



## The Artistic Archive: Two Examples

### First example

<http://black.fri.uni-lj.si/videospace/>

The artistic project VideoSpace (2003) establishes a new media entering into the synchronous presentation of the author's history of his creativity in the artistic media. It is a virtual three-dimensional space in which particular artistic projects are set in spatial and conceptual relations. It represents a type of archive that declines the accumulation of artefacts in chronological developing series; instead it offers the spectator to enter or better to submerge into a new reality, constructed exclusively from the codification of relations between the concepts of particular projects. Since these relations are codified and anchored in the spatial relations of the virtual reality, the spectator's trajectory through VideoSpace is not drawn in time of experiencing but rather in the dramaturgy of space, which thereby enacts the first level of the internal spectator - it modifies the spectator's view and perception of the art work.

The project VideoSpace enables us to rethink the concept of art and theory of art today. By re-considering the margins between the art projects the artistic field is construed as an archive, constructed through the exact definition of the specificities of the boundaries between the projects. The artistic archive as a whole is established also through its unity as a part of a broader archive that includes the whole reality of our society. Hence, the model of relationships between particular elements of VideoSpace proposes a model of artistic functioning in general, since artistic works as units of the contemporary reality can not be justified through the model of aesthetic experience, the genius artist or pragmatically through the mere institution of art. Instead, they are elaborated through the relationship towards the everyday life, where art is not isolated from political and ethical questions.

VideoSpace was created on the basis of three projects: Javornik (2001), R III (2002) and VSA (2003). These are autonomous artistic projects that should be conceived through the viewpoint of video-integrated media and conceptual art. Each of the three projects and of course their relationships in VideoSpace are realised through multiple artistic media: as video tape, video installation and web site, in some cases also as an interactive CD-ROM (Javornik), traditional paintings acrylic on canvas (R III) and corporate identity (VSA). VideoSpace is realized on different levels, too: first as a conceptual diagram, than as an interactive CD-ROM with a virtual three-dimensional hyperspace and as a reduction of the CD-ROM version into the language of VRML three-dimensional net reality.

network of discourses.

Thus constructed and relationally codified virtual space can hold an author's history in a single frozen moment in time, but unfolded in the dramaturgy of space, since like Gaston Bachelard wrote in his book Poetics of Space: in it's thousand folds, the space holds the enclosed fossils of time, made concrete by their enduring existences. This is a hermeneutical approach to singular realized projects that function like nodes in the rhizome of discourses, which is totally different from the biographical approach that tries to feel the gaps in the timeline between discrete emanations, that is, singular artistic projects. On the other hand, the rhizomatic structure enables also the coexistence of different discourses, different projects from different authors that are set in a dialogue to one another correspondingly with the spatial and conceptual relations between them. The VideoSpace as a virtual space of dialogical confrontation and as a battlefield between different voices has been used to contain the relations between the projects from nine different authors. These relations reflect the institutional functioning of the academic teaching processes on different departments of the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana and thus rethink the politics of art at this specific locus.

### Second example

<http://black.fri.uni-lj.si/mouseionserapeion/>

To construct an archive nowadays is not a non-problematic or an obvious project. This is not due only to the fact that we are constructing a DVD-ROM application of the archive structure and its further integration into the medium of the Internet site - that both constitutively imply a certain degree of interactivity -, but it is the very identity of the archive that is problematic today. Even more, it is not a crisis of the identity of the archive but of the notion of identity itself, in the context of contemporary criticism of the subjectivity. To understand the concept of the archive, if we want our approach to be up to date, it is necessary to consider the "archaeological method" that dissolves the archive as a self-standing unit like that of a telephone directory printed in a book. (However, we must point out that a book as such is not necessarily constructed according to the principles of the "pre-foucaultian" archive, but it is still apparent that the contemporary interactive forms and media propose a more adequate means for the reconfiguration of the archive-structure.) The second philosophical impulse (besides Foucault) for the guidelines of our project of the archive is the mystical tradition of the renaissance philosopher Nicholas of Cusa (Nicolaus Cusanus) (1401-64), especially his treatise De Visione Dei. In his text inspired by the contradictory aspect of the pictures that follow the spectator

Three autonomous projects in the VideoSpace are connected to each other by the conceptual horizon that defines each of them and all of them in relation to each other. This is a triade of irreducible cosmic substances: the matter, the human and the language. With this triade - of course in the theoretical form enabled by the metalinguistics of Mikhail Bakhtin and the archaeology of Michael Foucault - we are able to overcome some of the crucial contemporary philosophical biases embodied in critical movements - as for example formalism (that functions only in the field of language and to some extent in the field of matter), then psychologism (with the human expressiveness through language), or historical materialism and neomarksisms (with the focus on the materiality)... In the three projects all three substances are intertwined on the artistically specific level: the language is considered from the point of view of literary sciences and intertextuality, the human is considered through the theories and practices of body art and performance, whereas the matter is considered through Bakhtin's and Foucault's theories of the materiality of discourse.

Language is in the focus of the project R III, which is actually a transposition of Shakespeare's history play King Richard the Third into the medium of videotape. Today King Richard the Third is perceived mainly as a discursive field that transgresses the mere problematics of literary intertextuality and extends into the field of material effects that interfere with human life in the form of politics. Javornik explores the borders of body art, which despite its apparently transparent aim turns out to be not as non-problematic as it may seem. Activation of unpleasant connotations of artistic discourses and institutions shatters the very institution of artistic abuse of the body. The VSA project is focused on the materiality, it searches for the contact with the matter in its pure form. However, this contact is not non-problematic but instead it appears wrapped into a Kafka-like maze of discourses and institutions.

In VideoSpace we followed the logic of the triade language, human, matter and we added the spatial dimension. This move is suggested in the theoretical shift enabled by the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Michael Foucault. Foucault somewhere clearly states that the shift of the philosophical research from the problematics of time onto the problematics of space relations is necessary.\* The territorialization of the discourse has replaced the deconstructionist or Lacanian burgeoning of the discourse from the rapture in time. Since we are dealing with computer media, we evolved our concept mainly from the model of the hypertext, that is, by means of links spreading through the internet, and from the model of video games that contribute the three dimensional graphics - some kind of hyperspace -, which appears before our eyes in real time.

with their eyes across the room Cusanus derives the possibility of conceptualising the God's view and thereby God's image, as suggested to the already quite individualized early renaissance human. Here we want to mention also the paper by Tine Germ that explains Dürer's Christomorphic self-portrait (1500) through the Nicholas' thesis. Dürer has, following Cusanus, portrayed God, as he appears to every individual in the way most adequate for him/her - that is as his/her self-portrait.

Our archive will through manipulation of a simple algorithm, some kind of artificial intelligence, adapt to each user in turn. (Actually, these will be generic groups of users since we are not interested in the individuality of a subject in the hermeneutical circle but instead we are interested in the regular construction of the socio-historically specific identities). Thus two things happen: on one hand the archive is constructed in the way most suitable for each particular user - the meaning evolves by the movements through the archive, in the constellations of elements specific to each user -, on the other hand it is important that although the access to any element of the archive is not blocked, the effect of the individually created constellations of the archive suggests the atmosphere of closing up or restriction. The archive appears to be closing despite the fact that there are no actual restrictions at browsing; this however can be explained through Foucault's concept of Power-Knowledge, so often being misinterpreted by the theoreticians as simply restrictive.

Our project of the archive will enable two things. First, this will be the actual archive of the projects by students of video seminar at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. Secondly, it will enable the view into the construction of social identities that are not evolved simply through violence and indoctrination, but rather through the hermeneutical circles of creating meanings. Different forms or constellations of the archive will appear as different subject positions, whereas on the other hand this specific form of the archive dissolves one of the major problems of contemporary writing of theories and histories of art. The archive will not be constructed once and for all times, instead it will evolve through dialog between different users that will enter and manipulate it, among them of course the authors, too.

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\* See Vaupotič, Aleš. "On the problem of historical research in humanities: Michel Foucault and Mikhail Bakhtin." Logos. 2. 3 (Fall 2002). URL: <http://www.kud-logos.si/LOGOS-3-02/bakhtinfoucault.htm> also in Vaupotič, Aleš & Bovcon, Narvika. Umetniški arhiv: Dva primera/Artistic Archive: Two Examples. (Exh. Cat.) Maribor: MKC, 2004. URL: <http://vaupotic.com/files/vspcmousseurap.pdf>

<http://narvika.bovcon.com>  
<http://ales.vaupotic.com>

On the level of conceptual diagram we added to the three projects also the context of the video game Tomb Raider, which makes use of the third person gaze, attached to the model of our double, the avatar. The space with which Lara Croft communicates and interacts is mainly a representation of the real space. In the CD-ROM version, when we have faced the concrete dilemma about what the virtual space should look like in order to enable the coexistence and mutual functioning of the three projects, the shift of the player's interest from the avatar to the space itself was necessary. That is because the avatar implies the connection of the tactile qualities of the space details with the user, who relates to the virtual space through the experience of his/her own physical body in the real space. The meaning of the avatar in the video game is that it as a perfect double of the user takes over his/her complete interest and thereby it disqualifies the spatial features of the game (eg. video game Tekken). Since the triangular relatiogram of the world is developed on the conceptual level and since it addresses the user completely on the conceptual level, too (and not on the level of physical experience), the avatar as the strongest carrier of identification becomes unnecessary and even disturbing, since the user strolls in the conceptual space with the aim to discover the space and not to experience it as his home. By absence of the experimental manipulability of the space features the empirical distance is evolved between the user and the virtual space, the consequence of which is the shift into the conceptual understanding.

The virtual space of VideoSpace is founded in three elements: the three dimensional objects, the two dimensional textures and the interested gaze that explores the space. Each of the elements is developed through its crucial perceptive aspect: three dimensional objects mimic the three dimensional objects from the real space (e.g. the house), textures are not mimetically applied to the objects they cover (e.g. the texture of wall bricks is not applied to the object of the house), instead they claim the two-dimensionality, whereas the interested gaze is focused onto the space itself and it does not disclose its carrier, the avatar. The three dimensional objects and the two dimensional textures are thereby functional in their specific roles and not in the common role of an illusion of the real world. This is in part possible because the three dimensional objects carry enough information about the references to the real world by their three dimensional form alone and would be therefore redundantly codified if they would mimic real world also on the level of textures. We must keep in mind, that the exact codification and sharpening of the edges between elements are the very material of which the virtual space is constructed.

The textures are utterly flat, two-dimensional

when they carry pornographic images. In fact, the meaning or the story of any image takes place in the point of its suspense, the macule. This is the point, which is not directly, or onefoldedly interpreted; it is the point of the submersion of the viewer into the image. A pornographical picture has no such point since it discloses everything. It has no suspense; its first meaning is at the same time also its last and all the meanings in between.

Each of the three elements of the VideoSpace (objects, textures, interested gaze) could not exist without the other two and every two of them without the third could not form the logic of the virtual space. The segmentation of the virtual space into the crucial perceptive functions of the elements that form it has been the foundation for the understanding, conceptualizing and designing of the form and the way of codification of each of them. Hence, here we have a conceptual virtual space, the task of which is not to mimic the real world at the resolution as high as possible (as are the trends in contemporary video games), but rather to evolve an environment into which the triangular relatiogram of the world can be placed and developed by the means of the three projects Javornik, R III and VSA.

The VRML version of the VideoSpace is reduced to a platform in the black infinite space and the conceptual triad of the relatiogram language, human, matter juxtaposed with the triad of the projects Javornik, R III and VSA. The space in the virtual reality of the VRML code is functionally reduced to the minimal possible information in order not to overload the internet data transfer. The platform in the black space is manipulated by means of the possible movements in the virtual space: the translation with the functions of zoom in and zoom out, and the rotation of the object (the platform). Each of these manipulations creates a travelling in the space, whereas through travelling different points of view and interest are created and discovered. Thereby the user gradually approaches the relatiogram: he/she can grasp it from a distance by zooming out or proceed from one mapped identity point to another. Each of the identity points is linked to the web pages of the project in concern. Thus the spatially mapped relatiogram is transferred to a parallel level of separate pages by the instantaneous action of the web links. The linked pages may be considered flat in comparison to the three-dimensional translations in the virtual reality of the VRML. This is one way of exiting and re-entering the virtual space of VideoSpace; the other is the disclosure of the symbol of the relatiogram, which is the Star of David. It is the point of leakage of the virtual space into the real world space of a specific social context that cannot be perceived as a neutral appendix but instead it modifies the self-contained structure of the virtual reality and makes it dependent on and a part of the social

2007 2006 2005 2004 2003 2002 2001 2000

Society for Connecting Art and Science ArtNetLab establishes a platform for production management of new media art projects by the youngest generations of artists. It offers organisational support for the collaboration of the Academy of fine art and design and the Faculty of computer and information science, University of Ljubljana. The key institution of ArtNetLab is our organization of the International Festival of Computer Arts, making possible the realization and presentation of the works and at the same time opening up the possibility of direct contact of the new new media works with internationally established projects from this field. Aleš Vaupotič, ArtNetLab

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Tilen Zbona:  
Hybrid Subjects

Iztok Holc, Staš Repše, Simon Ferkolj, Andrej Mihorič:  
Metastaze svetlobe in podobe

Luka Leskovšek, Bojan Bajc, Hamza Sadiković, Matej Kastelic:  
Demon

Vanja Mervič, Simon Cegljar, Andraž Franjko:  
SUBCOnTEXT

Iztok Holc:  
Tipna animacija

Narvika Bovcon, Aleš Vaupotič:  
V Brecknock brž, življenje je na nit!

Gorazd Krnc:  
Plain Forms

Srečo Dragan:  
Metamorfoza lingvistika

Peter Cluha:  
Manifest

Robert Caglić:

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