburger und Gold sind zwei von insgesamt 19 Medienkünstlern, die die Galerie Museum derzeit in einer mit „Abstracts of syn“ betitelten Ausstellung präsentiert. Kuratiert wird die Ausstellung von Sandro Droschl vom Grazer Medienturm, eine Institution, die sich aufgemacht hat, Neue Me-

„Velozitäre Vernichtung“

Die jüngste Medienkunst sucht den Anschluss an die Bildende: Die Galerie Museum zeigt einige spannende Versuche aus dem Depot des Grazer Medienturms.

von Heinrich Schwazer

Was ist eigentlich Abstraktion? Ein Lieblingsbegriff der Moderne, über den ganze Bibliotheken geschrieben wurden, und ein Ende ist nicht abzusehen. Glücklicherweise muss man das heutzutage nicht mehr alles lesen, ein paar Häppchen aus dem Internet tun's fürs erste auch. Ganze 684.000 Einträge verzeichnet Google in der deutschen

Schreibweise, gibt man den englischen Begriff „abstraction“ ein, kommt man auf fast zehn Millionen. Wechselt man unter demselben Begriff in das Bilderverzeichnis, listet die Suchmaschine die erkleckliche Zahl von 861.000 Einträgen auf.

Exakt diesen digitalen Pfad hat der deutsche Medienkünstler und Theoretiker Axel Stockburger mit seinem Video „abstraction“ ganz im Sinne eines effizienten Zeitmanagements eingeschlagen. Wollte man sich die Masse an Bildern auch nur per Mouseclick, geschweige denn im Realraum, anschauen, müsste man wahrscheinlich Monate investieren. Stockburger verkürzt beides, Zeit und Raum, auf ein Minimum: exakt fünf Minuten, die Zeit, die es braucht, um tausende Bilder an

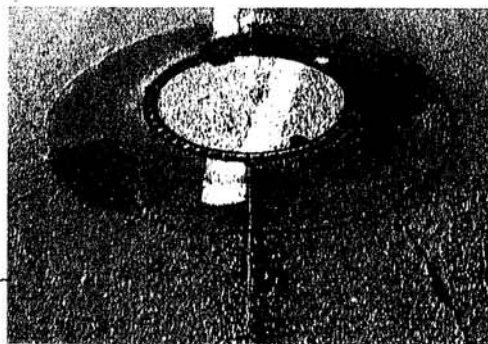


LUUKKAANKANGAS
von Dariusz Kowalski:
Ästhetische
Untersuchungen an
finnischen Straßen

Weise ins Extrem, dass diese dabei regelrecht vernichtet werden. „Velozitäre Vernichtung“ nennt der Kultur- und Medientheoretiker Marc Ries dergleichen, doch einer reinen Verlustrhetorik entgeht das Spannende an Stockburgers „Versuch, das Meer auszutrinken“.

die Wand zu beamen. Das Ergebnis ist ein rasendes Sampling von aus dem Internet herausgesaugten Bildern, bei dem kein einziges Bild mehr erkennbar ist. Stockburger bricht völlig mit der herkömmlichen Betrachtungszeit, indem er die Bilder auf eine Weise beschleunigt, dass sie gar nicht mehr als einzelne, sondern nur noch als sequentieller Bildersalat wahrgenommen werden können.

Auch in musealen Kunstausstellungen war es immer schon ein Irrtum zu glauben, man habe Gemälde in wenigen Minuten, inklusive der Schildchen-Lektüre, gesehen, doch Stockburger treibt den schnellen Bilderzugriff auf eine



CUR ET QUOMODO, Videostill von
Nicolas Jasmin: Lebendige Kanaldeckel

klaren“. Sein formaler Kunstgriff, Bilder aus dem Internet, dem Raum der verteilten Bilder, in eine ältere Form, eine sequentielle, zu übersetzen, stellt einerseits einen kla-

ren Bereich der bildenden Kunst zu verankern und mit einer eigenen Edition effizienter zu vertreiben. Ergänzend werden neue Arbeiten des Meraners Tomas Eller, des Franzosen Nicolas Jasmin und von Axel Stockburger vorgestellt.

Der Titel bezieht sich auf die synästhetische Verflechtung von Bildern und Klang, ein Phänomen, das im 19. Jahrhundert im Kontext des „Farbenhörens“ zunächst Psychologen und dann auch bildende Künstler nachhaltig interessierte. Stimulus war damals Arthur Rimbauds Gedicht „Voyelles“, heute gestattet das

digitale Vokabular der Medienkunst ganz neue Zugänge zum Thema „Synästhesie“. Die meisten Videos arbeiten mit Sound als Klangraum, um die Bilder aus ihrer Zweidimensionalität herauszulösen. Der spannendste Aspekt ist jedoch die auf vielen Videos präsente Hinterfragung des Verhältnisses der neusten digitalen Bildproduktion zu Moderne: Abstraktion, Zeitlichkeit, white cube, Raum sind

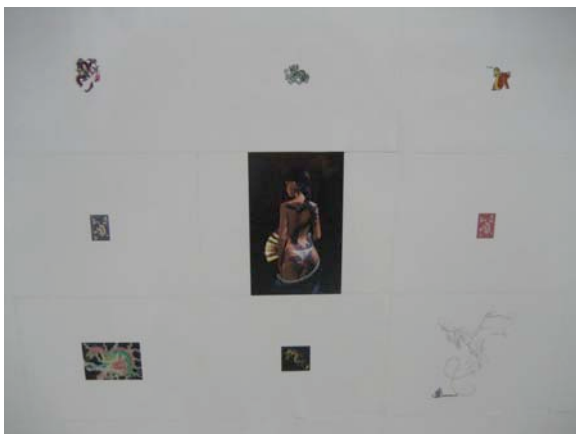
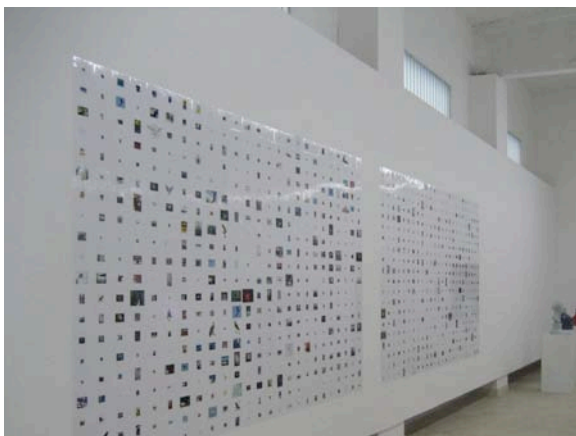
die Stichwörter – alles auf einem hohen Reflexionsgrad der Wahrnehmungszustände. Man muss sich Zeit nehmen und Geduld mit der Technik aufbringen – aber es lohnt sich.

Die Ausstellung in der Galerie Museum ist bis 7. März zugänglich.



ILSA initials stand for Industria Linii, Societate Anonima textile factory founded in Timisoara in the early 1920's. The video was filmed in May 2006 in the abandoned ILSA (Industria Linii, Societate Anonima) textile factory in Timisoara, Romania. Over the years, the workers have generated a kind of image database consisting of an immense amount of clippings from newspapers, product covers, photographs, posters, labels, postcards and stickers on the walls of numerous rooms throughout the factory complex. The camera traces this odd collection of imagery, which evokes products, people, places and dreams and follows the paths of image arrangement. For example there exists an entire wall made up of cars, another wall groups political figures such as the dictator Ceasescu with He-Man and a Boss advert, thereby making fun of power relations and Machismo. Other imagery shows families from south america juxtaposed with postcards from the swiss mountains. The camera movement and animation tries to uncover the connections between different images in this veritable database in order to tell a narrative fuelled by the rich imagination of the factory workers at ILSA.

ILSA Factory Database, 2006, DVD Video, 6 minutes, Edition of 5, courtesy of the artist. □
 Concept & camera: Axel Stockburger, Sound: Mark Schreiber.



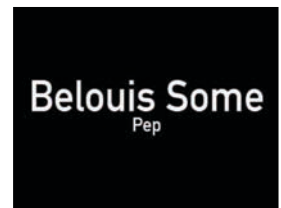
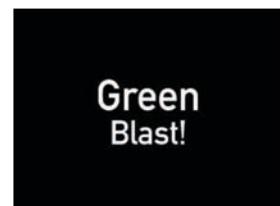
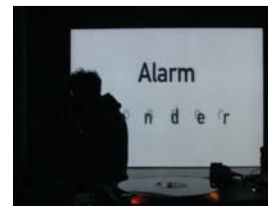
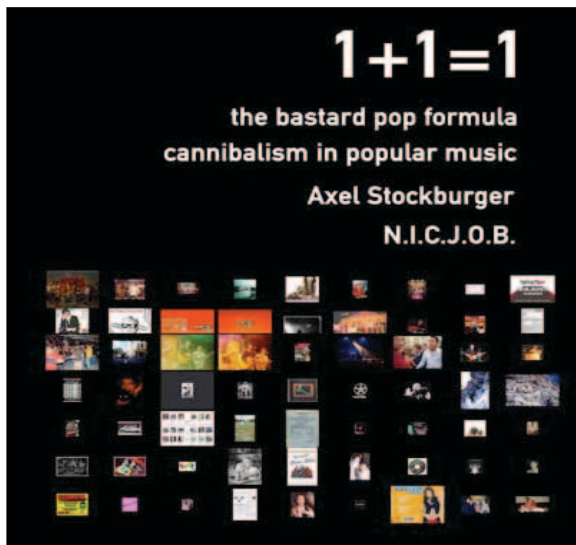
The Installation BUREAU OF RICH HARVEST - DEPARTMENT CHINA refers to Marcel Broodthaer's Museum of Eagles. Two image archives derived from Internet search for the words "Eagle" and "Dragon" are confronted with each other. The mythical and ancient Chinese Dragon is brought in contact with the other symbol of imperial power, the eagle. The installation consists of 1000 single images that are arranged in two blocks and was part of the exhibition POTENTIAL DIALOGUE at the RCM museum in Nanjing, China

Installation, 2006, 4000 Photoprints, Axel Stockburger & Nikolaus Gansterer,



The Video Boys in the Hood consists of interviews with players of the controversial computer game Grand Theft Auto. The players deliver their perspective of the narrative space of the game by giving detailed descriptions of locations, movements and actions in the game. These subjective accounts of a shared space lead to a diffusion of the borders between 'real' and 'virtual'.

Boys in The Hood, 2005, DVD Video, 60 minutes, Edition of 5, courtesy of the artist.



The Audiovisual Life Performance 1=1=1, The Bastard Pop Formula - Cannibalism in Popular Music has been developed by Axel Stockburger and N.I.C.J.O.B. It comments on the popular phenomenon of Bastard Pop, that has emerged with the ubiquitous online sharing of music. Bastard Pop stands the combination of 2 entire tracks from two different artists in order to form one new piece of music. N.I.C.J.O.B. creates a dense web of pop hooks and loops with four turntables in dialogue with a live videopiece by Axel Stockburger, that utilises a database of 100.000 artist names which are continually recombined.

Performed as part of the exhibition *Lebt und arbeitet* in Wien II on the 30.06.05 at Kunsthalle Wien, Museumsquartier and at Kunsthalle Graz, on the 28.01.05 for the opening of the exhibition *Now's The Time*.

1+1=1, Live Performance with N.I.C.J.O.B., 2005, Audio/Video, 4 Record Players, Max Msp Patch, Documentation DVD.



Tokyo Arcade Warriors - Shibuya, is part of an ongoing series of videoportraits of players of video and computer games. It was shot in September 2003 in three different Public Gaming Arcades near Shinjuku/Tokyo. The faces of the players are the only visible evidence of the game being played. Their facial reactions are synced with the sounds emerging from the game consoles.

TokyoArcade Warriors - Shibuya, 2005, DVD Video, 4 minutes, Edition of 5, courtesy of the artist.



The film Brilliant City was produced during a stay in Shanghai with the British Council Artist Link Program. The title refers to the name of the location, a residential complex comprised of 25 high-rises in the northern part of Shanghai. It is entirely shot from the 34th floor of one of the buildings and stages a peeping tom view of the surrounding city, capturing everyday activities that can be observed from this vantage point - training soldiers, building activity, traffic, gardening. The camera hovers above the entire panorama and focuses on details in the surrounding urban fabric. The film reacts to a particular visual paradigm, which is well known from strategy and simulation computer games (Sim City, The Sims) as the so called God View. It is the distanced perspective usually taken on by city planners, game players or politicians. In these situations people turn from individuals into patterns of movement and symbolic activity, and the viewer is turned into an accomplice of the visual apparatus and the power relations it signifies.

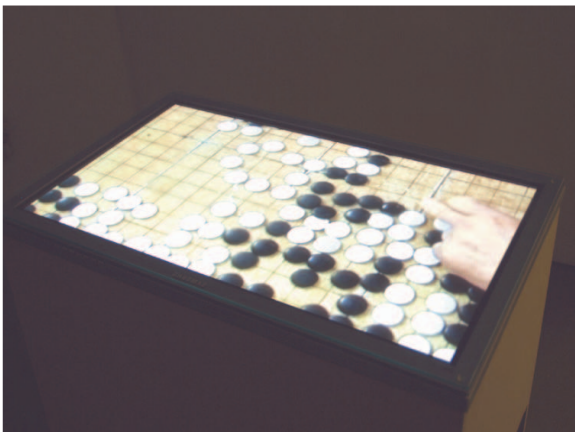
The film was shown at the following exhibitions and festivals:

"British Film Festival", 2005, Shanghai, CHN
 "Shanghai Surprise", Exhibition, Lothringer 13, 2005, Munich, DE
 "Now's the Time", Exhibition, Medienturm, 2005, Graz, AT
 "Video as Urban Condition", ACF, 2005, London, UK
 "Fly Stories, Mobile Road Cinema", 2005, TH
 "Tulsaoverground Festival", 2005, Tulsa, US
 "Cimatics Festival", 2005, Brussels, BE
 "Brilliant City", Exhibition, Starkwhite, 2006, Auckland, NZ
 "Transvision", onedotzero, 2006, ICA, London and Red Dot Museum, 2006, Singapore
 "Lovebytes Festival", 2006, Manchester, UK
 "File Festival", 2006, Sao Paulo, BR
 "ArtExpo Video Exhibition", 2006, Kentucky, US
 "Rencontres Audiovisuelles Festival", 2006, Lille, FR
 "Pictoplasma Festival", Firenze, 2006, IT

Brilliant City, 2005, DVD Video, 12 minutes, courtesy of the artist and D-Fuse,
 Conception, Filming, Editing, Animation: Axel Stockburger, Sound: Mathias Kispert, Still Imagery: Mike Faulkner.

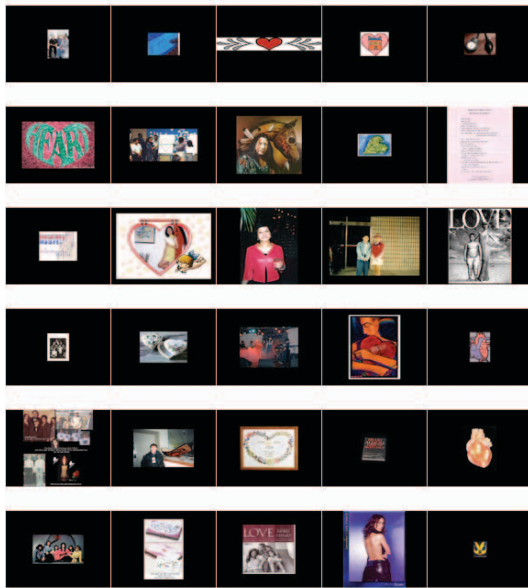


exhibition views , Spielraum, Praxis Gallery Vienna

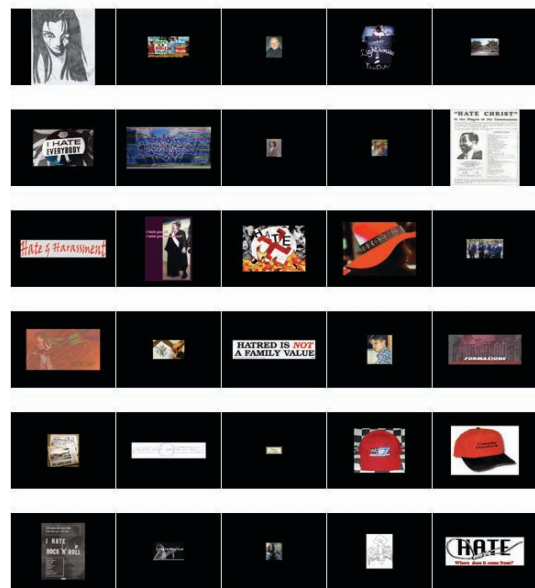


The Videoinstallation GO is recreation of one round of the ancient asian game GO that has been filmed in a public park in Shanghai. GO highlights the specific spatial structure that emerges from the territorial rules of the game.

GO, Video Installation, MDF Box 150 cm x 100 cm x 70 cm, Plasma TV, DVD 30 min, courtesy of the artist.



collection of images appearing in 1 second of the video Love



collection of images appearing in 1 second of the video Hate

The videos Love and Hate are part of a series of works under the collective title Aleph, that has been started in the year 2000. The title refers to a short story by J.L.Borges, which describes the discovery of the curious phenomenon of the Aleph. It is a spaceless space that can only be seen from the stairs leading to the cellar of a friend of the writer, but it simultaneously opens up an access to the whole universe of visual information. The Aleph is described as a source of an immense richness of information which makes it impossible to represent it or capture it in words. It fascinates and captivates the writer in such a way that it makes it impossible for him to keep up his work.

The Aleph videos Love and Hate consist entirely of images downloaded from the internet that have been given the respective titles of Love or Hate. A whole world of the most diverse images is grouped by these language concepts. From people to books, animals, objects, landscapes, works of art to pornography it seems that the whole universe of human pattern recognition and meaning is present. 25 images are shown per second which goes beyond the borders of human visual perception, thereby creating a stream of images that cannot be fully decoded or understood.

Marcel Broodthaer's famous Museum of Eagles, in which he grouped images and objects from the most diverse fields of life that based on their reference to the word eagle can be seen as a very early attempt to question structuring of information. Since this early encounter, machines and programs have been developed to make sense within a universe of signification. Google could be seen as one of the most recent attempts to channel this universe of meaning. The Aleph series is questioning the relation between abstract concepts and language on the one hand and the sheer explosion of visual information on the other hand. It is at once an attempt in vain to fix and grasp something that cannot be pinned down, like the attempt to start drinking the seas dry.

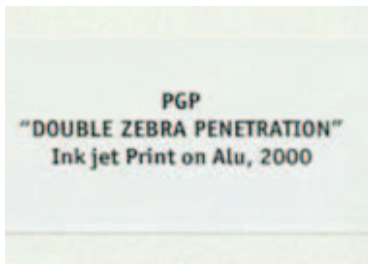
Hate , 2003, DVD Video, 3 minutes, Edition of 5, courtesy of the artist.
Love , 2003, DVD Video, 3 minutes, Edition of 5, courtesy of the artist.



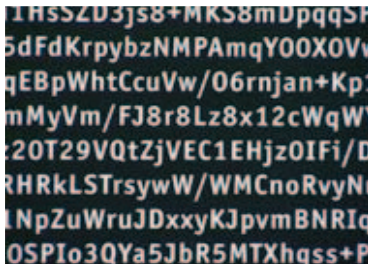
collection of images appearing in We Accept, print

The video *We Accept* is part of a series of short films entitled the *Aleph* series, consisting entirely of images downloaded from the Internet. All of these short videopieces target the selection and processing of visual information on a systemic level, regarding the logical structure of search programs and webbrowsers, as well as human perceptive capabilities. About 10000 images have been selected according to their filename ("credit card") and turned into a single frame animation. Images are selected and combined according to their referential context: the title that has been chosen when the image was saved. The sequential animation of all these images in a film represents the vast context of images subsumed to a language based category. Images advertising and symbolising different credit cards and virtual payment systems have become a visual undercurrent of the contemporary state of the world wide web. In "*We Accept*" they have been taken from the sites and form the content of the video.

We Accept, 2005, DVD Video, 3 minutes, Edition of 5, Sound: Kid 606: Ass Sratch Fever courtesy of the artist.

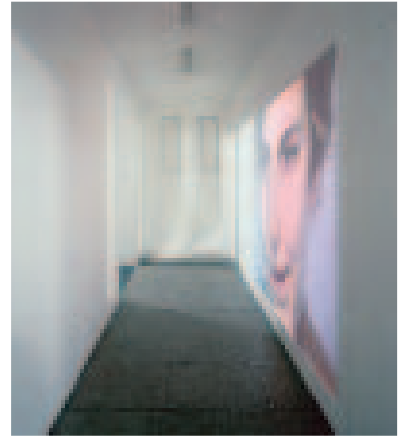
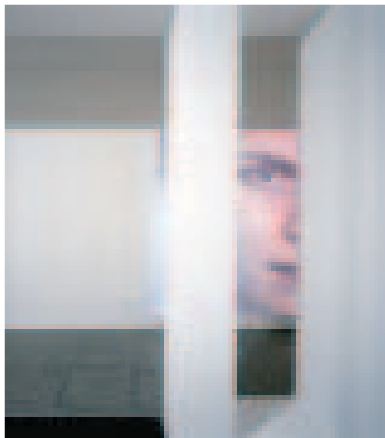


PGP series, exhibition view, solo exhibition, ARC Gallery, Vienna (2000)



PGP ("Pretty Good Privacy") is a military strength digital cryptography solution. It enables people to exchange files in a private, encrypted format over the Internet and also provides message authentication. PGP is a so-called public key system. Each person using PGP has two keys, a public and a private key. The keys are actually a digital signature, a small file with a stream of uniquely generated numbers. The public key is widely distributed to any correspondents, and the private key is guarded with secrecy. An encrypted message is scrambled in a complex way to make it unreadable to anyone who doesn't have both keys. Thus one can use the private key and the recipient's public key to generate a message that can only be unscrambled by the recipient who has the public key as well as the private key. This enables the exchange of encrypted messages with anyone with whom has the public key.

The works in the series, showing images downloaded from the Internet chosen by Axel Stockburger, which are encrypted with the military-strength encryption program PGP. Beyond the gibberish of random ascii-code that represents the image, the viewer is led to imagine the content of these images by following their titles. These images are pure information, unreadable without the key, yet they open up room for imagination and speculation. The source images will always stay hidden behind the information that represents them. PGP is also widely used to create a kind of "digital signature", this way a digital file can be brought back to a state of original that would be lost otherwise. Contemporary art markets are still fuelled by upholding the logic of the original. In a digital environment however, the only way to hang on to the original is to encrypt the information thereby retaining access to it through an individual and original key. In this sense the PGP series comments upon the current discourse surrounding Intellectual Property rights by introducing encrypted works into the gallery. If intellectual property protection is taken to the extremes, the aesthetic content of the work itself vanishes.



exhibition view, main room: video installation PSX Warriors: Gran Turismo, installation view Backbone



exhibition view, main room:
Installation Most Wanted

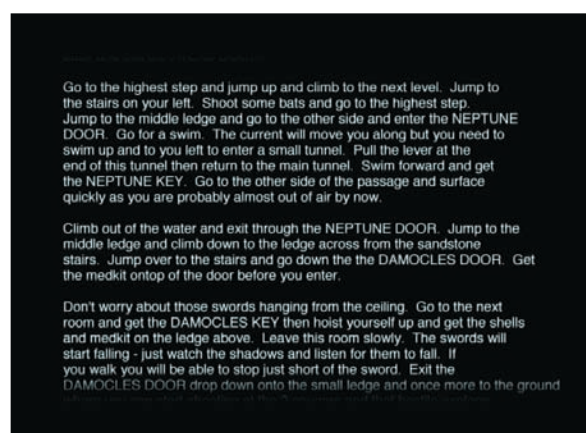
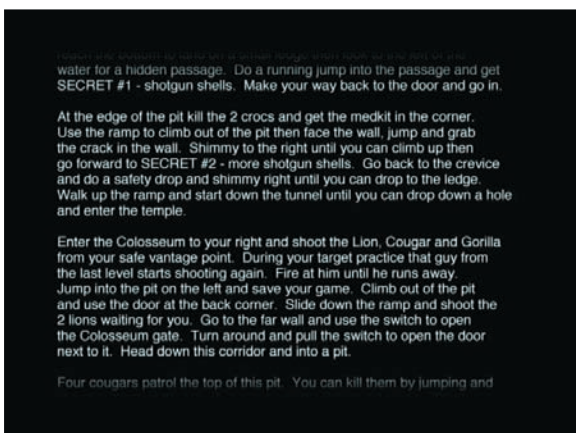
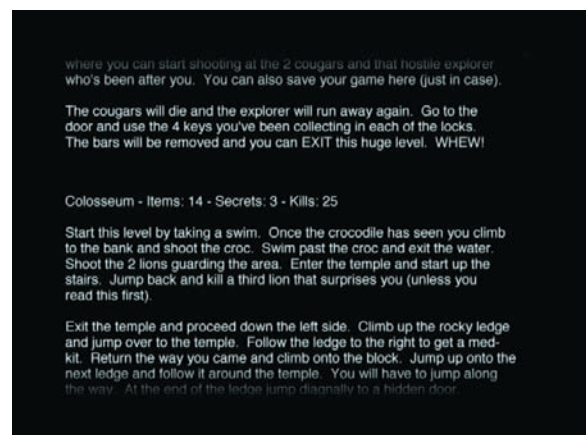
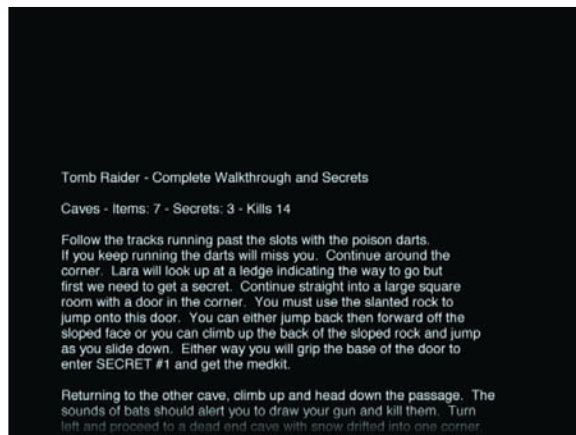


exhibition view, first room: PGP print and installation view Backbone

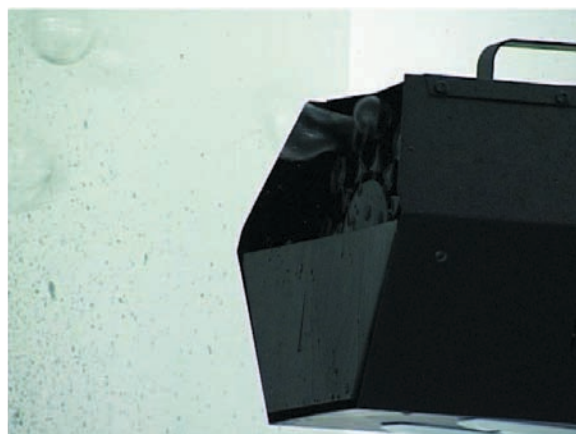
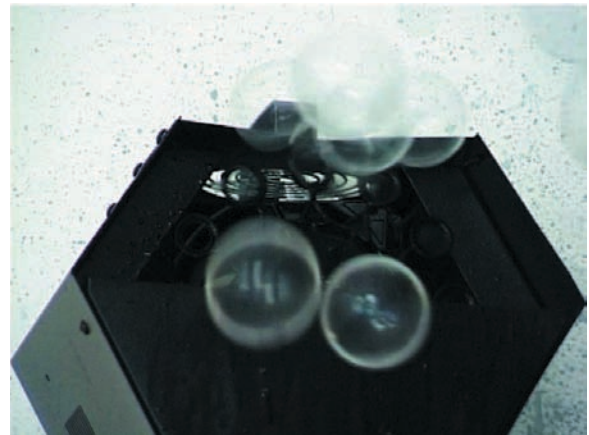
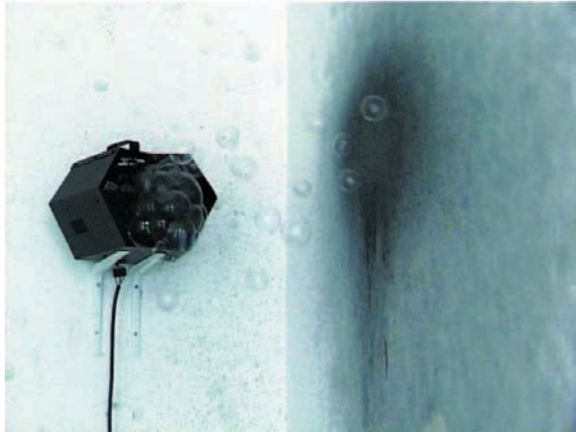


The exhibition Most Wanted at Vienna's Secession, showcased works from three different bodies of work: PGP prints, the PSX Warriors series, as well as the Aleph series (Most Wanted). The main work in the show, Most Wanted was a video comprised of all the images downloaded from the then 10 most visited websites worldwide. The installation Backbone consisted of interconnected Joysticks that were laid out on the gallery floor in the form of a grid, mocking concepts of interaction and control.

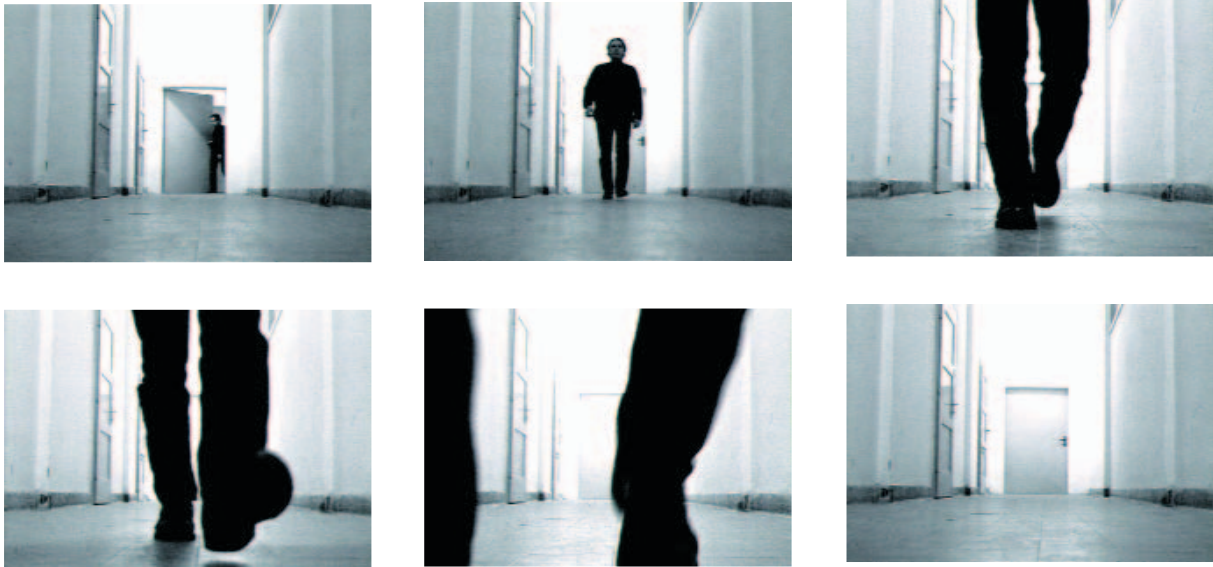
Solo exhibition - Most Wanted, Secession, Vienna, March 2001.



A walkthrough is a descriptive text availing itself of the imperative mood and reflecting the entire field of action of a computer game and offering solutions for various mysterious tasks. The world sketched out in Tomb Raider, one of the most successful computer games in the 90ies, by now has become a part of the collective media consciousness. Whoever has once tried to reach the final level of the game will remember its topographical characteristics, the scenes and puzzles. In the video walkthrough the "virtual" space of the game Tomb raider reappears in the form of a text-based cartography that is representing every spatial detail in a succession in the manner of the final credits in a film. Formal characteristics of the feature film, the 20th century mass medium, are thus the blueprint for the emerging mass media forms, computer and video games. Walkthroughs are poetical texts on territories familiar to those who spend their spare time in programmed alternative realities. They are guided tours, as it were, through computer generated spatial structures. By means of the text the spaces, we might say, are given an additional realism boost. If, in the text, there is talk of caves, passages or stretches of water, which again one has to pass through in this or that manner, this reminds us more of an adventure or a travel novel.



The Installation Plague Machine was installed at Gallery Kunstbuero during the exhibition minimal 1. Two Soap machines blow black bubbles into the space and create a randomized black pattern in the gallery space that evolves and changes over the duration of the exhibition. Plague Machine reverberates with ideas challenging the history of painting and the modern phenomenon of the neutral art space - the whitecube. It is as if the space itself could be infected with a virus, a disease.

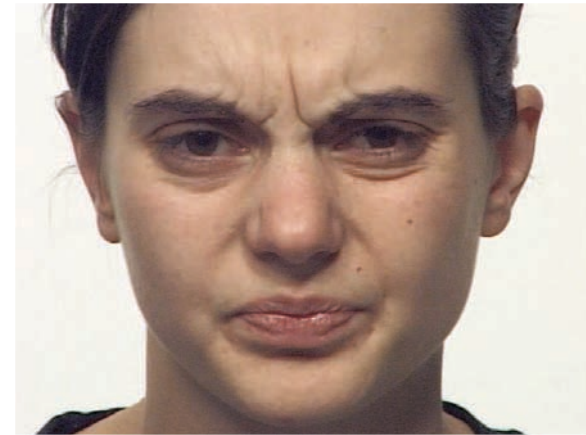
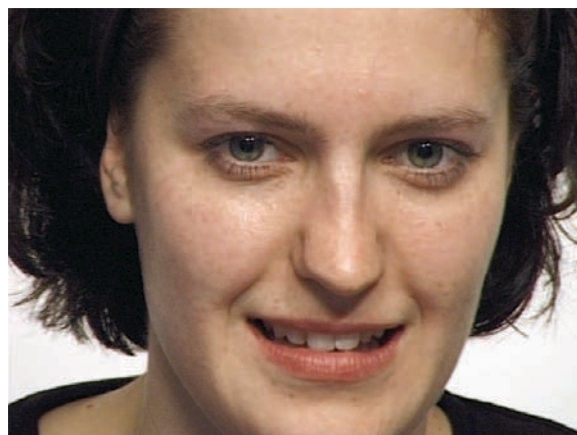
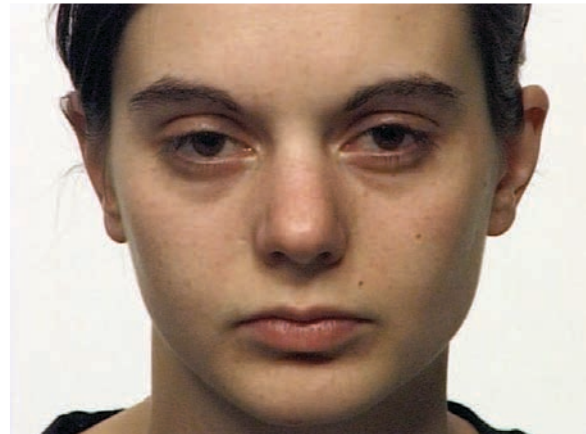
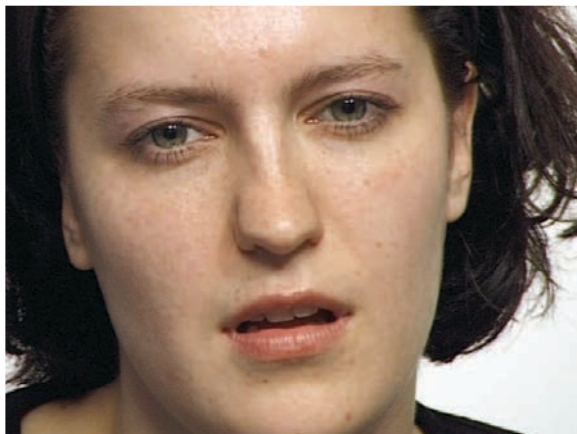


The Acousmatic Way is a Video and Sound Installation consisting of 1 Monitor and 2 Loudspeakers. Visual and aural events are separated in this installation to extend the perception of space. You see a person walking towards you. The moment he leaves the field of vision you start hearing footsteps from a loudspeaker installed behind you. This acousmatic separation lets you imagine a space that seems to extend from the monitors, at the same time you are centered within this imagined space. The Video work "Der akusmatische Weg" ("The acousmatic way") by Axel Stockburger, deals exemplarily with the relationship between pictures and sound as factors of perception in audio-visual media such as cinema and television. In traditional films there is usually an unequivocal correspondence of picture and sound. The causes or sources of notes, sounds, noises and spoken words can usually be clearly attributed in visual terms. The unambiguity is not disturbed by asynchronicity or lacking the attribution of sounds. The viewer believes in all times that he/she is in the centre of what is seen and heard, or at least has the illusion that he/she can sufficiently identify the scene of the action by knowing the origin of the sounds that go with the picture.

"Der akusmatische Weg" disrupts perceptual habits. The video camera does not follow a person walking out of the picture, it keeps the original angle even though this is not required by the following action. As the person vanishes from sight, the sound of footsteps moving away can suddenly be heard from a loudspeaker installed behind the viewer. The isolation of picture and sound where seeing and hearing are reversed. The sound of retreating footsteps which fails to conform with what is seen on the monitor forces us to create a second space, a staircase or stairwell, as it triggers the complementary function of perception as an elimination of contradictions. When separated from vision, hearing can do the same thing media such as radio or telephone has always done as a matter of course: generate virtual spaces of their own, independent of vision. In their practices of teaching philosophy, the Acousmatics, a Greek school of philosophy, called for a separation of vision and hearing by putting a curtain between the lecturer and the listeners to help these concentrate as much as possible on the contents of speech. Axel Stockburger's video work is an exemplary illustration of this separation. It is a practice that is directly opposed to contemporary commercial multi-mediality in MTV style."

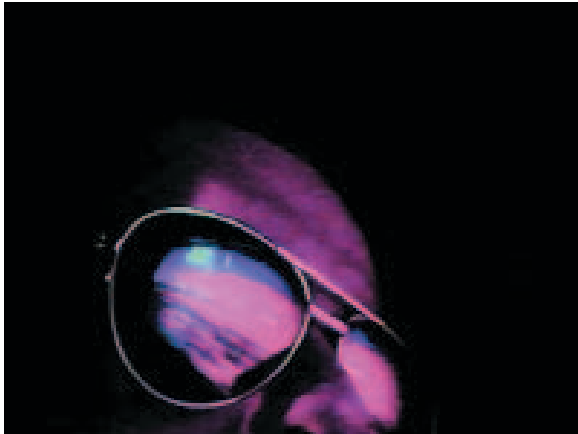
Kathrin Romberg,
 Catalogue "Junge Szene" 1998, Secession, Vienna

The Acousmatic Way - Der Akusmatische Weg, 1998, DVD Video Monitor, Loudspeakers, 1 minute, edition of 5, courtesy of the artist.

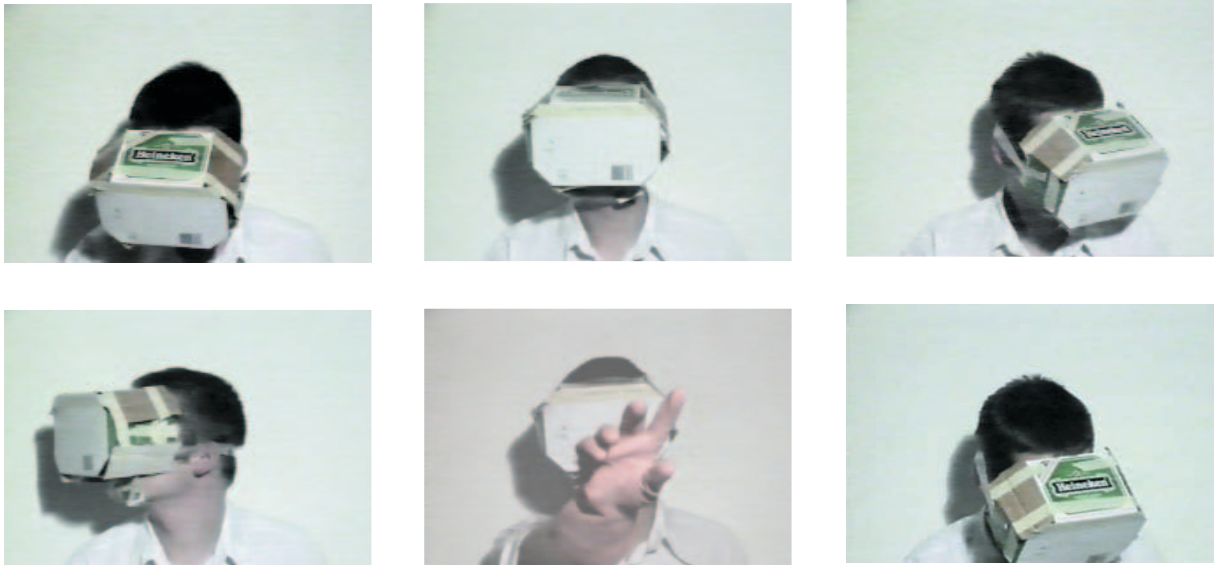


The piece PSX Warriors Tekken consists of 2 videos simultaneously showing the faces of 2 players playing the well known fighting game Tekken against each other. The piece is the first in a series of works examining different aspects of this specific situation. The videos are either projected on opposite sides of a room or in the form of two monitors facing each other. The original sound from the game syncs the reactions of the players.

The whole gameplay is visible on the "Inter-face" of the players. Their reactions, mimics and movements are representing the virtual gamespace. Every action in the digital environment of the game is followed by a little movement of her body. These traces of movement are stronger with people who are new to the immersive spaces of computer-games. Players that are used to games do not move much, they have learnt to constrain their movement to their fingertips on the gamepad. The human side of the interface is used as a screen for the abstract space produced by the game.



In Head Mounted Display the Internet-game "Spectre Supreme" is projected on the mirror shaded glasses of a person that does not move. People navigating through computergames are moving a lot more than People watching Television. They move their fingertips and eyes, while they are immersed in the illusion of a three dimensional space created by the game. Head Mounted Display presents the ideal space that places the bond between the user and the digital environment. The abstract space of the game, originating from a 2dimensional screen is redirected through the possible perception of the user towards the viewer of the video. A HMD, Head Mounted Display is used by Fighter pilots as a way of seeing the Data that is projected onto the inside of special glasses, and the view out of the cockpit, simultaneously. This technology displays the mixture of different levels of perception in a very distinctive manner.



The Video shows a person wearing a Cyberhelmet made of Heineken Beer Boxes, and a plastic glove, moving in an imagined virtual space. In a way it is mocking the privacy of experiences that users of 3d virtual environments are having. If you enter a gaming arcade today you will see people wearing helmets moving in strange ways, which are reasonable only for them, and are not shared outside their immersive environment. The piece was produced as part of an artist residency at Villa Arson, Nice and shown in the exhibition Hors Saison at Villa Arson (1996).