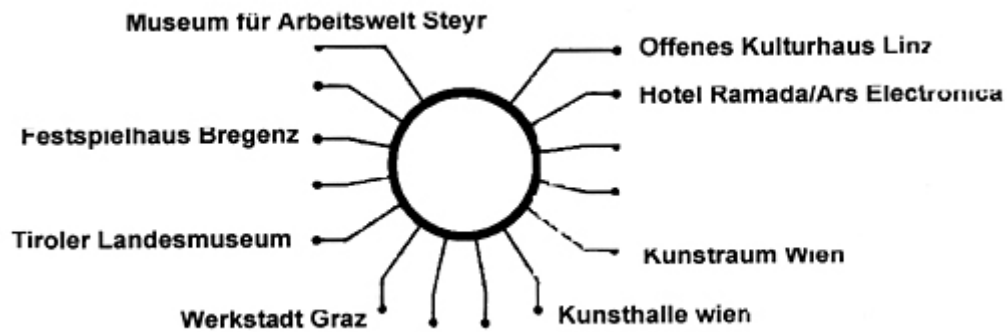
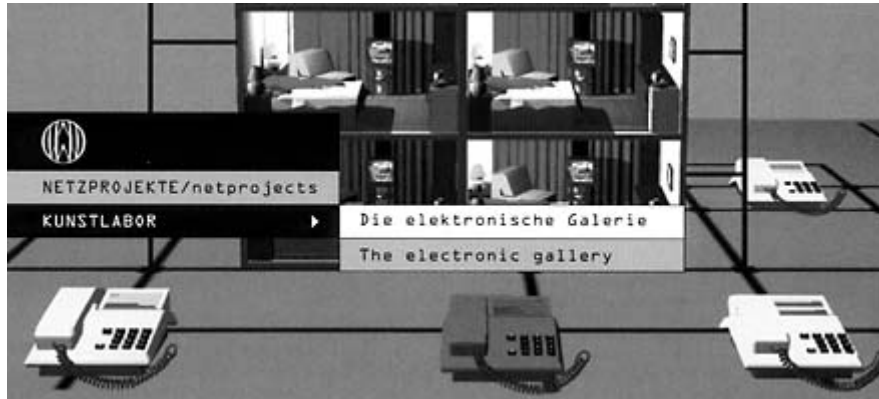


The electronic gallery KUNSTLABOR



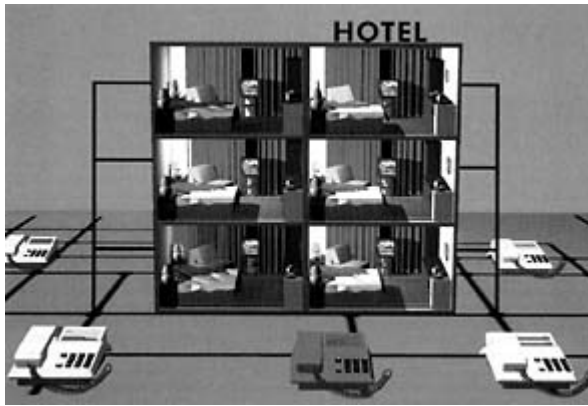
Schematische Darstellung der ELEKTRONISCHEN GALERIE



CHANNEL 37 (sämtliche Daten auf dem Bestellschein)



LCD-PANEL (sämtliche Daten auf dem Bestellschein). Angezeigter Bildbeitrag von Max Moswitzer.



Anlässlich der Ars Electronica '95 ist DIE ELEKTRONISCHE GALERIE in einem Linzer Hotel installiert. Über die Einheit CHANNEL 37 können die Bildbeiträge der KünstlerInnen über das Hotelfernsehsystem unter dem angeführten Kanal in jedem Hotelzimmer empfangen werden. Im Foyer des Hotels ist die Sichtstelle LCD-PANEL montiert. Grafik: Peter Hauenschild.

In the word KUNSTLABOR "Kunst" (art) precedes "Labor" (laboratory), just like "not" precedes "beautiful". This being the case, our artistic practice is primarily directed at the contemporary discourse of art.

The Electronic Gallery's task is not to promote computer graphics. It is not just a collection of physical components: the term refers to an art project. It does not obey the dogmas of media art, because the existing possibilities of interactivity do not even come close to video on demand. Also, those wanting to receive on-line off-color propositions from Madame Jacky and her friend Miss 0. from Vienna will be disappointed by this network. And beware: this facility is not a model of the future teleworking of visual artists.

The operation of the gallery is easy: about fifty artists are invited to participate and transmit their contributions via a computer modem or fax to the central computer at any time. The displays of the gallery, which can be placed anywhere and in any number, become operational once they have been hooked up to the power and telephone outlets; they update themselves and the gallery program on display automatically through daily data transmissions from the central computer via telephone modems. The exhibition will be displayed either on an integrated LCD screen (LCD PANEL) or on your very own TV set (CHANNEL 37) in the form of still pictures that are changed every minute.

STRUCTURALLY ORIENTED ART

Unplugged art for a complex world.

1. The intentional plan of the ELECTRONIC GALLERY is based on its concept of artistic practice, which defines art according to social and functional aspects. This implies the inclusion of contingency, resulting from the plan's projection on to the possible fields of operation. The communications program (of the art project) started by the artists is at first vaguely defined as to its value in terms of the discourse, and in its procedure is exposed to the dynamics of complex systems of action and communication. In the intertextual space this program undergoes a number of states that could be seen as attractors in the sense of the formal theory of dynamic systems. Or according to Julia Kristeva: the text results from the movement of simultaneous affirmation and negation of other texts. The context is in some way more complex than the text. This means that inferior complexity has to be compensated

for by way of selection strategies, which the protagonist can influence only in a limited way. This intended influence is therefore called an "intervening measure".

2. Without denying the inherent dynamics and rules of complex systems, we conceptualize social systems the following way - the procedures of interactions are controlled by mutually interdependent aggregation levels, and specific intervening measures are controlled by people and groups of people on a scale from "probable" to "improbable", depending on the degree to which specific fields can be influenced. From the point of view of a socially critical discourse this comprises structural power. A specific distribution of power between interest groups, hence rulers and those under their rule, a hegemony of power monopolies, etc. These things are linked to those fields that have a concentration of symbolic capital, i.e. fields where the formula "symbolic capital equals economic capital" is no longer a fundamental contradiction. Although this formula is a proven fact, it has to be disregarded in the largely archaic sphere of art.

3. The art system has sectors of performance in relation to other systems. Art productions of the past and present have shown that there are methods to deliberately (!) integrate into one's artistic work those social factors that give rise to the artwork. The obvious problem of such an undertaking is "how?" Those who failed in doing so failed because they neglected the principle that facts in other social fields like politics, business, science, etc. can be communicated only in a comprehensible form of the respective field and thus become more persuasive. If a synreferential approach is to shape artistic work, exact coding will be all the more important. In practice, this means that the coding of a work must obey the self-referentiality and self-reflective reproduction of the system, in this case the art system. The hope that the dynamics of the system will somehow extend the communication offer into the "fine semantics" of art is a fallacy because these dynamics show no mercy.

4. Modern and post-industrial mass societies more and more often experience sudden rises in complexity. Each rise means that every modification of the form of differentiation produces corresponding temporal structures, which we find accelerate their speed. As far as the art system is concerned, which is a social system, i.e., an autonomous subsystem of society, this means that, like other subsystems, A is coupled to the basal principles of society by a temporalized complexity and, therefore, is exposed to its effects. It is not one event (e.g. an act) that counts, but only a unit of events structured by self-reflective selection processes of the respective system. This is achieved by selecting a specific pattern for establishing a connection with other acts. This is the only way for a series of events to be regarded as communication and at the same time as a production of society. Temporalized complex systems do have sophisticated internal arrangements, but because of that they strongly depend on environmental information; thus, reproduction in temporalized systems is an on-going problem.²

5. In our view this comprises the connection between the differentiation of the inherent complexity of the art system and the necessary expansion of the concept of art in modern art, an increase in resorting to disciplines not related to art. and the inclusion of their topics and methods in our practice. As experiencing difference is the only way to gain information, the art protagonists tend to resort to areas not related to art in their quest to keep up with the discourse. The danger lies in an entropy imminent in the system, i.e., pragmatically speaking, when the communicative tapering of offers does not exist or is insufficient. The conclusion drawn for artistic practice is that the useful solution cannot be found by resorting to areas not related to art, but as the historical archives of art prove, by utilizing the formative potentials released by the socio-cultural evolution.

6. Failing to understand the consequences, some artists say that the problems raised here could be solved at once, if they resorted to digital communications networks. This is the impression one might get now browsing through the Internet sensation "World Wide Web". The Internet, which has an LAN-compatible open interface and thus links not only thousands of local-area networks throughout the world, but also a multitude of interest groups, is – at least for the time being – a specific area of the social culture where the status of the members of the art culture has lost its importance, as has been envisaged in the concepts of artistic telematics. Not even a "meta-designer" will help much. But the historical art context has been an evolution of ideas. This means that every generation of artists re-forms its past and its future, and its valid positions. Or we might simply say: in the name of the art culture (a very advanced culture) the artists and groups of artists present in the "WWW" colonize a communications space that universities and socioculturally oriented groups managed to wring from the US army and that has become important as a telematic culture of resistance. Robert Taylor, who was in charge of the Internet precursor "Arpanet", was censured for his disobedience and transferred to Vietnam. Today, more than half of Internet "residents" are commercially minded.

7. The intentional plan of the ELECTRONIC GALLERY takes up a strand of discourse which has actively shaped the evolution of ideas of modern art from its beginning to the present. Partly for reasons already mentioned, this strand of discourse represents the expansion of the concept of art and is today taken up by the fourth generation of artists. Since 1993, or even earlier than that, this discourse has been labeled "Kontext- Kunst" (context art).³ We from KUNSTLABOR want to distance our approach from this label for various reasons. Not least because of some considerations, as expressed by Pierre Bourdieu, who, when asked about the concepts of context according to Wolfgang Kemp or T.J. Clark, said: "At any rate, these concepts are weak and inconsistent; they only state that artists, too, are surrounded by a social universe of institutions."⁴

8. We from KUNSTLABOR replace the vague term "context" with "structures". i.e. from a systems-theory point of view. The interdependence of text/context when we look at it closely, cannot be translated into system/environment. We certainly do not borrow from structuralistic theories to define our concept of structure: we see it from the point of view of necessary autopoietic self-reproduction. In this view the function of the order of a structure is to turn unstructured complexity. i.e. impending disintegration – which would lead to the dissolution of the relational patterns of the system's elements and thus to entropy -into structured complexity, i.e. extend it to a level of structured order. This is where "dissipative structures" come in.⁵ How "deep" this structural concept goes becomes clear, when structure – also in the sense of process is not only linked to complexity, but also to (the system's) time. In complex social systems, not every element (an event or an act) can be connected to every other element at any time! So, by way of reflective selection only one relational pattern out of a multitude of possible combinations is realized. This means great opportunities, but also great risk, for suppliers of communications programs. But it is the temporal structures of society that "thrill" suppliers. When we speak of "structurally oriented art", we refer to the artistic approaches that introduce the processes of reproduction, which they are affected by, conceptually and endogenously into the artistic work by means of artistic methods.

9. The relation of the ELECTRONIC GALLERY to other constructions of reality that make up its milieu is indexical. That is to say, as art, it is bound to the inherent logic of the system. In other words, it differs from the identity and difference of other constructions of reality. The technical and electronic components of the ELECTRONIC GALLERY are, in terms of complexity, simple in structure and function. In relation to what they are projected on to, they

are "trivial systems" in the spirit of Glaserfeld. This means that this is the only way in which one can work with them. But as simple input/output models, these components are exposed to the dynamics of complex communications spaces. And so the project ELECTRONIC GALLERY, which does not imitate, copy, parody, reflect or represent anything at all, can gain its own complexity beyond its physical limitations. This way, the project enables recipients to experience difference and thus gain information.

10. All of this is not about content, which is always demanded in naive discussions about art. It is not about the "meaning- inspiring subject", which is a fallacy caused by anthropocentrism, for it is the order of a structure that enables the ultimate elements (events, information, etc.) to constitute meaning. And it is the order of elements (no ontological units!) that creates content and form. No, it is about difference which is tantamount to form.

1 "We" refers to all persons within KUNSTLABOR who have reached a consensus on the subject matter in question.

2 Niklas Luhmann: Soziale Systeme. Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie. Frankfurt/Main; Suhrkamp 1987,

3 The exhibition "Kontext-Kunst" was organized as part of "Steirischer Herbst '93", Curator: Peter Weibel

4 Pierre Bourdieu interviewed by Isabelle Graw: Selbstbeziehung. In: Texte zur Kunst, 2nd vol., no. 6: June 1992.

5 Ilya Prigogine / Nicotis Gregoire: Die Erforschung des Komplexen. Munich, 1987.

On the occasion of Ars Electronica '95 the ELECTRONIC GALLERY has been set up in a hotel in Linz. Via the CHANNEL 37 unit the contributions of the artists can be received on the hotel's TV system in every room on the given channel. An LCD PANEL has been installed in the lobby of the hotel. Work on display by Peter Hauenschild.

ORDER FORM

I. RECEIVING UNIT

The computer hardware and software needed for the reception and the display of the program of the ELECTRONIC GALLERY is integrated and fully installed in the equipment offered. Thanks to our very own PLUG-AND-PLAY SYSTEM the display becomes fully operational when the unit is connected to power and to the telephone line of the user.

KUNSTLABOR offers two types of receiving units:

CHANNEL 37

Measurements: width x depth x height = 930 x 680 x 70 mm

Weight: about 9 kg

Connections: 1 x power 220V; 1 x telephone; 1 x video out

Color: gray letters/black surface or gray letters/white surface

Range: (of transmitter) about 20 m

Contents: CHANNEL 37, power cord, manual, info video

Terms/delivery: 3 weeks

The program of the ELECTRONIC GALLERY can be received in two ways:

1. The transmitter in the CHANNEL 37 unit transmits the program within a range of 20 meters. All you have to do is adjust the frequency of your TV set and programme it. The set must be equipped with an indoor antenna.

2. Or you can connect your TV set to the CHANNEL 37 unit by using the video-out port.

PRICE EXCL. VAT
ATS 18,000.

LCD PANEL

Overall measurements: width x depth x height = 700 x 500 x 110 mm

Screen specifications: display: active color-LCD panel;

resolution: 640 x 480 pixels with 256 colors:

visible screen diagonal: 241.3 mm

Weight: about 6 kg

Connections: 1 x power 220V; 1 x telephone

Color: golden frame, with black passe-partout

Contents: LCD PANEL, power card, manual, info video

Terms/delivery: 3 weeks

The program of the ELECTRONIC GALLERY is displayed on the LCD screen. PRICE
EXCL. VAT

2. Gallery Program

ATS 47. 000.

The current program is available on a subscription basis. The terms of payment (direct debiting, standing order. etc.) of the gallery subscription, which has to be paid in advance monthly, can be arranged individually. The subscriber may cancel his/her subscription within a period of 3 months without giving reasons. KUNSTLABOR reserves the right to raise the subscription price subject to 3 months of notice.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE PER MONTH EXCL. VAT
ATS 416.67