Art and Democracy (2005)
People Making Art Making People
Peter Weibel

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I. The Mythical Past of the Corpus Politicum

We know of the great Greek sculptor Polyclitus that he measured many people in order to arrive at a canon of the human figure by means of a perhaps idealistic average. His famous *Spear Bearer*, that idealized figure, can hardly be representative of a differentiated society with all its dissimilarities, differences and specializations. Instead, the canon must have been shaped for a specific, limited social group that aspired to homogeneity. A representative canon of the human figure can only arise, in other words, if all the members of the community in question are geared to a single measure and, thus, where the ideal is balance within the group. The aesthetic canon and the social canon were mutually determining. The representation of the citizens in a shared aesthetic ideal of equality corresponded to the representation of the citizen in the shared social ideal of equality. As this example shows, there is much shared ground between the emergence of democracy and the emergence of Greek sculpture, between the political form (Greek democracy) and the aesthetic form (Greek classical sculpture). The aesthetic ideal was the product of a political program, the rise of the Greek citizen.

We can discern in the Greek exploratory efforts to find an ideal form of state (as is indicated by the concepts of democracy and aristocracy themselves), the actual break with the past and the actual problem, in constitutional terms, the transition from the "Nomist" to the "Cratist" age, from the age of Gods to the age of Man, to refer to a term that Carl Schmitt, the influential constitutional theorist and later legal crown witness to the Third Reich, proposed in his book *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Ius Publicum Europaeum*.[1] The nomist age is defined by *Nomos*, the Law, the Pre-Ordained, which is linked to rules. It is hardly

surprising that the idea of the *Nomos* as the basis of an eternal social order endured for millennia. With the Cratist age, it is not an autocratic age that commenced, the age of authoritarian rule, but the age when the people, the *Demos*, received power over the social order so that they could introduce democracies, the rule of the people. Greek aesthetics was rooted in this idea of Cratist regimes – the notion of the commensurability of anatomical and social order, the notion that the measurements of the human figure corresponded to the mean underlying the world, that the pre-ordained is mutable, that rules are not eternal and that the laws of the gods do not inevitably and infinitely define the order of Man; the people themselves can determine the shape of society and its laws. Man takes the stage, in Protagoras' words from the fifth century BCE, as the measure of all things, taking the place of the laws of the gods, in art and in society. Just as the people determined the shape and order of society, defying *Nomos* by defining these anew, so too the sculptor determined the shape and order of man by positing these qualities anew at will. That is the doctrine of Polyclitus; that is the link between Greek sculpture and Greek democracy.[2]

Once the *Nomos*, that is to say the gods, no longer told men what was correct or incorrect, good or evil, they had to make the related decisions themselves. And once the old answers given by the *Nomos* no longer applied, men were now well prepared for the new decision-making processes involved. The numerous problems that the Greeks faced at the transition from the Nomist

1 Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Ius Publicum Europaeum*, Duncker & Humboldt, Berlin, 1950.
2 See Christian Meier, *Res Publica Amissa*, F. Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1966; *Entstehung des Begriffs der Demokratie*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M., 1970; *Die Entstehung des Politischen bei den Griechen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M., 1980; *Politik und Anmut*, Siedler, Berlin 1985; *Athen: ein Neubeginn der Weltgeschichte*, Siedler, Berlin, 1993; see also Bruno Snell, *Die Entstehung des Geistes*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1975.
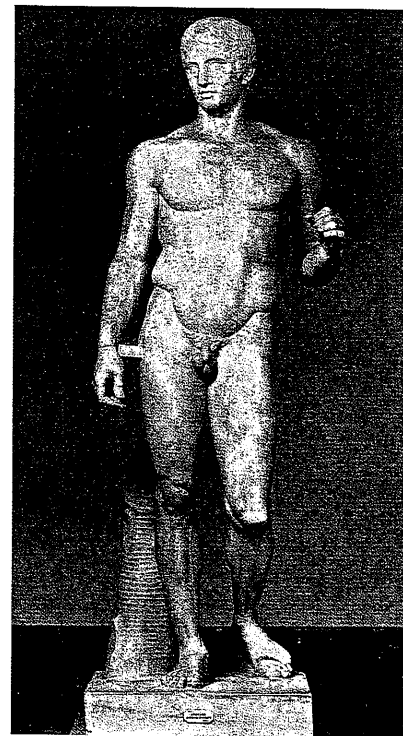
Polyclitus, *Doryphoros* [Spear Bearer], 450-440 BCE, marble sculpture, Museo Nazionale, Naples, Italy

to the Cratist age are reflected less in the visual arts than in their literature. The Attic tragedy is the real focus of this transition. Classical tragedy plays out the problems caused by this transition because theater, like all good art, is an important instrument for the individual to assure himself of his status as such. By constantly playing through and changing the old myths, the Greeks recognized their multifarious problems through the medium of theater. In Aeschylus' *The Persians*, we experience how the traditional notion of the preordained order of the gods is destroyed, the council of nobles stripped of its power and the people seize rule; in his *Orestes*, the law of revenge generates one misdeed after another, a chain of injustice,

until the goddess Athena in order to discontinue the cycle of revenge and counter-revenge introduces a law that finds Orestes not guilty. However, the Greeks still required recourse to the powers of a goddess who was alone empowered to negate a *Nomos*. The audience watching an Attic tragedy experienced through the language of art the truth about politics.

The example of the Greeks shows us just how much art and democracy are interwoven. The Greeks required tragedy just as much as they needed their council and popular assemblies. A functioning democracy requires art as an instrument for assuring itself that it functions and for questioning *Nomos*. Art is one of the preconditions of a functioning democracy. Anyone tending to be against art also has reservations about democracy. Of course we know that modern democracy, mass democracy, is thoroughly unlike its Greek predecessor and that therefore the aesthetic ideal of the Greeks cannot be the aesthetic ideal of democracy today. It is therefore symptomatic, when the twentieth-century totalitarian systems (national socialism, fascism, Stalinism) proclaimed the ideals of Greek Classicism, the cult of the ideal body. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the imitating of Greek architecture and ideal physical forms were an attempt to pretend through the mirror of art that a social order existed that did not actually exist. This did not mean that the mirror of art was blind; it was kidnapped. The doctrinaire use of art, the *imitatio* of the free art, of the ideals of the Greek culture of the body, was intended to disguise the barbaric state of an unfree society, of social disorder. But because it was evident that totalitarian systems were de facto not democratic, the mirror of art functioned as a symptom, as a sign of the social unconscious and repressed, as an indicator of suppressed knowledge and barbarism. In other words, the mirror of art showed, via inversion, the truth about the preconditions for politics. Nevertheless, it is Greece we have to thank for the idea of democracy, and it is the bewitching spirit of democracy that is expressed in Greek sculpture.

The same link between art and politics can be detected, but reversed, in the distinction between *artes liberales* and *artes mechanicae* reflected in the

The Birth of the Glamorous Star as an Optical Illusion
## Busby Berkeley's Dames
Elisabeth Bronfen

Busby Berkeley's *Dames* (1934): The plot is that of the classic revue film. A young, ambitious songwriter, Jimmy Higgins (Dick Powell) wants to stage his first Broadway show with his lover, Barbara Hemingway (Ruby Keeler). His uncle, a millionaire, who they hope will financially back the show, is initially against it. So Jimmy uses his great show song, *I only have eyes for you*, to lure the uncle, through a visually brilliant optical illusion. The trick works, the millionaire invests the money and the songwriter has his breakthrough on Broadway and can now marry his lover. The number decisive for this happy ending begins with Barbara Hemingway picking her lover, played by Jimmy himself, up from work. Together they run to the subway station, while his song, explicitly pointing out the optical illusion ("is this an optical illusion") enchants the world, transferring it into a space-time frame that is beyond all material resolution. Barbara, as the object of his loving gaze, immediately falls asleep in the subway. However, Jimmy, looking at her, keeps singing and transfers her beautiful body first onto a billboard for cosmetics; then he reproduces it endlessly, expressing his own eternal values, because suddenly all the billboards that he looks at through his imaginary looking glass carry her face. The billboard image transforms itself into a manifold reproduction of the face of the young woman. One face becomes many faces, carried by dancers whose bodies we initially don't see. One layer of faces produces yet another layer of faces, which eventually, as the dancers bow forward, turns into a variety of skirts. A multitude of showgirls who all look like Ruby Keeler now each carries a detail of the advertising for the star under the front of her tulle skirt, swinging the covered image back and forth. In the semi close-up we keep seeing Ruby Keeler (or, rather,

we think we recognize her) before she resolves again into the complete body of the dancers and the body structure they form. The highlight of this number is the moment when all the dancers lift their skirts, covering their faces. From an overhead perspective the camera now captures the star's face, for which only the singer has eyes, as a completed jigsaw puzzle. The birth of the star has been accomplished. This glamorous image in the enthusiastic gaze of the lover reveals itself as an assembled picture but also as a transformation of many bodies – in which each carries a detail – into a single completed picture: a double transformation – from a multitude of undistinguishable dancers evolves an oversized glamorous image: the star who is immediately framed, reproducing herself again and thereby also hinting at the tradition of *Vanitas* – the transitory nature of glamour. But through his self-confident playing with media images, Busby Berkeley tightens the screw of optical illusion even farther. After Berkeley drives the camera onto the pupil of the jigsaw image a new chain of resurrections occurs. Ruby Keeler, phallus-like, steps out of her own painted eye (and thereby out of our own as well as the song writer's) but only to turn into a picture again: to a mirror image that, after showing us its back, returns us to the two sleeping people on the subway. They wake up and step into a rainy reality. But the illusion of the enchantment remains. The railway tracks sparkle.

Many bodies form one perfect corpus that in its uniqueness towers above them and yet at the same time is being visually adapted by the group. But in this number the totality seems to be carried to extremes: The poet, his work of art and his audience (his listening lover) – are all united in one complete body of work.

Busby Berkeley, *Dames*, USA 1934, b/w, 90 min, film stills, © Warner Bros.
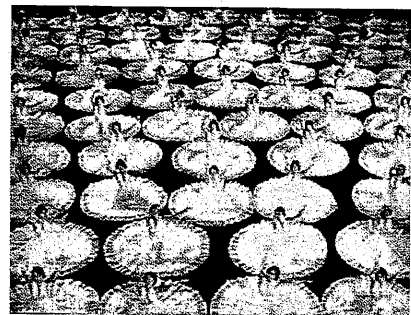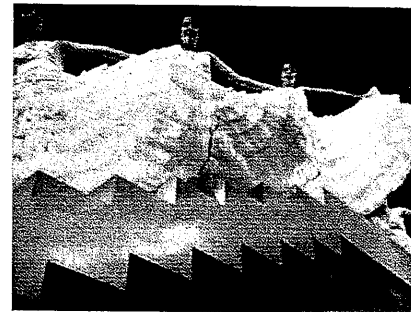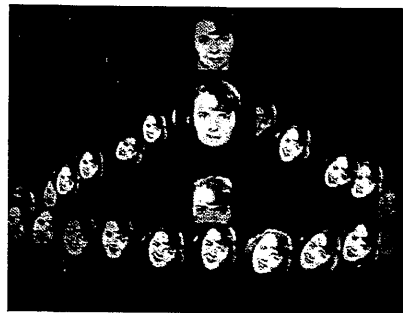
Roman social system. The higher status of the *artes mechanicae* to the detriment of *artes liberales* reveals the emancipation of the slaves and wage laborers and thus the struggle of hitherto suppressed groups for a stake in the social whole. In other words, there is a differentiated relationship between art and politics, one that can be expressed by the words *speculum artium*, the mirror of the arts. For this reason, it is quite justifiable to conjecture that the development of participatory practices in the arts concurs with the advance in participatory democracy and that these processes reciprocally influence each other, just as originally the emergence of Greek sculpture was closely related to the emergence of Greek democracy. The reflection of social conditions in art is of course not as straightforward as some optical reflection. The mirroring is not some isomorphic state or simple bijection and not even inverted or anamorphic and thus distorted; instead the reflection entails complex transformational processes and interdependences. The reflection of the social subconscious through art can also take the shape of inversion, not only through iconographic images but through symptomatic symbols.

II. The Artificialization of the State

The history of political philosophy teaches us that there have repeatedly been common problems and intersections between the various fields of the social domain – for example, between politics, science, economics, art and technology – and that they have all influenced one another. It is therefore quite logical to remember that one of the most influential treatises in political philosophy, namely Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), actually does not begin as a political treatise but with the framework for an aesthetics that can in terms of approach be readily compared with the later aesthetics created by Kant and Hegel.

"Nature (the Art whereby God hath made and governes the World) is by the *Art* of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal. For seeing life is but a motion of Limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principall part within; why may we not say, that all Automata (Engines that move themselves by springs and wheeles as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the *Heart*, but a *Spring*;

and the *Nerves*, but so many *Strings*; and the *Joynty*, but so many *Wheeles*, giving motion to the whole Body, such as was intended by the Artificer? *Art* goes yet further, imitating that Rationall and most excellent worke of Nature, *Man*. For by Art is created that great *Leviathan* called a COM-MON-WEALTH, or STATE (in latine *Civitas*) which is but an Artificiall Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose protection and defence it was intended."[3]

Hobbes does not speak of art but of the entire genealogy of the artificial: of the artificial animal, artificial life, the artificial body and even of the artificial human being. The latter is the state, which is created by art. In other words, Hobbes does not consider community to be something natural but something created, and thus as *techné*, as something artificially created, as art. The chain of comparisons Hobbes makes between animals, humans, the body and the state under the common sign of artificiality is quite astonishing for political scientists today. The metaphors for the political that Hobbes created were highly effective without the majority of people being conscious of their use. It thus bears pointing out that Hobbes compares the commonwealth with a person, indeed with a body, albeit with an artificial body. The frontispiece of his book visualizes this idea by means of a composite image in the vein of the Arcimboldo School, made by Wenzeslaus Hollar and Abraham Bosse: the state as an artificial body composed of a large number of natural bodies.[4] The frontispiece is the visualization of Hobbes' theory of commonwealth as body politic. Following the doctrine of Polyclitus, art and politics mutually justify each other in terms of body politic (in the sign of their artificial nature): the state as an artwork – the art of the statesman – the artist as politician.

Thus, according to Hobbes, the commonwealth is a being of art, an artificial being, an artificial body, an artwork. The aesthetic theory of art as the imitation of nature mentioned at the outset therefore overshadowed political theory: The organs of the state are compared with bodily

3 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, C. B. Macpherson (ed.), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 81.
4 See Horst Bredekamp, *Thomas Hobbes. Der Leviathan. Das Urbild des modernen Staates und seine Gegenbilder 1651-2001*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 2003; Herfried Münkler, *Thomas Hobbes*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt/M., 1993; Herfried Münkler, *Politische Bilder, Politik der Metaphern*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt/M., 1994.

organs, the artificial organs of an artificial commonwealth are derived from natural organs. The natural organism is paradoxically the model for the state structure, an artificial organism, an artificial animal. For all its foundations in an aesthetics of the artificial organism, the body theory of the state was to predominate in the centuries that followed. In the twentieth century, we still find labels such as the people's body and other biological terms being used in the most ghastly and inhuman of ideologies. Yet these ideologies have negated the aesthetic foundations and the aspect of the artistic in Hobbes' notion of politics.

We can glean from his introduction that Hobbes originally wished to ban neither art nor nature, neither feelings nor things from the sphere of the political. Given that the things and the passions, art and nature, the body and the state artificially merge with one another, the customary types of representation – art as the way in which humans represent the world; science as the way humans represent nature and its objects; and politics as the way humans represent humans – intermingle and become blurred.[5] In other words, Hobbes established the theory of the political on aesthetic theory, namely on an aesthetics of the inorganic. This allows us today to continue to grasp the field of the aesthetic as a domain of the political and to derive (from the transformations in the classical representation strategies of art and the natural sciences in Post-Modernity) opportunities for transformations in the strategies of political representation.

## III. The Artistic Technology of the Enlightenment

But the fascinating connection between theory of art, artificial life, politics and technology does not end with Hobbes. Denis Diderot is an important and forgotten precursor of this idea of parliamentary life in connection with the mechanical arts as a tool of democracy; from 1751 to 1780 with Jean le Rond D'Alembert he edited the thirty-five volumes of the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonnée des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, the most significant publishing endeavor of the French Enlightenment, the "chapter that introduced the Revolution," as Robespierre put it, and which as early as the seventh volume was officially con-

demned by Pope Clemence XIII. The elite of the French Enlightenment – Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, and Montesquieu – lent the *Encyclopédie* its anticlerical and anti-absolutist character.

It was above all Diderot's efforts we have to thank for it; he primarily focused on the *arts mécaniciens*, the handicrafts and the engravings presenting these, and technology as the *langue des arts*. Diderot (1713-1784) offers a surprising version of materialism decades before Marx and Engels. Indeed, Engels himself commented, "If ever anybody dedicated his whole life to the enthusiasm for truth and justice using this phrase in the good sense – it was Diderot."

Diderot wishes to sublate the division between *artes liberales* and *artes mechanicae* as the mirror of class society and to change society by emancipating the mechanical arts. The distinction between liberal and mechanical arts had produced a "bad effect in degrading the respectable and useful people". Diderot had three goals: to reach a large public, to encourage research at all stages of production and to disclose all the secrets of manufacturing. In terms of today Diderot was against monopoly and for open sources and favored publishing all things for all people. He was all for an expansion of the field of actors, for a great distribution of knowledge and the development of tools and machines, molds and instruments in the interest of progress. He published the results of his research in the *Encyclopédie* to bring about social change, which he hoped would occur through the widespread knowledge of the mechanical arts. Striking a new balance in the relationship of the mechanical arts to society would, he assumed, change society. Technology would help reconstruct society. The improvement of the status of artisans and the mechanical arts, their materials, products, machines and operations would therefore also augment the social status of all citizens. In other words, he did not expect the arts in the form of painting and sculpture to make major contributions to a free society but anticipated that the mechanical arts would deliver on this point. The knowledge of the mechanical arts organized by his own rational method would, he believed, lead to a rational and just society. He therefore reminded his readers, "Bacon regarded the history of the

5 Stephen Shapin, Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the air-pump. Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1985.
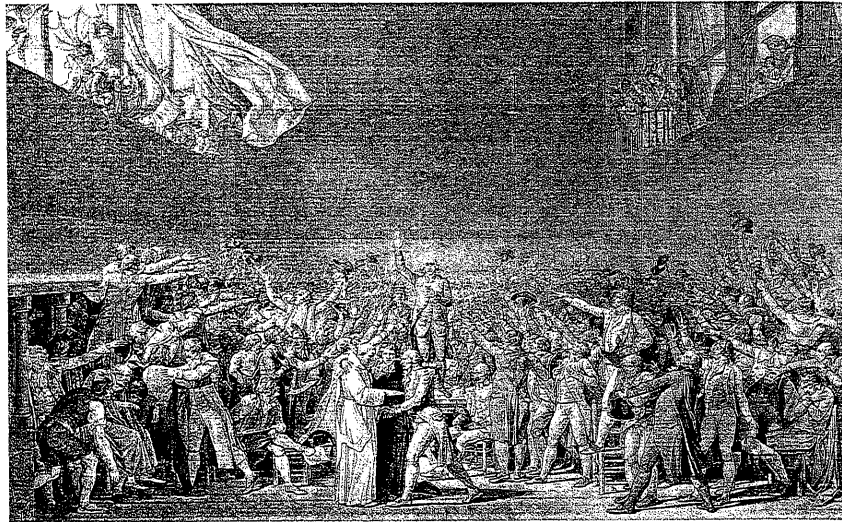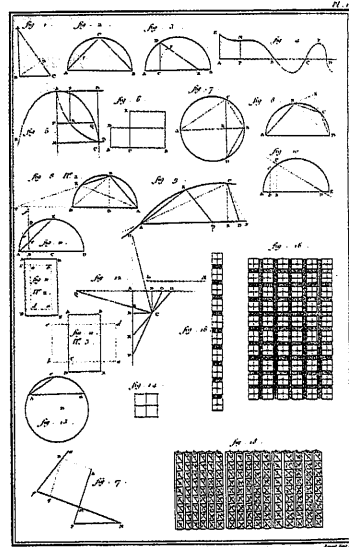
Jacques-Louis David, *The Tennis Court Oath*, pen washed with bistre with highlights of white on paper, 66 x 105.1 cm, Paris, 1791, Musée National du Château, Versailles
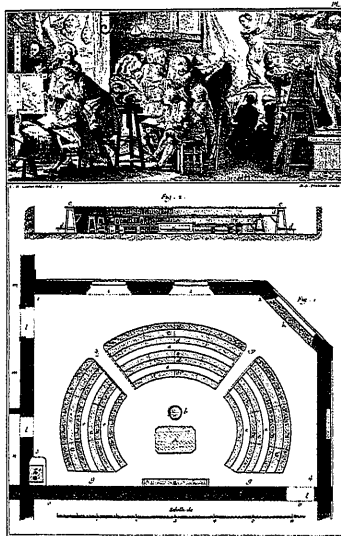
Denis Diderot, Jean d'Alembert, *Encyclopédie, ou, Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, Paris, 1751-1772, left: *Ecole de Dessein*, plate I, vol. 3 (1765), right: *Algebre et Arithmetique*, plate I, vol. 5 (1768)

mechanical arts as the most important branch of true philosophy". The tools of more democracy were thus to be found in the mechanical arts, just as today we hope to find them in the modern media arts and media technologies. Experimental politics and experimental media art – for example, Internet-based community projects, – are meant to support each other. In Diderot and the program of the Enlightenment we find a precursor to "object-oriented democracy," interested in and geared toward the tools of knowledge, the technologies of the political, the integration of the separated fields of representation of science, art and politics. Technology and science take the place of the body politic. Instead of the commensurability of body and state we have the commensurability of science, technology (mechanical arts) and politics. The Enlightenment and Diderot considered the mechanical arts, technology and science to form the basis of an enlightened society. It is in this tradition that the project *Making Things Public* stands.

IV. The Autonomization of Art
This complex relation between art and politics, people making art and art making people, took a new turn around 1800 with the industrial and political revolutions, when Europe started to bid farewell to political absolutism. In order to survive, the idea of the absolute migrated into philosophy and art, where it rules until this very day. At this historical juncture, under pressure from the nascent industrial revolution, a comprehensive rationalization of all domains of life commenced that prompted a degree of discontent among certain groupings in society. The fight for or struggle against this rationalization gave rise to philosophical traditions that endure today. Enlightenment is the point where the inimical parties part ways. The one camp espouses progression and conceptualization, the other votes for regression and contemplation. At any rate, what has broken out is what the one terms "progress" and the other "crisis" or "disintegration". Ever since the Enlightenment we have seen the waves and floodwaters of crises – as resistance to and as a struggle against Enlightenment reason.

As late as 1936 Edmund Husserl identified a "crisis in the European sciences" that commenced

with their rationalization. He dated this crisis to the "Galilean mathematization of nature". The crisis of science consisted in the loss of historical experience, its place taken by mere mathematics. "In the Galilean mathematization of nature the latter itself became reduced to mathematical diversity." Husserl sets contemplation (*Anschauung*) and the world of experience against this rationality of the world as "more geometrico" and the "non-visual symbolism" of mathematics. For "in the current act of measuring of visual objects of experience all we gain are empirical-inexact variables and figures".[6] For him, this reduction to a mere science of fact constituted a crisis in science, as it led to science losing its "significance for life". Precisely at this point the crisis in science becomes a crisis in life. Only a turn back to history could free us from this crisis. Like the Romantics, Husserl evoked history as the highest authority, the highest source of our actions. With history, he proposed a determinism that excluded free and conscious human activities.

Not until the revolutionary years of 1830-1848 did the first models arise for parliamentary systems or constitutional monarchies, with all citizens as equals before the law, with freedom of expression and of the press. The German *Volksverein* founded in 1834 with the objective of the universal realization of human and civil rights was transformed in 1847 through an alliance of liberal citizens into the League of the Just, which then set up a main office in London as the League of Communists. In 1848, Marx and Engels published their *Communist Manifesto*, which described the state of advancing global industrialization in such a dramatic way that one could imagine they were painting a picture of globalization today: "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind."[7] It is against this foil of a dialectic of "revolution and restoration,"[8] of wars of liberation and patronization and the beginning of rampant industrialization that we should see the com-

6 Edmund Husserl, *Die Krise der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg, 1996, p. 42.

7 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Das Kommunistische Manifest*, Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart, 1999, p. 23.

8 Klaus Lankheit, *Revolution und Restauration*, Holle Verlag, Baden-Baden, 1965.

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CYKLOOP is a complete solution package for Virtual Reality (VR). It is equipped with a special diffusion screen optimized for stereo projection and two integrated Digital Light Processing (DLP) stereo projectors that use wide-angle lenses to generate a stereo image. This evokes a realistic impression which lets the user "dive" in a complex virtual world of data.
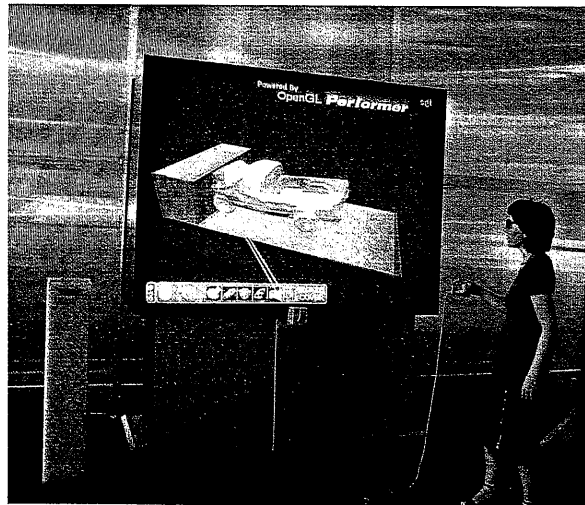
CYKLOOP also includes a high-precision tracking system. This tracking system recognizes your point of view and your direction of view via an electromagnetic field and sends this information to the Virtual Reality software COVISE. So COVISE "knows" where you are and where you are looking in your virtual world of data and adapts the image according to this information.

CYKLOOP is made by VISENSO, Stuttgart, Germany

CYKLOOP, Mobile Virtual-Reality Center, 84" projection screen, computer, tracking system, VR-software COVISE, 251.5 x 183.5 x 82 cm, installation view ZKM, © Visenso, Stuttgart, project partners: Hewlett-Packard, VDC St. Georgen, HLRS - University Stuttgart

EyeVisionBot
Sebastian Fischer,
Lasse Scherffig, Hans H. Diebner

Hans H. Diebner, Sebastian Fischer, Lasse Scherffig, EyeVisionBot, 2003/04, interactive installation, 380 x 400 x 400 cm, ZKM_Collection, © Hans H. Diebner, Sebastian Fischer, Lasse Scherffig, photo: Ulrike Havemann ▓ An adaptive and context-sensitive interface for image retrieval.

The objective of the project is to optimize image retrieval from databases and the Internet with the aid of eye-tracking and adaptive algorithms.[1] Keywords and structural attributes can be used for the search. The efficiency of the keyword-based search in databases depends on the usefulness of the classification and the correct assignment of the images to the categories. In the World Wide Web, the keywords address terms that appear on the web page in which the image is embedded or as image file names. The structural search is based on comparisons between the searched images and structurally resembling "archetypes".

As a start, EyeVisonBot presents nine to 25 images (depending on the monitor size). The time that the gaze dwells on the individual image is registered via eye-tracking. The cumulated viewing times are used to estimate the searched category. By and by a new set of images is requested, based on keywords that are generated from the previous searching behavior. In addition, structural comparisons with the so far longest-viewed images are performed.

EyeVisionBot shall be understood as an experimental interface to capture and analyze preconscious perception, too. Therewith, the search and classification behavior is to be investigated eventually in order to optimize the adaptation to the needs of the user. This research is not restricted to the derivation and analysis of adaptive algorithms to estimate the desired categories but also comprises the optimization of classifications as well as the presentational interface. We expect new insights with respect to the classification of databases as well as innovations in the fields of adaptive and context-sensitive methods. The presentation of the algorithmized decision processes allows the user a reflection of what happened in the background. This enforces the claim of making things public.

1 Sebastian Fischer, Lasse Scherffig, Hans H. Diebner, EyeVisionBot, Interactive Installation, 2003-2004, Institute of Basic Research, ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe. See: http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/stories/storyReader$4213

bination of art, literature, music and philosophy that responded to the horror scenarios of the day (cruel wars, impoverished districts in the cities, rural pauperism) and which Heinrich Heine termed "The Romantic School" in 1833.

The first to call for a battle against the philosophy of the Enlightenment were the Romantics, writes Ernst Cassirer correctly in his *Der Mythos des Staates*[9]. Schelling, the philosophical champion of Romanticism, devised a "philosophy of mythology" in which he accorded the myth a legitimate place in civilization. Myth, rejected by Enlightenment as barbaric, returned to the scene as an object of reverence and awe, as the main driving force behind human culture. Poetry was now not meant to be a language of clear concepts but of mysterious and holy symbols, indebted to what Novalis termed "magical idealism". Romanticism was one of the myths on which the twentieth century drew, and thus many historians believe it first lay claim to the idea of a "totalitarian state".[10]

Be that as it may, the Romantic program and its image of the artist deeply influenced Modernity. The notion entailed poeticizing all the spheres of human life, turning them into art. What Joseph Beuys said had already been said by Novalis: "Every man shall be an artist. Everything can only be beautiful art."[11] The Romantic heritage in Modernity led to our not being really and truly modern. The agenda of Modernity is as a consequence unfulfilled, owing to the many contradictions between restoration and revolution, between individuality and totality, between myth and rationality, between contemplation and conceptual reasoning. This is the reason why the declarations of independence of art limit themselves to the form, color and surface, the aesthetic domain, and why the declaration of human and civil rights found no real bedrock in Modernist aesthetics. On the contrary, we can conclude that Zygmunt Baumann might have been right when he thought he had detected some relationship between Modernity and the Holocaust.[12]

Heine was an opponent of Romanticism: "It was nothing other than the re-awakening of the poetry of the Middle Ages, such as had manifested itself in the latter's songs, paintings and buildings, in art as in life. This poetry was, however, the product of Christendom, it was a flower of Passion that had sprung from the blood of Christ."[13] Heine already used the opposites of spiritualism and sensualism. He understood sensualism to be that current of thought that defends the "natural rights of matter" and in the process cited the Hellenes in his favor, embodied by the "Greek" Goethe. Heine accused the Romantics of spiritualism and asserted that the Christian religion (referring to Roman Catholicism) "through its unnatural task has actually brought into being sin and hypocrisy," and become "the best-tried pillar of despotism. People have now discerned the essence of this religion and no longer allow themselves to be fobbed off by instructions from Heaven. Precisely because we now fully understand all the consequences of this absolute spiritualism we may also believe that the Christian-Catholic view of the world has reached its end point."[14] Heine was a this-worldly materialist who advocated the Enlightenment standpoint: the end of absolutism and despotism in his political and religious forms. The other side was Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling as well as the brothers August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, and Heine attacked them in his treatise.

Schelling's views on art had a major influence on German Romantic art. According to Schelling, it is art's vocation to occupy the highest place among products of the intellect. The task of philosophy, he claimed, was "intellectual contemplation"[15] or "congenial intuition" in grasping the absolute. Schelling also distinguishes between the product of art and an organic product of nature. In his treatise *Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur* (1807) this enables him to proclaim nature free of imitating nature and to declare

the artwork as a self-referential *Natura naturans*.[16] It is this that is the source of "the holiness and purity of art" thanks to which "the tyranny of the poet knows of no law above him," as Friedrich Schlegel put it when defining his view of a "universal poetry".[17] This is the beginning of the notion of the autonomy of art. Schelling's theory of art helped found the autonomy of art, the primacy of the aesthetic and the concept of the genius, the heritage of Romanticism that was also taken on board by Modernism, and also taken further in the reconciliation of aesthetics and reason, beauty and truth.

We can thus ascertain that with the Enlightenment, Romanticism and German Idealism the discipline of aesthetics was founded and with it the aesthetics that (for all its contradictions and its recourse to Classical Antiquity, the Renaissance, the Middle Ages and religion) sparked and defined the discourse of Modernity. For example, the wish to create a new basis for art in the people and the utopia of uniting art and life was always to be the Modernist agenda in the twentieth century. The programmatic battle-cry of Fluxus, Happening and Action Art "Let us transform our life into an artwork," was not of its practitioners' own making but is quite literally a demand Ludwig Tieck made in his *Phantasien über die Kunst für Freunde der Kunst* (1799).[18] The Romantic response was in radical contrast to the Enlightenment and German Idealism, which rested on the power of conceptual/rational thought.

Hegel saw himself as an opponent of the Romantics, whom he accused of "not construing, but feeling and contemplating the Absolute, and it is not the concept thereof, but the emotion and contemplation of it that are meant to lead the way and be expressed".[19]

With Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* (1835-38)[20] the end of the Romantic art form is tolled. For Hegel, Romanticism already marks the end of art, as is expressed in his famous statement that philosophy in the guise of the self-awareness of mind has taken the place of religion and that only it can reach as far as penetrating the absolute truth. Religion and art take second place in this system. Hegel defines art as "the sensuous semblance of the idea" and thus gives it a conceptual quality steeped in a theory of cognition. Hegel's sympathy is for Classical Greek art. In his eyes, the Romantic art form is proof of the dissolution of art in line with his theory that philosophy is the real discipline in which mind comes into its own as the highest stage of human development and to which sensuousness takes a back seat. The sensuous artwork only has a raison d'etre as a forum for the mind and not for itself as sensuousness. With the reference of Romanticism to former forms of creation and art, to dramatic stagings of what were already stock images, to eclectic strategies of appropriation and to indifference, Hegel saw Romanticism (in contemporary terms) as the "post-modern" response to the Enlightenment, if we see him through Modernist eyes. In other words, we are experiencing a kind of epoch repetition: Enlightenment versus Romanticism, Modernism versus Postmodernism, precisely because Modernism shed its Romantic inheritance and the latter's rejection of the Enlightenment. The absolute and the spiritual, the religious and the authoritarian continue to woo the viewer in modern art.

Precisely what Heine accused the Romantics of survives unbroken in twentieth-century abstract art: spirituality, as the title of an important work on the subject puts it. *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*[21] studies precisely the influence of Romanticism, mysticism, esotericism and the occult on the genesis and development of abstract art. Likewise, in Hans Scheugl's book on *Das Absolute*[22], which proposes a panoramic view of Modernity, we can sense the traces of religious Romantics. Another contribution to the history of modern art that describes the Romantic heritage of the search for the absolute in Modernist art is

9   Ernst Cassirer, *Der Mythos des Staates. Philosophische Grundlagen politischen Verhaltens*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M., 1949, p. 236.

10 See for example Peter Robert Edwin Viereck, *Metapolitics. From the Romantics to Hitler*, Capricorn Books, New York, 1961.

11 Novalis, *Glauben und Liebe*, see.33, *Schriften*, J. Minov (ed.), Jena, 1907, II, p. 162.

12 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Polity Press, Cambridge, MA, 1989.

13 Heinrich Heine, *Die romantische Schule und andere Schriften über Deutschland*, Könemann, Cologne, 1995, p. 10.

14 Ibid., pp. 11f.

15 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, §3, "Folgesätze" (1800), cited after F. W. J. Schelling, *Texte zur Philosophie der Kunst*, Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart, 1982, p. 118.

16 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zur Natur*, 1807, cited after Schelling, *Texte zur Philosophie der Kunst*, Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart, 1982, p. 53-95.

17 Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften*, Wolfdietrich Rasch (ed.), Hanser, Munich, 1964, pp. 37-38.

18 Ludwig Tieck, „Die Ewigkeit der Kunst," in: *Phantasien über die Kunst für die Freunde der Kunst*, published in: *Die deutsche Literatur in Text und Darstellung. Romantik I*, Reclam, Stuttgart, 1974, p. 91.

19 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorrede, Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M., 1989, p. 15.

20 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik (1835-38)*, Reclam, Stuttgart, 1971.

21 *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*, Maurice Tuchmann (ed.), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Abbeville Press, New York, 1986.

22 Hans Scheugl, *Das Absolute. Eine Ideengeschichte der Moderne*, Springer Verlag, Vienna, New York, 2001.

John Golding's *Paths to the Absolute*,[23] which highlights the Romantic vocabulary of the fusion of the arts and the sublime in its chapter headings: "Malevich and the ascent into ether; Kandinsky and the sound of color; Pollock and the search for a symbol; Newman, Rothko, Still and the abstract sublime." There is no farewell bade to the absolute. Modernism drowned between Scylla and Charybdis, between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, between disenchantment und re-enchantment.

With the atheism of the Enlightenment (its insistence that society be rooted in science and technology, in the distribution of knowledge, together with nascent industrialization and political upheaval) began what Max Weber termed the "disenchantment of the world". Romanticism was the first counter-reaction to it. It was against enlightenment, reason, science, technology, industry; it was the first re-enchantment program. Since then there have repeatedly been movements that feel the need to overcome the crisis of disenchantment.[24]

Religion served in pre-Modern times as ersatz politics and art in Modernism as an ersatz religion. Today, politics serves as ersatz religion and art as ersatz politics. This is why the suggestions are right that *We have never been modern*, as the title of a book by Bruno Latour would have it[25] and that *Modernity* – [may be] *an incomplete project* as Jürgen Habermas puts it.[26] The dispute between enlightenment and absolutism, between sensualism and spirituality, between rationality and religion is evidently not yet over: It continues, albeit under different presuppositions and conditions. For this reason, old equations and calculations no longer hold true, and therefore Modernism, above all its Romantic heritage, must be overcome.

V. Ars Pro Deo, Pro Rege, Pro Domo
The liberation from political absolutism was not accompanied by a liberation from aesthetic or philosophical absolutism; on the contrary. But at least with bourgeois society there arose the sphere of bourgeois art, a bourgeois public art in which art could develop and free itself of its historical and social confines. The rules of art, bourgeois aesthetics, arose as part of the civil society ruled by law.

The first regular art exhibitions were held in the eighteenth century: the Paris Salon in 1737 and at the London Royal Academy as of 1768. A bourgeois alternative became possible to that art commissioned by the church and the government. The artist no longer worked only by appointment to God's church or by appointment to the aristocracy on behalf of the palaces, but for the houses of the bourgeoisie, to be more precise for the bourgeoisie and not yet for the *citoyens*. A new public arose at the same time as the new forums for public debates on art.

These forums became a place where opposition to the existing political conditions was articulated. The art of Modernity arose parallel to a public sphere whose structure had changed. Processes of multiplication, such as the technology of the mechanical arts, played a crucial role in this construction of a bourgeois public sphere and its conquest by art. The pace of the distribution of knowledge and Bibles was accelerated by reproduction techniques. Art became a topic of public debate. Artists such as Jacques-Louis David deliberately locked into this trend. He first displayed his art in his studio before sending it to the Academy exhibition in Paris and then commissioned printed reproductions for sale in England.

The Louvre was opened in 1794. With this display of private collections to the French people, they were essentially no longer limited to an elite, and the preconditions were thus laid for the expansion of the art public. Museums were integrated into the modern state in order to express a national cultural feeling of self-esteem. The improvement in popular education was intended to compensate for the negative sides of industrialization. Citizens were, however, by no means equals before art. Museums staged different levels of the public sphere, such as special openings for collectors and artists. But museums are the calling card of a national cultural achievement. A national

23 John Golding, *Paths to the Absolute. Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollock, Newman, Rothko, and Still*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000.
24 Morris Berman, *The Reenchantment of the World*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1981; Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed?*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1984; Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1991.
25 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992.
26 Jürgen Habermas, *Moderne – ein unvollendetes Projekt*, Reclam, Leipzig, 2001.

art and a national art public arise. At an early date, artists questioned the museums' selective process. Who decides what is made public in museums and thus decides on the kind of public to be reared/created? By dint of their selection mechanisms, the official salons had already created the dynamics of alternative forums, such as private exhibition rooms and studios and alternative distribution forms such as dealers, galleries and agents. New interfaces to the public sphere came into being. Today the public spaces (streets, plazas, newspapers, TV, radio and the Internet) form new forums for artistic articulation. They serve as a field of interaction for a different art in which passers-by or users become actors engaged in creating a different society.

The modern artwork is an autonomous aesthetic construct, a closed system. One of the consequences of Modernity is the aesthetic reflection on the essence of Modernity. The critique of Modernity is thus part and parcel of Modernity. Modernity constantly has to justify itself in its drive for transparency, and it is characterized less by the new for its own sake than by this radical reflexivity that continually revises the conventions and agreements on what constitutes both art and Modernity. This reflexivity does not thus help stabilize the notion of art, as many wished and expected, but on the contrary fosters instability and inconstancy.

In the 1960s, parallel to political emancipation, a critique of the aesthetic praxis of Modernism arose. This resulted in the de-framing of the panel picture, the rejection of pictures, and what Lucy R. Lippard terms the "dematerialization of the art object," for example, the de-representation of art. This trend to conceptualize and dematerialize the artwork culminated in 1962 in Umberto Eco's theory of the "open artwork," which, while remaining an object, is not foreclosed; its openness enhances the degree of freedom the interpreter enjoys.

The epoch of Modernity, as based on the Industrial Revolution, comes to an end with the dissolution of the artwork as an object or a surface (like painting). The rules of the game of art are transformed with events and situations, from Fluxus to Happenings, from Actionism to Performance. The "open object" is followed by "open

systems" and finally by what I term "open fields of enactment," in an epoch that is based on the digital information revolution.

At the end of the extension of the concept of art (to incorporate new materials, methods and media) were open fields of enactment. At the end of the expansion of the art public stood the mass public. When the state started to withdraw from financing museums and industrial sponsors, private patrons and collectors took its place, the privatization of the museum's res publica set in, the refeudalization of the art public by the dominion of the private collector and the industrialization of the museums as leisure-time facilities competing with other leisure-time offerings for the mass public. At the end of the twentieth century the museum loses the autonomy it had achieved in the wake of the claims art made to being autonomous. It remains at a distance from the state but loses any distance from sponsors, companies, the art market. It accepts that it is competing with the leisure industry, shopping malls, cineplex movie theaters and even zoos, and that it is vying with the mass media for mass public favor.

Artists adapt to these new conditions in the market economy, work with a view to attracting the attention of the mass media and the mass public, for what Guy Debord calls the "society of the spectacle". Pop Art is one symptom of this attempt to blend art and mass taste, art and the leisure industry.[27] Whether what arises is art for the masses or damage to both is a moot point.[28] At any rate, the politicization of the public sphere, one of the original goals of creating a public sphere through art, has given way to depoliticization.

VI. The Multiplication of Public Spheres and the Crisis of Competence
In the preceding sections we have sketched the long and intricate history of connections between art and politics. Constantly, we refer back to things in nature, to people and to art that lay the foundations for the political. But what happens when there are deep changes in all the techniques of representation – art, science and the political –

27 See John Russell, Suzi Gablik, *Pop Art Redefined*, Praeger, New York, Washington, 1969; Kirk Varnedoe, Adam Gopnik, *Modern Art and Popular Culture. Readings in High & Low*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1990.
28 Dwight MacDonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," in: *Mass Culture, The Popular Arts in America*, Bernard Rosenberg, David Manning White (eds), Free Press, Glencoe, 1957.

Fabien Lerat: Théâtre

Yoann Le Claire

The object is in the shape of a half-sphere, obliging the spectators to sit in the round. When everyone is seated, all lines of vision converge, meet, hold still. The stage is very small, reduced to one meter in diameter. This contraction induces changes in theatrical practice: The hierarchical distances between actor and spectator and among spectators are abolished. With no stage sets, curtain, or sense of the stage as a closet-like space, the action cannot take place – it is impossible here to stage Racine, Shakespeare, Ionesco's *The Chairs*...

It is a place or structure that cannot contain the actions for which it was or seems to have been conceived. That does not correspond to what is usually meant by this place: A theater is surely not a theater if plays cannot be staged in it. Fabien Lerat's *Théâtre* is therefore only a theater because it has been designated as such. The artist has given it a function it cannot contain. He has conferred a status on it. To call "theater" an object that is structurally similar to a theater is to provide a user's manual for that object while locating it within a history. The object now has a purpose in addition to that of being contemplated: This is not a sculpture but a theater. The word "theater" informs in the sense that it commands a particular representation of the object and gives it a use.

The object opens.

And given our expectation that a spectacle will take place in it, we may imagine that the spectacle is adapted to its structure. This eventuality does not seem to be a projection, yet this eventuality does not seem to have been planned for. The artist accentuates the paradox. He not so much designates or constructs it as attributes a history and function to it, the purpose or end of which is unendingly undermined, thwarted.

The Expectation

By telling us, "This object is a theater," the artist invites us to take a place. The empty object awaits the spectator. If we enter, we are no longer regarding an object but are located in a space.

A theater is a space arranged or an edifice constructed for the presentation or execution of a spectacle. So we are here, sitting in the round, awaiting a probable spectacle. *Everything around me is spectacle.* Awaiting a spectacle that cannot happen even if it arrives. There remains, however, something to see, to perceive, something to be given the title "theater". From outside we see people in a structure; from inside, we see, touch, sense one another, close together. Parallel to the closeness it creates, the theater rests on its convex base, which logically reduces the stability of the whole and subjects it to a kind of rocking. Inside, each movement made by each person is felt by all – as imbalance. If a person moves, his or her act engages the perception of all; they are brought into the presence of all.

The multitude of small movements imprint on one another. This mobility is perceptible, it transgresses the sphere of personal intimacy within which it is usually contained. Movement under these conditions has qualities that are rarely encountered: indeterminate, insignificant, often unconscious. Here, each movement touches the other, without intention or excuse.

Physically, the weight of each person is decentered and gathered into the same mobile point. Perception of gravity, normally proprioceptive, is displaced outside the self, joins with others. The others are inscribed within a quasi-organic, empathic structure in which their presence is not so much represented as felt. "I" and "we" experiment with having the same body.

Excerpt from Yoann Le Claire, "Théâtre," in: *Hors de soi – Fabien Lerat*, Le Quartier, Quimper and Galérie Duchamp, Yvetot, 1999.
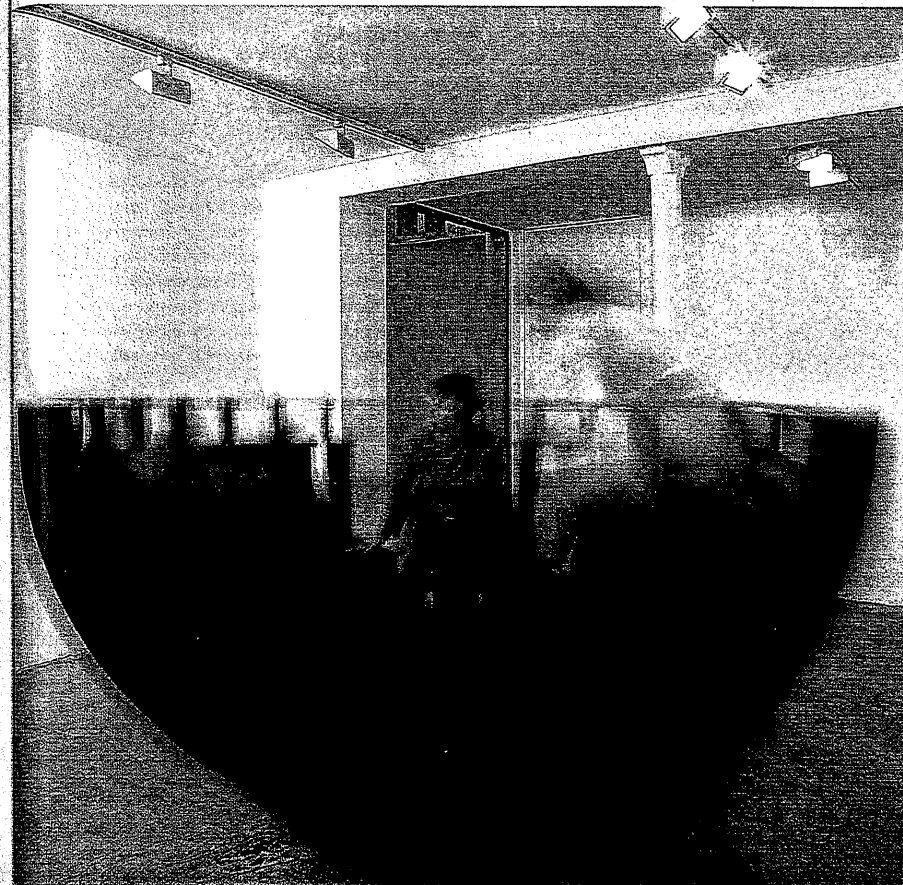
Fabien Lerat, *Théâtre*, 1999, steel, painted wood, Ø 300 cm, height 150 cm, Collection Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain, Strasbourg, with funds from the Banque de Neuflize, ABN AMRO, 2004, photo: Marc Domage ▨ "A half-spherical form rests on its convex base. Thirty-one segments curve into quarter-circles to form the limits of the structure and fold toward the center. Four indented, circular plates meet the espalier horizontally, creating the structure's rigidity. From outside, the structure can be seen through at many points; inside, benches can hold up to 20 people. A metal cup, 21 centimeters high and 150 centimeters in diameter, creates the step into the structure and is its connection with the ground." Fabien Lerat

all at once? In his fundamental book *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* published in 1962, Jürgen Habermas studied the key characteristics of the public sphere. As of the fourteenth century, a "representative public sphere" existed, and Habermas distinguishes between a secular and a religious representative public sphere. The religious public sphere even has a place of representation, the church. The parliament is the location of the secular public sphere. Out of the representative public sphere evolves representative democracy. The public sphere and public opinion are the key building blocks here for a theory of democracy. Crises in the public sphere are therefore always signs of a crisis in democracy.

Not until the seventeenth century in England and the eighteenth century in France do people talk of "public opinion" in the precise sense of the term, for the "bourgeois public sphere" cannot be extricated from the evolution of "bourgeois society". The bourgeois public sphere and society are woven from the same cloth. The rise of the bourgeoisie succeeded in part by the constructing of a public sphere and the impact of public opinion. Many private individuals who, despite their financial power, had hitherto been excluded from participating in state powers now achieved this through the institutions of the public sphere. Parliamentarization meant the participating in the affairs of state and the increasing weight of public opinion in influencing decisions in parliament. Journalistic power now offered access to the public power of institutions of the state, such as the judiciary, the military and the bureaucracy. Public opinion only counts if institutionalized as a private or state institution/agency such as the press, radio, film, TV and the like. For this reason, mass democracy in the welfare state and the liberal constitutional state both have to exhibit a politically functioning public sphere. How can this public sphere still be secured today if the press, film, radio and TV increasingly function according to the rules of market forces? Does this not increasingly commercialize the political public sphere? What is the state of the democratic public sphere, the political public sphere, in light of neo-liberal globalization, renationalization, privatization, the commercial mass media and the medialization of politics?

The medialization of politics, from Berlusconi to Bush, clearly shows that in the twenty-first century the public sphere itself becomes a commodity and with it the bourgeois, political, public sphere disintegrates. This also threatens the survival of the constitutional state as created by bourgeois society and with it representative democracy. The functions of a political public sphere are lost in the interaction between state companies that become private companies and company heads (private entrepreneurs) who become heads of state – and with them a key component of democracy gets lost. The decline of a critical, political, cultural and scholarly public sphere spells a decline in democracy. If each year the mass media Top Ten list grotesquely mixes politicians, sports personalities, Nobel prize winners from the worlds of science and literature, TV showmasters and businessmen, then this is precisely that reduction in the critical public sphere and competences that weakens democracy.

By questioning how things are made public, we also question the state of democracy. What are the current conditions for the public sphere, in art, science and business, and how do they influence democracy? Following Ferdinand Tönnies' studies on *Community and Society* (1887) and his book on Hobbes entitled *The Man and the Thinker* (1910), Tönnies (1855-1936) wrote a *Critique of Public Opinion* (1922). In this book he suggested that the significance of religions had given way to public opinion. He analyzed the power of public opinion as a partial aspect of emancipation and democracy. The absolutist monopoly the state and church once had on opinion formation had been weakened, he suggested, following the invention of the printing press, by the early mass media, leaflets, and theater.

In 1922, Walter Lippmann published a famous critique, *The Public Opinion*. We know from his book *The Phantom Public* (1925) that the public sphere and the general public are not a biological body that remains the same for time immemorial but something that is threatened with extinction if we do not constantly re-activate it. The issue of what constitutes public interest and the general public and/or specific things and public opinion, is very broad. We could even paraphrase the title of John Dewey's book *The Public and its Problems* of 1927 and say: The problem of the public is the

public itself, because the latter is something that is made, made of countless other issues that are initially made public. For this reason, everyone – the mass media, the cultural institutions, the politicians – is busy hunting for the phantom that is the public. The question: "How are things made public?" is therefore a multiple question: How are things made? How is the public sphere made? How is the public made? How are things made public?

Once upon a time, the belief prevailed that reason ruled the public domain – a Kantian ideal for the public sphere. On the free market, the new public space of the eighteenth century, the free exchange of opinions ensued; an intellectual market place. This free market for opinions was the expression of a liberal democracy and was used by the citizens as a weapon against the monopoly the aristocracy and the church held on opinion formation. Sovereign citizens committed themselves to rational consensual debates on matters of public concern in public spaces. In principle, the state was accountable to the citizens in public space. In the twentieth century, once public and private interests were permeated both by the mass media and the government, this public sphere ceased to exist. As of 1920 the state bureaucracy or the market started to use the media to steer opinion. The public was transformed from a "reasoning cultural public into a culture-consuming public," as Habermas puts it, from active sovereign into passive consumer.

In the 1993 anthology edited by Bruce Robbins entitled *The Phantom Public Sphere*,[29] the authors argue that the ideal of the omniscient citizen was only drawn up to be able to denounce it as a phantom and phantasm, and thus relativize the very ideal of democracy. For this reason, they distance themselves from proposing general solutions to social problems and prefer instead to offer solutions to actual problems on the basis of human rights. The fleeting nature of the public and of public space, its phantom character (as a result of which the public cannot be pinned down as one thing) is actually what constitutes its democratic character. The changing "Public Phantom" or "Phantom Public" is an expression of democracy. In democracy all power emanates from the people, but they cannot be pinned down as an entity and

identified, although they are likewise not an amorphous mass. Thus, the power actually belongs to no one but has to be reconstituted and legitimized each time anew. You cannot speak of democracy without speaking of the public sphere and the general public. This public sphere is however not lost, as some sociologists bemoan; its absence is only a matter of a change in representation. If the bourgeois public sphere has perhaps been lost, this does not also mean that the public sphere as a whole has been lost; it only means that we can no longer find it where we are accustomed to seeing it and must therefore hunt for it in another shape and another place. In *La démocratie ajournée* (1991), Jacques Derrida outlines such a mobile public sphere.

In *Public Sphere and Experience. Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Spheres*, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge in 1972 identified a different public sphere, the proletarian variant. The public sphere is no longer a universal entity valid for all members of society but has disintegrated into many sub-spheres. The prevailing opinion is countered by a deviating opinion, and the public sphere is complementary to a large number of counter-spheres. The task of democracy today is no longer to speak of minorities and majorities, of the dominant opinion and deviating opinions, but to respect a multiplicity of opinions in the public sphere. In his 2002 *Publics and Counterpublics*, Michael Warner offers a description of the distribution or circulation of multiple public spheres. Since in the mass media, particularly in TV, an extremely anti-democratic impulse prevails as we know from Pierre Bourdieu's study *Sur la télévision* (1996), new forms of and forums for the public sphere, ranging from interactive media art to the virtual laboratory, are the places that now don the role once reserved for coffeehouses, clubs, debating societies and leagues in the early days of the public sphere; they are thus immensely important for the new spheres of democracy. If constitutional democracy seems about to collapse along with the welfare state and what Alfred Müller-Armack branded the "social market economy," then confidence in democracy will disappear along with it. It then becomes all the more important to

29 Bruce Robbins (ed.), *The Phantom Public Sphere*, from the series: *Cultural Politics*, Vol.5, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993; see also John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, Holt, New York, 1927.

re-stimulate the idea of the democratic.

Art endeavors (by emphasizing the active participation of the public in the construction of the artwork) to counter the authoritarian management of will and opinion formation by the market or the state, and thus the transformation of a reasoning public into a consuming public. Press and parliaments, now commercialized and embedded in the state's bureaucratic governmental structures, are no longer the sole organs and institutions of the public sphere. The order of the day has been for some time now to give the forms, forums and functions of the public sphere new conditions and new opportunities. It is important for the future to make sure that the new forums of the public sphere as presented in this book also participate in the powers and affairs of the state, and that the new types of assembly are also furnished with real parliamentary competences.

Science took place in the laboratory, which is why we talk of "laboratory life". Analogously we could talk of democracy as "parliamentary life". As we know, advances in the sciences depend on progress in instruments, experiments and research methods in the laboratories. For this reason, we could analogously say that this exhibition shows new advancements in parliamentarian tools, the instruments, experiments and methods of democracy. The focus here is not on grand political theories; we know from the past how these fail. Instead the exhibition concentrates on the craftsmanship of democracy, on the representational and enactment technologies of democracy. We enquire less into "what is made public?" and more into "how does that happen?" The decision-making mechanisms must become more transparent, and more actors should be involved. The transformations of the concept of the public sphere also imply transformations in the concept of the political, which develops from the representative public sphere and political representation into democratic participation in the performance of the political. We focus here on this dynamic and expanded model of democracy, with the new changing media, interfaces, forums, spheres and spaces in which and through which it is developed. The goal: democratic participation in the performance of the political[30] and thus a change from representing politics to performing politics.

### VII. From enchantment to enactment

Whereas Hobbes' *Leviathan* exposed on the frontispiece a body represented in turn by a multitude of bodies,[33] the frontispiece of a contemporary book on democratic society would show Michel Jaffrenou's and Thierry Codys' artwork *Phantom Public*. For here the public is not represented but is itself part of the system that it observes. The whole exhibition is an interactive participatory artwork that is what it shows: an assembly of assemblies, a parliament of parliaments. A new type of political gathering. The entire exhibition responds to the visitors' behavior. The visitors act as representatives of the public sphere, and they construct the public sphere.

The exhibition itself is a real commonwealth and the model for a commonwealth that arises from the relationship between "things". It shows that implicitly any exhibition is an assembly. An assembly with a political character. The exhibition shows quite manifestly and renders quite transparently what essentially constitutes every public assembly that is "thing"-based: a complex set of technologies, interfaces, platforms, networks, media and "things," which gave rise to a public sphere. Precisely in this way, the exhibition itself becomes the model of an "object-oriented democracy": a "gathering," a "thing" in itself. The visitors' behavior triggers influences, responses and changes at every moment, repeatedly creating new public spheres. To this extent, the exhibition and its design are not only the image of an "object-oriented" democracy and not only the model of res publica but are themselves a democratic "gathering". Precisely by virtue of not being some giant body consisting of many small bodies but a Phantom, composed of many things and a diversity of mobile and variable visitors who move through the space, the exhibition visualizes the exact opposite of the historical, political body, the massive crowned giant Leviathan, hierarchically composed of many bodies. The democratic public sphere is not a "body" or an organism made up of bodies. Democracy is a phantom of bodies, a deceptive

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30 Emanuel Richter, *Republikanische Politik. Demokratische Öffentlichkeit und politische Moralität*, Rowohlt, Hamburg, 2004.

31 Peter Weibel, *Offene Handlungsfelder*, DuMont, Cologne, 1999. See also Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, op. cit., p. 7: "The emerging new paradigm reflects a will to participate socially: a central aspect of new paradigm thinking involves a significant shift from objects to relationships."

Abraham Bosse (attr.), frontispiece to Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme, And Power of A Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, detail, Crooke, London, 1651, 24.1 x 15.7 cm, British Library, London, photo © British Library, London
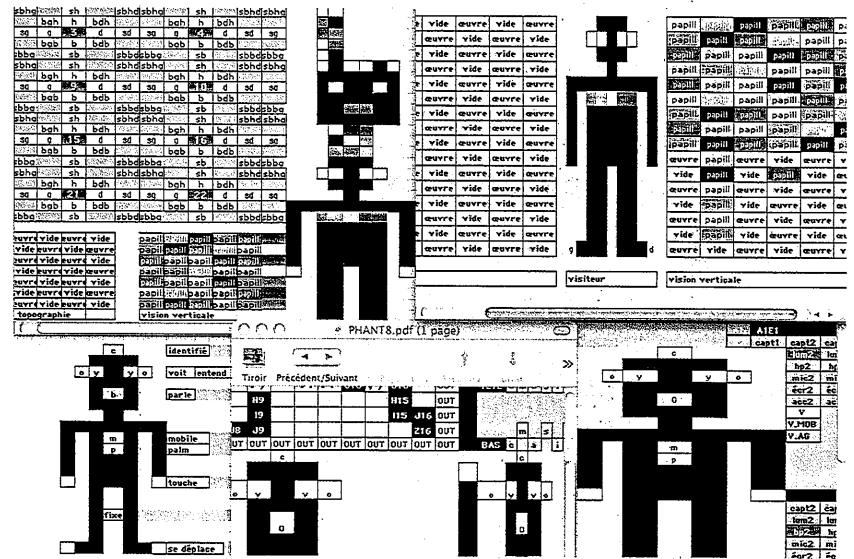
Michel Jaffrennou, Thierry Coduys, *The Phantom Public*, 2005, schemes of the project, ©.Michel Jaffrennou

Pieter Breughel, *The Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind*, 1568, oil on canvas, 86 x 154 cm

XPERIMENT!, *Research Center for Shared Incompetence features What is a Body/Person? – A Topography of the Possible*, 2005, installation, mixed media, colored PVC foil, 320 m², installation view ZKM, © XPERIMENT!, photo: Franz Wamhof

illusion of bodies, the dynamic network of moving and acting subjects. The artist no longer chisels an ideal body from the stone to mirror society, as Polyclitus did, but nevertheless remains true to Polyclitus' doctrine by presenting the commensurability of the aesthetic and political orders, of democratic aesthetics and political democracy. The art of democracy at the pinnacle of democracy is no longer an anatomical image of the body but the behavior of subjects as kindled by an emerging system. Here, we can already discern that the focus of the show is no longer on representing the enchanting spirit of democracy through images or on captivating beholders but on *enacting democracy*. Democracy cannot be represented, it can only be "enacted". The same is true of democratic art, as the "phantom public" shows.

At the same time, the visitor no longer enjoys the privilege of being a special visitor. No visitor is a sovereign. Yet each visitor's behavior influences the surroundings and thus the perception of the other visitors. Here, visitors are indeed equals. In other words, this exhibition presents a state without a state, precisely because this is one of the features of global society today: the fact that the state is no longer that artificial being invented in order to protect and defend natural persons, as Hobbes once thought, for the modern state itself may become the enemy of man.[32]

In the twentieth century, we first experienced through totalitarian systems and their wars that the state did not defend people but could instead destroy them. Which is why following the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945 Ernst Cassirer pointed to the absolutization of mythical thought in the myth of the state.[33] Mythical thought promotes the irrational powers of man and led to the state developing totalitarian technologies to destroy human liberties and human life. Now we experience that the state is exposing rather than protecting the people from the powers of the market.

To show the difference between the myth of the state and democracy, we might have to turn towards another metaphor, that of the blind leading the blind. Pieter Breughel's painting based on the parable of the *Blind Man* (1568) refers to the Bible. (Matthew 15: 14): "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the

blind, both shall fall into the ditch." The painting shows a chain of blind men, each with his hand on the next man's shoulder, following a blind man leading them toward an abyss. It is not only an iconography of belief. The customary reading would have it that whosoever is not part of the Christian faith will be blinded to the truth and fall into the abyss. Yet it is actually a political iconography, in which we see how people are blinded by the absolute power of the state. The blind leading the blind: There is no better image for totalitarian systems and yet, to recognize that no superior power is able to see better and farther than the common folk, this is also what allows democracy to thrive. This painting poses the question of competence.

For this reason, what is needed is a democratization of politics in the service of competence. We wish to advance the very tools of democracy, to expand the laboratory of democracy to include artistic and scientific tools, techniques, devices, apparatuses, and methods, in other words to achieve a surplus of parliamentarianism, but less by representation and more by new technologies and interfaces to the parliamentary.

So the crisis of political representation is a complementary phenomenon to the crisis of representation in art. The latter commenced at that historical moment when painting lost interest in representing visible reality owing to the pressure of the true-to-reality depiction of photography. Twentieth-century art appears under the control of the authoritative paradigm of photography. The pressure of photography led to painting's starting to lose interest in a true-to-life depiction of reality. With Impressionism, not only did perspective dissolve, but color lost its links to the object. Local color is replaced by absolute color. With *Les Fauves,* trees could now be red, horses blue, and the sky green. Reality became a field of subjective impressions. The compulsion to depict and to represent was lost because photography managed to do a more faithful job of depicting the world. For this reason, painting was no longer interested in faithful representation. Real objects were banished from images in abstract art. The banishment of objects from images, which started with absolute

32 Franz. L. Neumann, *Behemoth: The structure and practice of national socialism*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1942.
33 Cassirer, op. cit.

color painting and peaked at an early date in the paintings of Malevich around 1915, signified the end of the representation of reality in painting, and thus began the crisis of representation in art. Over the decades that follow, from abstract painting through to the painting of Nouveau Réalisme, instead of the representation of objects it was the means of representation itself (from the paint to the brush, from the canvas to the frame) that became the topic of representation. "Representation never again," stated Alexander Rodchenko in 1921 on creating the first three monochrome pictures in art history, three canvases each of which bore only one color.[34] This call for an end to representation led to the iconoclasm of Modernist art, to the self-elected dissolution of painting. In the final instance it was not only representation of objects that was elided in the abstract image, but even the image itself was repressed and then destroyed. Paintings could be cut up, perforated or torn up. The reverse of paintings was displayed or simply empty frames. Even stacked planks of wood could function as image/objects. The transformation of the surface of the image was the first phase of the crisis of the representation.

Around 1915 the object was thus banished from images, representation of the world of objects prohibited. This was the one side to the crisis of representation. A glance at the other side shows that the object returned into art to a quite unprecedented extent, namely not as an image or as a represented object, but as a real object. While the represented object disappeared it was replaced by a real object that likewise did not stem from the hand of the artist, but was an already extant found industrial object: Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades. This constituted the second aspect to the crisis of representation, namely the return of the object banished from painting as a real object in sculpture. For both forms of the crisis, the uppermost criterion was this: Representation of the object remains scorned.

This prohibition on representation gave birth not only to abstract painting and, instead of objective art, an art of objects, but also through painting led new forms of enactment in art. Probably written in the early 1940s, a newly discovered manuscript by Mark Rothko provides his considerable

insights into topics ranging from arts as a form of action to plasticity, naturalism and primitivism: "Art is a form of action," he wrote, or to be more precise: "Art is not only a form of action it is a form of social action. For art is a type of communication, and when it enters the environment it produces its effects just as any other form of action does."[35] In action painting the panel painting served, as the name suggests, as the arena of action, and physical action on the canvas created painting. This physical action on the canvas led to painting before the canvas, to a show of the action, and then to action without the canvas, to painting on and with the body, to action art.

At the same time as Duchamp, a solution to the crisis of representation and the banishment of objects as images arose. Duchamp had introduced the real object as an art object, but not as an object of use. His famous urinal (*Fountain*) of 1917 could not be used. This artistic proposition was continued in the Surrealists' found objects. They likewise used industrially manufactured commercial objects, but by transforming them in the service of symbolic functions these utilitarian objects were also rendered unusable, such as Man Ray's iron with nails (*Cadeau*, 1921) or Meret Oppenheim's fur cup (*Fur Cup*, 1936).

Since that time, the sphere of objects can be divided along two axes: objects that can be used and those that cannot. Art objects are usually not objects for use. Duchamp therefore provocatively suggested that a Rembrandt painting be used as an ironing board.[36] Yet as the term "use object" conveys, objects are usually there to be used. Thus alongside the development of abstract sculpture parallel to abstract painting, the sculptural strategy for the future consisted of creating use objects in a

34 Alexander Rodchenko, 1939, quoted from Anna Moszynska, "Purity and Belief. The Lure of Abstraction," in: *The Age of Modernism: Art in the 20th Century*, Christos Joachimides, Norman Rosenthal (eds), Hatje Verlag, Stuttgart, 1997, p. 204

35 *Mark Rothko. The Artist's Reality. Philosophies of Art*, Christopher Rothko (ed.), Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 2004, p. 10; Robert Motherwell likewise wrote in the early 1940s in his essay *A Personal Expression*: "Art is a form of action, a drama, a process. It is the dramatic gesture itself in modern times, not a religious content, that accounts for art's hold on the minds of men."

36 Marcel Duchamp, *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (1934), quoted from Marcel Duchamp, *Duchamp du signe. Ecrits*, Flammarion, Paris, 1975, p. 49 ["READY-MADE RÉCIPROQUE / Se servir d'un Rembrandt comme planche à repasser"].

usable function as artworks. One of the great Modernist sculptors, Constantin Brancusi, a marvelous master of abstract sculpture, had as early as 1915 founded the real answer to the crisis of representation. For he had not, like Duchamp, exhibited everyday use-objects and constrained, subverted or negated their use function. He exhibited usable sculptures, such as benches, arches and chairs that could be used as usable sculptures or as unusable furniture. Brancusi put the furniture he made himself or abstract sculptures to functional use in his studio. In exhibitions he utilized his furniture as the bases for sculptures or even as sculptures themselves. Conversely, the bases were used as sculptures or furniture, be it in the exhibition hall or in the studio (see ARC, 1914-6; *Bench* 1914-6, *Stool*, 1920). An equally radical solution to the crisis of representation was created in 1921 by Rodchenko, who following his monochrome paintings, the "last pictures in art history," as he himself called them, and his battle cry of "Representation never again!", then proceeded to follow the paradigm of photography, the new medium of representation, or to no longer represent but instead manufacture usable furniture, such as for the famous Workers' Club. The material culture practiced by the Russian Constructivists from Tatlin to Rodchenko, defined the agenda pursued by the neo-avant-garde in music and the visual arts in the 1950s and 1960s, obeying the logic and associative wealth of the material in order to liberate human products from their reification in Marx's sense, from their reification as commodities or false abstraction.[37] Here, the concept of "thing" is of course unlike that used in the present volume.

Once the functionally viable use-object is introduced as sculpture, the difference between the use object and the artwork is minimal. In the decades that followed, the world of objects entered art, not as the image of an object but as real object. We know, however, that each use object comes with instructions for use. So it can happen that the instructions for use replace the use object, just as the object had replaced the image of the object. If instructions for use are read not as retrograde but prospectively, then they can be grasped as what they are: instructions for action in using the object. With the appearance of real objects in art,

not only the instructions for use but also instructions for action take the stage. This is clearly expressed in one of the first instructions for action as an art form to be found in art history, by none other, typically, than Duchamp around 1918, when the crisis of representation was fully afoot. Duchamp published a close-up photo of his artwork *The Large Glass* with the instructions "To Be Looked At, With One Eye, Close To, For Almost An Hour" ["A regarder d'un oeil, de près, pendant presqu'une heure"]. Since then, an art of propositions, statements and instructions has existed, from Op Art, Kinetic Art, arte programmata, Concept Art via Fluxus and Performance to Happenings, and above all to the interactive media arts, the artes mechnicae, digital arts. With the banishment of the representation of objects from painting came the real object.

With the object came the use-object, with the latter came the instructions for use, with the instructions for use came the instructions for action and finally the algorithmic act. By virtue of the latter, the observer of an artwork becomes the artist's partner in constructing or using the artwork; "audience participation" was called for. In 1968 Franz E. Walther published his book *Objects, to use* in which he encouraged people to use the objects he provided. Likewise, in 1971 Robert Morris developed sculptures specifically for audience participation: ropes, on which they could balance and the like. As early as 1967, I created open systems and event fields, such as *The Myth of the 21st Century*, where visitors interacted electronically with the image and sound sources. Viewers in front of the image or sculpture became interactive users. The end of the epoch of Modern art saw the emergence of new practices, namely the move from participation to interaction, to forms of enactment beyond the crisis of representation.

Viewers ceased to be only passive observers before a painting that did not change materially through the act of observation; in the case of interactive artworks, specifically computer-assisted artworks, the viewers become the users and by their observation generate material changes in the artwork. There is a material, physical interaction involved that in Op Art and Kinetic Art was manual or mechanical and in media art is machine-based and digital. In this way, the notion of the

37 Peter Weibel, "Materialdenken als Befreiung," 1966, in: *Kritik der Kunst – Kunst der Kritik: Es says & I say*, Peter Weibel, Jugend und Volk, Vienna, Munich, 1973.

Flying Spy Potatoes: Mission 21st Street, NYC

Jenny Marketou

Between March 2003 and October 2004 Jenny Marketou walked a red, helium-filled weather balloon (with a hidden wireless cam attached to a 40-foot tether) among the public spaces that are high orange security and under surveillance in New York City, such as the Port Authority, Grand Central Station, the World Financial Center and others. Although she was arrested by the FBI and Port Authority police for suspicious and terrorist behavior and detained for several hours, these walks resulted in a series of video recordings that led to the idea of Flying Spy Potatoes: *Mission 21st Street, NYC.*

Because of the immediacy and the sense of control involved in the recording process with the balloon's Godzilla-cam perspective, she decided that it was very important for her audience to directly share this experience. Marketou collaborated with game designer Katie Salen to create a real-action street game, as the art of playing street games is a particularly well-suited form for a socially engaging activity. In *Mission 21st Street, NYC,* the narrative of each mission and the balloon/cam apparatus are very important in the way players relate to and reflect on public spaces. Stylistically the work is a mission-based game in which each participant captures and reveals territory on a game board by completing individual missions that render sections of the game board "visible" through streaming media recording with the *Flying Spy Potatoes* mission balloon. The game board is a city street itself (21st Street between 10th and 11th avenues) and the *Flying Spy Potatoes* mission balloon/camera apparatus is controlled by a 40-foot tether that a player manipulates while playing the game. Players must master control of the balloon/cam apparatus in order to successfully complete their mission. The game ends when the territory of the 21st Street map has been collectively captured and revealed. There

Jenny Marketou, *Flying Spy Potatoes: Mission 21st Street, NYC,* 2002-2005, live action street game, view from a mission with the red helium ballon/cam along 21st Street, © Jenny Marketou, Katie Salen, photo: Sophy Naess

are a total of forty missions that can be played.

The game has been a great mid-winter event for the Chelsea neighborhood. A feeling of democratic dignity grows as the balloon creates a public space that brings people together and a place where people can use their imaginations. Much of the pleasure of the game lies in seeing people holding and controlling the red weather balloon from the tether while it is flying high above 21st Street, wandering against the blue or grey sky and among the industrial buildings of the city.
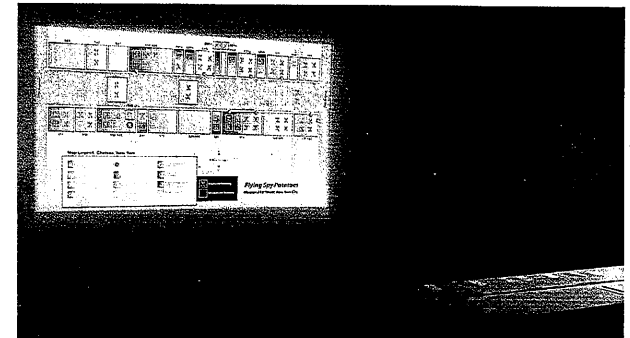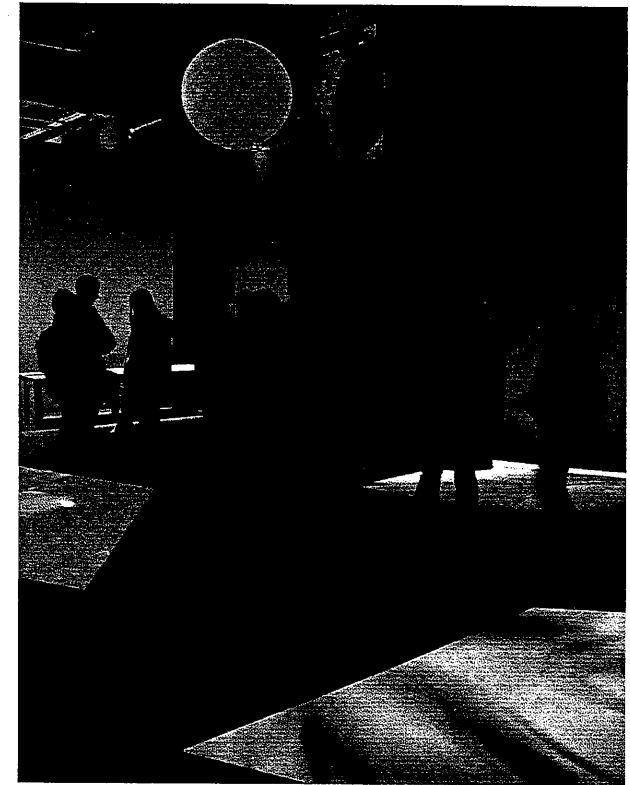
Jenny Marketou, *Flying Spy Potatoes: Mission 21st Street, NYC,* 2002-2005, installation with three video projections, installation view (above), game map (below), at Eyebeam, NYC 2005, © eyebeam, photos: Sophy Naess

closed artwork dissolves. The aesthetic object of Modernity was a closed object. Modernity itself was the response of art to the machine-based Industrial Revolution. The post-modern age is art's response to the post-industrial computer-assisted information revolution. In the information society, the aesthetic object not only becomes Eco's "open artwork," but the work as such disappears and is replaced by instructions for enactment, for communicative action and options for action. Open fields of enactment mean new alliances arise between author, work and observer, in which new actors such as machines, programs, multiple users operate, replacing the classical art object.

Art expands from the object to become the practice, and through its practice it expands its fields into new areas previously occupied only by the social and natural sciences.

Contemporary avant-garde artists respond sensitively to social changes by changing the structure of their approach to their work and entering into new alliances with new forms of enactments. Forms of enactment for sculpture, images, texts and music define their practices, and we can therefore speak of a "performative turn". The technical arts, the computing arts, play the pivotal role here. In the interactive artwork, the viewer becomes another actor in the actant's field of enactment who has the same rights as all others. The artwork is no longer the dream of autonomy, the absolute and sovereignty but a service, dependence and relativity. As instruction for actions *qua* artwork, art finally becomes a civil democratic medium. In the realm of instructions for use and open fields of enactment, the artists transpose their modus operandi from production into services.[40] Even artists operate increasingly in the secondary and tertiary sectors of economy, IT services and communication, rather than in the primary sector, production. This shift stems from acting in fields of enactment substituting for the production of objects, as is to be seen in countless works by members of the contemporary avant-garde from performances to net-based installations.

The aesthetic object collapses, and its place is taken by the field of enactment, which of course does not consist solely of linguistic instructions or performative acts, for the things themselves are actants for action. The object options and object fields serve as the medium for actions. The aesthetic product is replaced by an artistic practice that can be object-based or object-free but nevertheless expands the scope for enactment.

VIII. The Future of the *Corpus Politicum*

Theory and science once formed the arts of the free citizens the *artes liberales*, the free arts. Painting, sculpture and architecture have been the *artes mechanicae*. The "mechanical" crafts arts were the arts of the unfree wage laborers and slaves. Later painting, sculpture, architecture, music became the *artes liberales* and media art the *artes mechanicae* thus the division, which corresponded to the class divisions in Greek society, can be translated today into the evaluation of the "arts" and the "media arts".

Scorn for the automatically and mechanically made has taken the place of disdain for the crafts-made. The media have taken the place of the mechanical arts. The intellectual achievement of artistic creation, the artifact made by man and the machine, is not perceived. Essentially, the difference between *artes liberales* and *artes mechanicae* rests on the assumption that the one was an intellectual activity, the other a physical one. Today, the division is as follows: the artist's intuition and hand versus rational reason and mechanical production. Today, painting, as produced by the human hand in line with artistic intuition, is accorded precedence over those artworks that are produced or reproduced by technological means. The original works of painting are in the service of the upper classes. The lower classes are fobbed off with photographic reproductions of the famous artworks. To this very day, the bane of the *artes mechanicae* applies to those artworks generated by electronic media.

If we glance at contemporary books of art history, we will again encounter the disparagement of the media arts, which to this day have not yet been able to fully shed the scar of their origin in a practice of unfree and mechanical arts. For this reason, the liberation of the so-called lower classes

40 See the exhibitions and corresponding catalogue: Peter Weibel, *Kontext Kunst*, DuMont, Cologne, 1994; *Das Ende der Avantgarde: Kunst als Dienstleistung; Sammlung Schür-mann*, Pae White (ed.), exhib. cat. Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich, 1995.

can be discerned in the transformational processes of the arts themselves. The lower classes have less the arts to thank for their emancipation and more the natural sciences and the spirit of the Enlightenment, which set out to free humans from the social power exercised by the shackles of disenfranchisement forged by the aristocracy and the church and from the power of nature. The natural sciences joined forces here with the mechanical arts (*techné*) precisely in order (by means of instruments, appliances, laboratories, crafts skills, knowledge and expertise) to discover the laws of nature and advance the mechanisms of controlling nature. One part of the arts, such as Romanticism, rejected the Enlightenment; another part allied with it in order to improve the human condition. We are in a similar position today. The intention is to extend and advance the spheres of democracy, by again allying them with the natural sciences through the agency of the mechanical and digital media arts, and in this way, with the help of the artificial appliances provided by new technologies and procedures, to create platforms and practices for democratic processes. The "free" artists who emancipated themselves in the Renaissance from "mechanical" craftsmen did not liberate themselves from their thralldom to aristocratic patrons. Their art primarily still serves to glorify the ruling class. Today, the latter is no longer the church or the aristocracy, bishops and lords, but corporations, companies, CEOs and government ministers. Today, it is the present mechanical arts so scorned by the free arts that actually serve purely artistic purposes, and it is these works that can visualize the commensurability of aesthetic and social orders. The rise of technical art and its struggle for recognition reflects the rise of the working and slave classes and their struggle for political recognition. In his two books *La rebelión de las masas* (1930) and *La Deshumanización del arte* (1925), José Ortega y Gasset described the dialectics of these transformational processes from a conservative viewpoint. He saw the rise of the technological arts as a dehumanization of art and linked it to the ostensibly dehumanizing rise of the masses. Today, a type of art is required that is unlike Greek classicism and does justice to the requirements and problems of contemporary democracy. Are contemporary art and contempo-

rary theater up to the task of stating the truth of politics in the language of art? Can they address the multifarious problems confronting global society and for which, like Greek society before them, they are not prepared and likewise no longer know what is right or wrong, just or unjust? It is hard to answer this question at this point. After all, we are not in the fortunate position of the Greeks and cannot simply play out old myths and then break with them.

What we can perhaps do today is play through the old promises of the Enlightenment and democracy, ascertain what we are today and question ourselves. We must devise new images of man that correspond to the new world images. The commensurability between human figure and world events can no longer be forged by the canon of Classical beauty. The opposite would be to misunderstand the doctrine of Polyclitus, for the corresponding measures he called for and provided were in line with the social order of his time. What we can learn from him is that the artist today remains representative for the power over the human shape and social order, and must repeatedly re-posit it.

Put differently, today the aesthetic design of a new image of man no longer obeys the macro-system of the anatomy, but the biological system that the natural sciences describe. The shape and composition of man no longer follow anatomy, but molecular chemistry. Today, the image of man corresponds to the rules of the biological system as defined by sets of pairs, the four bases adenine, thymine, cytosine, guanine, which function like the rungs on a ladder to form the double helix that is human DNA and which consists of 3.2 billion base pairs or possible genetic combinations. In other words, the laws of nature have changed and now read as a computable, mathematical text that can be construed in algorithms. Just as the Greeks had to learn who they were and how they determined their own lives, we today, faced by genetic research and the possibilities of genetic engineering, must now likewise ask ourselves who we are and how we wish to design ourselves. Not so long ago Freud said that given the gender difference between men and women, anatomy was our fate; today we know that he was influenced by the Greek mindset. Artists today, operating at the
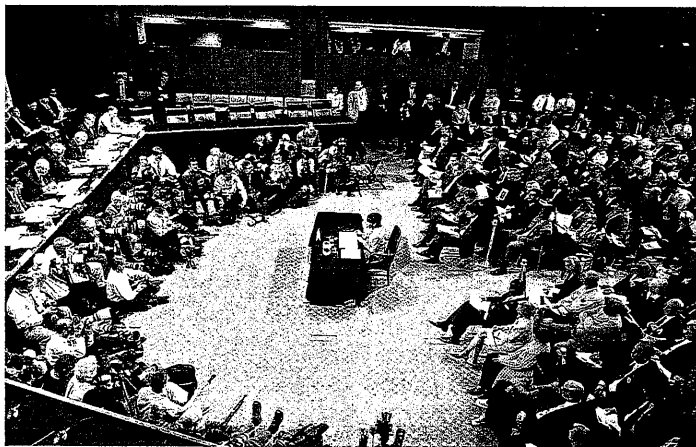
April 8, 2004 on Capitol Hill in Washington DC: US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice testifies before the independent commission investigating the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. Rice defended the Bush administration's counter-terrorism action before the September 11, 2001 attacks and insisted "no silver bullet" could have prevented the devastating strikes.
🖫 Photo © AFP /E-Lance Media, photo: Nicholas Roberts/PIG
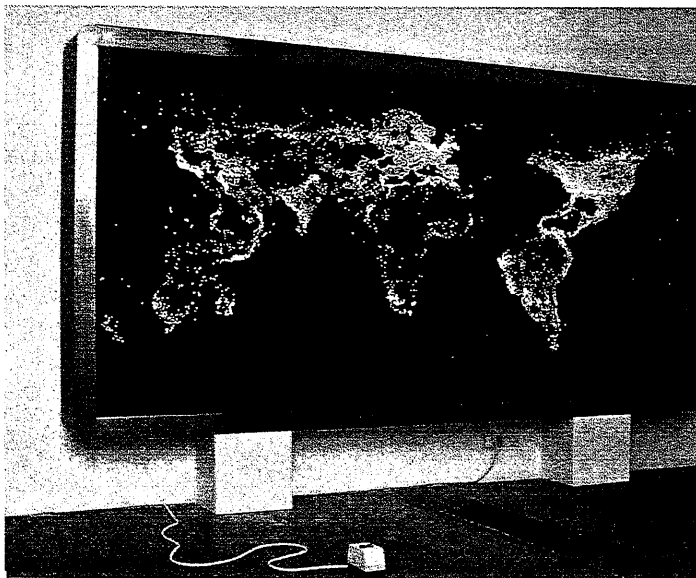
Melik Ohanian, *Switch off-on*, 2002, light box in a satin steel frame, 200 x 403 x 30.5 cm, courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

molecular level rather than that of the beauty of anatomy, can show us that anatomy is not our destiny, or no more than our genes are the basis of our identity. Indeed, they can even inquire what is happening to man and who it is who is determining the human measure against the backdrop of artificial life. If the system of biological laws, the *Nomos* of nature, is more radically questioned than ever before, then who determines the human measure that is the measure of all things? Is the human being still the measure of all things, as for the Greeks, and also the measure of man? What Cratist option is then still valid? The democratic artists of today will therefore devise a formal vocabulary that corresponds to the variables of artificial life and an artificial body politic, if we wish to speak in the Hobbesean terminology of the future. The state as an artificial body, as an arti-

ficial being, will no longer be addressed in the formal language of anatomy, not as a body but as a mathematical text. The political iconography of modern democracy and its contradictions in the age of globalization will call for a form of scientific visualization that no longer grasps the laws of nature visually, but conceptually, arithmetically and numerically. Only in this way can the infinity of possible genetic combinations, the infinity of variations on human identity become discernible as an open field for enactment.

The human image in the mirror of art will be different today than it was in the twentieth century. In the name of commensurability, precisely the "speculum artium," it will render the conflict lines of the Cratist age even sharper and deeper in order to show us the immense and violent changes in the global social order of citizens and slaves.
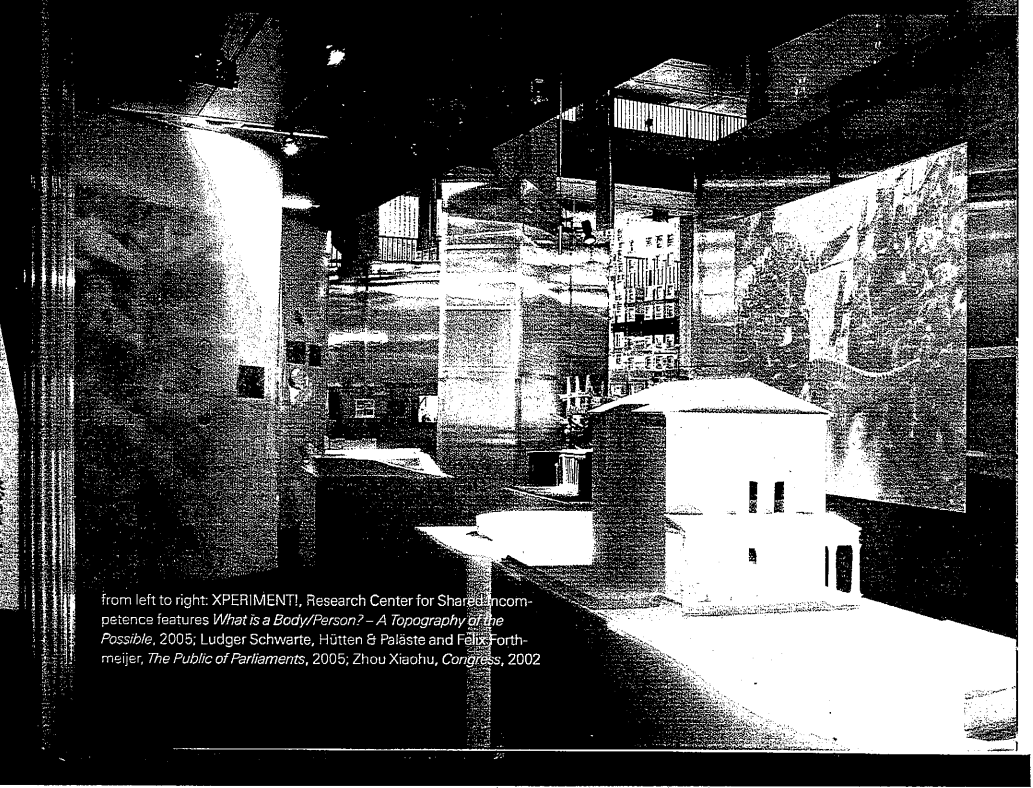
Diego Rivera, *Detroit Industry*, 1932–33

All installation views from the exhibition *Making Things Public* at the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, 2005, © the artists, photos: Franz Wamhof

Franck Cochoy, Catherine Grandclément-Chaffy, Alexis Bertrand, *Gathering Devices for Market Choices: Product Packaging and Shopping Carts*, 2005

from left to right: various artists, *Opsroom*, 2005; Diego Rivera, *Detroit Industry*, 1932–33; CYKLOOP, *Mobile Virtual Reality Center*; Peter Galison, Robb Moss and Students, *The Wall of Science*, 2005, 6-channel video installation; Hanna Rose Shell, *Locomotion in Water*, 2005.

from left to right: XPERIMENT!, Research Center for Shared Incompetence features *What is a Body/Person? – A Topography of the Possible*, 2005; Ludger Schwarte, Hütten & Paläste and Felix Forthmeijer, *The Public of Parliaments*, 2005; Zhou Xiaohu, *Congress*, 2002
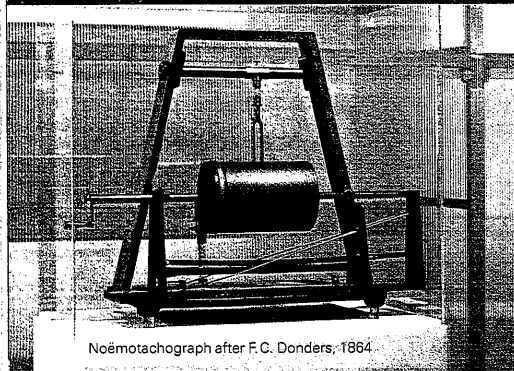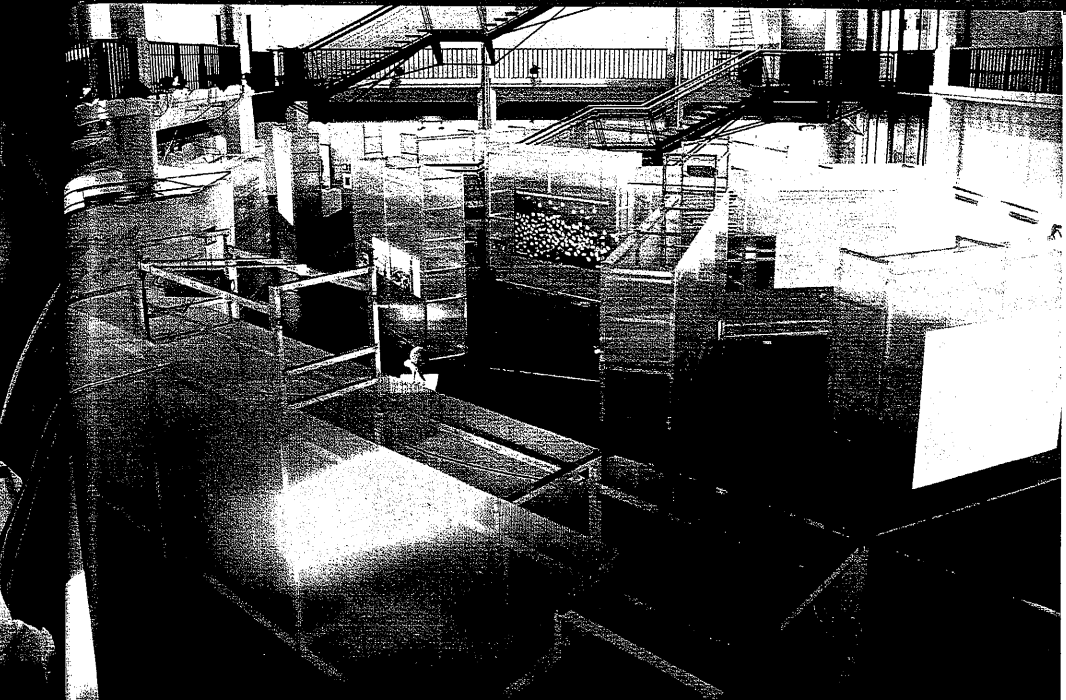
Natalie Jeremijenko, *One Trees*, 2005
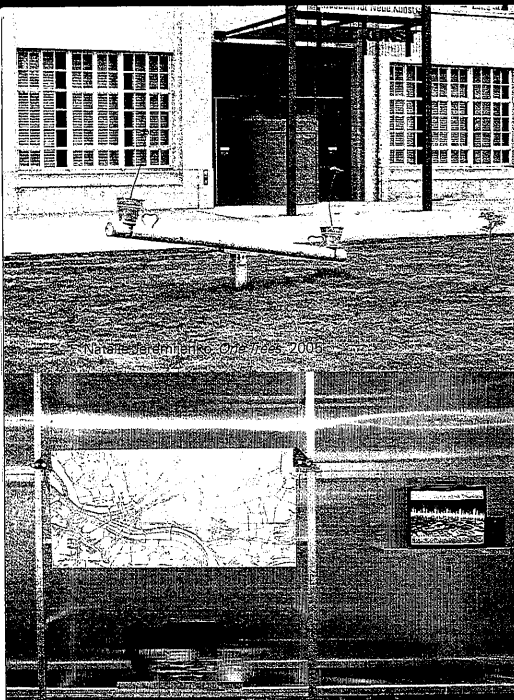
Carbon Defense League, *MapHub: Heard and MapMover*, 2005
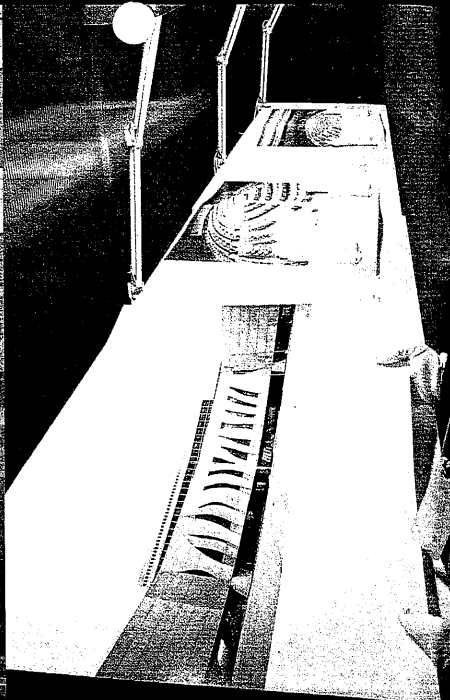
Armin Linke, *Assemblage*, 2005

Noëmotachograph after F. C. Donders, 1864

Michel Jaffrennou and Thierry Coduys, *The Phantom Public*, 2005

Franck Cochoy, Catherine Grandclément-Chaffy, Alexis Bertrand, *Gathering Devices for Market Choices: Product Packaging and Shopping Carts*, 2005