

## **STATEMENT**

My work reflects upon the condition of art making after the "digital experience." The formal and structural approach to various media I employ, such as installation, CD-ROM, Internet and sound, engages in binary logic, because I assemble the material according to a narrow set of self-imposed rules which often incorporate algorithms, controlled randomness and other methods inspired by computer code.

Since 1997, I have investigated the process of "reverse engineering"<sup>1</sup> by (re-)translating the abstract aesthetic language of virtual reality and 3-D computer modeling back into an architectural environment by means of large-scale light installations. In this body of work, space is experienced as a second skin, our social skin, which is transformed through my artistic intervention. Due to the very nature of its architectural dimension, participating by simply being "present" is an integral part of the installations. Visual perception works in conjunction with corporeal motion, and the subsequent passage of time<sup>2</sup>.

The formal aspect of the works is easily accessible. An interpretation and understanding of this characteristic is dependent upon the viewer's subjective references. Equally, the various individual's interactions within the context of the installation re-shape each viewer's subjective references and reveal a complex social phenomenon.

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<sup>1</sup> "Reverse engineering" - the method of re-programming software from an industry rival without knowing the original computer code.

<sup>2</sup> 'Speculatively, we might refer to the well-known experiment involving cats that were restricted so that they could not explore space through their own body movements, and thus could not learn the constants of objects relative to their own movement. Some of the cats were allowed to move freely, but dragged a cart containing other, constrained cats - bound like the viewers of the shadow show in Plato's cave. Both groups of cats had the same visual experiences. But when all the cats were, after several weeks, allowed to move freely, the cart-pulling cats were able to orient themselves normally, while those cats restricted from any movement would continuously bump into things or fall off edges. From this experiment, it was deduced that an "intelligent" orientation in space, or any generally "intelligent" behavior, develops from an active senso-motor exploration of the environment.'

Florian Rötzer, 'Images Within Images, or, From the Image to the Virtual World' in 'Iterations: The New Image', p.64, International Center of Photography - New York City, The MIT Press - Cambridge, Mass. and London, England 1994

## **PROJECT INFO YOU ME AND**

The play involves various interactions of two characters. One character is represented by a silhouette of a male figure, the other one by a silhouette of a female figure.

There is no story in a traditional sense. Extremely strict and ritualized movements are executed by the two characters or multiple instances of the characters. The computer program serves as an invisible regisseur that directs the virtual actors by controlled random functions.

Audio and visual material are reduced to essential elements. Three different tones on both audio channels and simple rhythm patterns direct the sensation to the spatial movement of sound. The images are in black and white with a few accents in color to emphasize the aesthetic of the actors' ornamental geometry. On one hand, the silhouettes of the figures are treated as individual actors and on the other hand, the spatial arrangements and movements of groups of figures are used as ornaments.

The same elements of the Minimal Opera are repeated in different variations. The result is a digital mantra open to various interpretations by the viewer.

The first act's title is "you me." It concentrates on the two solo actors. The second part, named "and," shows mass scenes and movements. The individual characters dissolve into ornamental patterns. "you me and," the last part, mixes individual and group actions from the first two acts into a final scene.

During the three sections the words "you," "me," and "and" appear as single words to provide poetic metaphors for the virtual narrative in the specific act. The positions of the actors in mass scenes are marked by numbers from 1 to 10. The numbers appear and disappear as the figures emerge on stage.

Each act is a single scene, arising in a different browser window. If all three windows are open, the visual-acoustic story of all three acts is permanently present. This leads to various unpredictable mixtures and interpretations depending on the user's action of resizing, moving, and arranging of windows. In addition to this simple customization of the play, each act itself allows users to direct actors by changing the position of the mouse. With this combination of high-level (moving windows, etc.) and low-level interaction (inside a window) the user is enabled to fine tune the Minimal Opera.

Interactivity is provided as a choice, not as a must. The viewer can influence the narrative but this active experience is not necessary to go through the piece - activity and passivity coexist simultaneously.

The project was made possible through a commission by HotWired, the web-site of Wired Magazine. It premiered in August 1997 at HotWired's RGB-Gallery at <http://www.hotwired.com/rgb/red/>.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

### **ShockWave plug-in**

Can be downloaded at <http://www.macromedia.com>

### **Memory**

At least 32 MB of RAM reserved for browser

### **Headphones**

Please plug headphones into the audio output of your sound card. The sound of the project is designed for headphones - without them you will miss most of the audio.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Born 1963, Gföhl, Lower Austria  
Lives and works in New York since 1993

**Education (selection):**

MFA Computer Art, School of Visual Arts, 1995, New York  
Diploma in Electronic Music, Academy of Music, 1991, Vienna  
BA in Composition, Academy of Music, 1990, Vienna

**Scholarships and awards (selection):**

WNET-Public Television Reel New York Web Award, 1999, New York  
P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center Studio Residency, 1997, New York  
Fulbright Scholarship for graduate studies at School of Visual Arts  
Prix Ars Electronica 96, Honorable mention - category Interactive Art

**Solo shows :**

KUNSTHALLE VIENNA, 2000, Vienna, Austria  
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY GALLERY, 1999, Jersey City, New Jersey  
444, Apex Art, 1999, New York  
AUSTRIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE, 1998, New York  
BLAU-GELBE GALERIE, 1995, Vienna, Austria

**Internet projects :**

YOU ME AND, <http://www.hotwired.com/rgb/redl>, 1997  
TRUTH IS A MOVING TARGET, <http://www.thing.net/~parallel>, 1997

**Group shows (selection):**

OKAY COMPUTER, La Programma, 2000, Mexico City, Mexico  
SERPENT, Hermit Foundation, 1999, Plasy, Czech Republic  
PUNTO CIEGO ("Blind Spot"), Art and Idea, 1999, Mexico City, Mexico  
FIN DE SIECLE NEW YORK A NANTES, Hôtel de la Duchesse-Anne, 1999, Nantes, France  
MODULAR COMPOSITE, Central Fine Arts Gallery, 1998, New York  
OPEN SALVO, White Box Gallery, 1998, New York  
WISH YOU LUCK, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, 1998, Queens, New York  
ISEA97, Chicago Art Institute, 1997, Chicago  
MAC CLASSIC, Postmasters Gallery, 1997, New York  
PASSWORD: FERDYDURKE, Postmasters Gallery, 1997, New York  
FRAGMENTS IN TIME, Clementice Gallery, 1997, New York  
TO-PUBLIC NETBASE CHILLER LOUNGE, Museums Quarter Vienna, 1997, Vienna, Austria  
BALANCE AKTE 96, Museum of Lower Austria, Vienna, Austria  
PASSWORD: FERDYDURKE, 1996, Postmasters Gallery, New York  
OUT OF THE DARK, 1996, Elga Wimmer Gallery, New York  
3RD NEW YORK INT. VIDEO & NEW MEDIA FESTIVAL, 1996, New York  
ARS ELECTRONICA 96, Linz, Austria  
FREE FALL, 1996, New York  
CAN YOU DIGIT?, 1996, Postmasters Gallery, New York  
DIGITAL SALON, 1995, Visual Arts Museum, New York  
CYBER QUEER, 1994, Anthology Film Archives, New York  
ZUR ZEIT, 1993, KunstHalle Krems, Austria

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