OSS/****
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In many respects the features of on-line web communication and consequently those of web art are rather different from the interactive multimedia of the CD-ROM. Thus, for some it was a great surprise that Joan and Irk, who were known as devoted net-artists, presented an off-line work, although it must be an acknowledged cliché, even for those who were surprised, that artistic freedom allows one to use the medium most adequate for one"s message - even if this message is created by the analysis of this very medium. In any case, it is not difficult to notice the similarity between the web-aesthetics of the Jodi project and the CD-ROM realized by them: it is a media-conscious approach, the focus is exclusively on the given medium and what it can create. Naturally, beyond the instrument itself, this approach calculates in the spectator as well as the given circumstances of perception.

The multimedia CD-ROM denoted by the above secretive subtitle, in its present form consists of three parts - yet as the artists have acknowledged, originally they wanted to design a four-part piece - which is signified by the three thicker lines of the square appearing within the grid of the first page / homepage??. These parts are not arranged in any special order and as a result of the non-linear nature of the medium the user might choose the starting point as soon as he recognizes the requirements of the next steps. Beyond the initial 5x5 grid that is similar to an "empty" magic square, there is another sign that implies something unusual: the unfinished lines of two squares in the bottom might indicate that this grid can be taken apart after the small individual squares are placed on the desktop one by one, which then appear as empty files or windows behind which there is nothing.

As for the title, the first part of OSS/**** could be described as a "tongue-in-cheek" anagram, inasmuch as OS might stand for Operating System as well as refer to SOS (with a slight acronymic twist) and the cluelessness of the user. The second part might formally denote a four-letter password and in this case it is again one of the most common functional gestures among those who use the computer that is emphasized through a formal representation outside of the context where it is normally used. (It belongs to the story of creating this CD and where it was meant to be distributed, since it is important for the artists that the public is introduced to their activity.)

Selecting the first part by random choice we reach a black-and-white pattern, which is similar to one of the earlier "sounds-in-motion" broadcasts by a Jodi-website or those found by desperate technicians in an early age of television. The speed of the programmed noise to be found here can be controlled with the mouse or if nobody interferes the pattern changes automatically every 30 seconds. The interference generated by the intra-linear pattern and the dissolution of the screen becomes intertwined with approximately eighty electronic pages and the experience of the elementary motion picture derives from the mutual inter-relation of these three constituents, sound, gesture and moiré, as well as the additional motion, which is the contribution of the user. This accidental-pattern is similar to natural mechanisms like the pattern of leaves on the ground in a forest clearing during the early fall. Certain sounds appear to be "didactic", in the same way, for instance, the dots along the sides of the screen support a sense of speed. The shifts between electrical ornaments are signified by sound effects: when the mouse/searcher reaches a "sounding noise" it denotes another level, where one arrives at a different pattern. It is not difficult, by tracing a relationship to early experimental films or the similar ambitions of formal/structuralist films, to show the connection between elementary motion as well as the tension stretching between the systemic and the accidental (Kubelka, Tony Conrat) and this "movie-game".

The basic element in the piece is the two major motions of the user, i.e. when he affects the mouse with his hand and when he affects the screen with a click or the keyboard. The latter is known as scrolling, which when related to the fast-forward button in video editing is the only instrument that directly links screen and motion picture together. The only difference perhaps, is that in the case of e-mail, for instance, one selects the speed of motion for oneself, and in that sense a computer image is dynamic while video and film are both static. (One might remember that in his "Scenario du Passion" Godard presents the basic principles of motion by the video mixer: the shift of two images models the scrolling on the computer; this is what the effect of the motion picture is based on - almost nothing happens yet the sense of motion is there.)

At certain points a running image is possible to stop by delicate motion of the mouse, which produces a unique graphic effect. In fact, the dynamics of the image can be arranged like a hook, which allows one to experience the transmission of a still image into a moving one, which in the meantime is in interference with the displaying "canvas" itself.

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Jumping onto the second level the user encounters a black screen, the toolbar being replaced by a congregation of numerous black dots and one standing alone. This is a drawing software; the user of the CD can draw by means of moving the mouse and when he stops the software displays the coordinates of the dots at the end of the line and releases a series of random sounds: one sound representing one letter of the keyboard.

Beyond this there are also hidden menus in the application: the software opens random windows which can be closed yet can also be replaced by new ones - a sort of parody of windows, where one finds the desktop full of windows which already cover each other up. The text files behind the windows are random combinations - textures that are somewhat like random bits of

programming or viruses or secret codes but even more are parts of a greater visual poetry. The sense of the latter seems to be supported by the fact that the earlier mentioned letter-sounds emitting an acoustic display of a coordinates can be connoted even further towards a kind of acoustic poetry like that of dada - one might think of Kurt Schwitters, or even some of Morgenstein"s poetry, which is a better example inasmuch as it indicates the sense of humor and play. The whole thing looks like the marriage of a psychotic drawing program and windows.

In certain cases the drawn lines become colorful, which is an uncontrollable exit from a black-and-white order. One can save the whole picture (drawing), which was made while using the program at only one single point and the creators reveal it also through a visual procedure: if one chooses the singular point that replaces the toolbar, the screen turns into its inverse: on a white surface there appears a black horizontal line, which can be moved to the bottom of the page by the mouse and then - and only then - the icon denoting saving appears. The whole procedure is precisely described by what one of the creators, Joan, has said is: "A study on the behavior of an application which does not have any function."

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The third - and in the traditional sense most spectacular - part of the CD is based on the instability of the desktop: it immediately removes the images "covering" the screen and seen by the user; the wallpaper or the abundance of icons - or anything that is visible on that specific computer - and afterwards are used as "working material". Through certain letter combinations or the typing of certain letters the most diverse effects are displayed in a transformed way, treating the already mentioned opening page as an image. The effect is similar to the first shock - it is as if the computer went out of order or the screen "went crazy". Yet in another way, as if out of this singular never-used-image all of a sudden a whole movie emerged.

This part is also full of hidden elements: certain letter combinations might be controlled with the mouse and even certain gift sounds are revealed: a "Japanese song", for example, which in fact consists of sounds generated by the computer.

At a certain point the command blows up the desktop to a large degree so that the grid of the screen becomes visible and naturally one can also move and navigate within the image, and, as opposed to the other two parts, color has an important role here: there is an abundance of colorful variations, it is almost as if one was in a posterhouse - there appear a rainbow of colors which move, while the colors that were already there constantly go through transformation.

In fact, what is happening is the filming of an indefinite existence. The message transmitted to the (regular) user is an aha-experience about creativity: in certain cases gained at the cost of a little stress or some shock (when the effect is explained in terms of the computer"s crash). This is a dynamic deliberation of images from the customary cover page by means of "peeling away the surface" of the screen. And then from the beginning again.

(source : http://framework.v2.nl/archive/archive/leaf/other/default.xslt/nodenr-131271)