

What's that supposed to be, what's program? Just Merrit



Reality isn't bygone; to me, it seems to be hidden in the here-and-now. So what's the point of a rearview mirror, which defines per se "what lies behind us," regardless of which gear we're in, Drive or Reverse — and not even a hasty change of course lets us move forward.

And why "towards"? "In the Rearview Mirror: the Reality" would be wrong, since by no means does reality present itself so clearly, not even in retrospect [regarded in the past, peering into the past]. At best, the way to get there can be sought in the mirror. "Objects may be closer than they appear!" is a warning sensibly posted on the rearview mirrors of some American cars. And that might be it, what fascinates us, what the "American" in us would like so very much to see. Possibly, the automobile transfers us into an energetic form of non-consisting, purity on an experimental basis. If everything is forever and everywhere, then it must, at the same time, be very close.

But we are not yet so close to this "state of light" as we imagine in our dreams. In an over-zealousness approaching religious fervor, we hope that a new age has actually dawned, one that enables us to link proximity and distance and to experience reality in a never-ending simultaneity. But the newness of the simultaneity remains, in our heads as in our formulas, vague and immature. So we flee to definitions and metaphors of transition — creating a "liquid age" — of emergent fluidity, amorphousness and a dissolution of material. We dwell precisely upon this materiality, distorted into an idealized quasi-nostalgia. Wistfully, we gaze into the rearview mirror at our own material make-up, our traditional, historically coherent context and search without any orientation for an actuality we believe we have lost.

There seems to be no other way to explain our melancholy contemplation of iron, the most concrete of all materials fashioned by the human hand. When IKEA sells iron spoons with the proviso that they may possibly decay [rust], then we have found the evidence we seek. When an adolescent oriented toward disorientation considers this spoon to be an example of cool Industrial Design and buys it, then it can be no wonder that magazines like *Wired* stylize former "Luddites" into "cybernavts."

In my day, at least, it was still the Myth of Evil that was attached to iron [*Blade Runner*]. Understandably, we "demographically insignificant Generation X dinosaurs," obsessed with hardware, demanded access to the means of production. Autonomy by means of unexplained conditions of ownership and alienating the "evil" material to a new purpose were both our maxims and dreams. More impressed than influenced by the early Heroes of the Industrial Culture [*Throbbing Cristle, SRL*], we felt both compassion for the steel workers and identification with their access to hardware, as well as fascination for the immediacy and directness of the production machinery. This was precisely the background from which *Contained* came into being. A conglomeration of adventurous ideas, carved out with passionate obsession in the heart of a steel works [*Voest Alpine*], mostly due to me but never borne forward by me alone. For 54 months, this construction of man and material [with considerable wear and tear on both] grew rampant like a malignant tumor at a location which I, bourgeois junior high school boy that I was, took to be at a maximum distance from my family home and my origins, and the place where life could be felt most directly.

Thus, the rearview mirror also serves a totally banal function, a recollection and a consideration of the possible powers of this malignancy: there can hardly have been another place like this one, in which the confrontation of industrial artists [from the builders of machines to the constructors of ideologies] with the background to which they referred was a more direct one. Nothing dragged the petit bourgeois roots so ruthlessly out of earthy sensuality and into the light. Nowhere else is it so delightful to rummage through things as they already are without ulterior considerations regarding problems of art — in one room, an elk's head nailed to the wall, a souvenir of geographical arrogance [mass tourism], invokes a presumption of taste, the cultural lives and doings of go-kart racers and dog trainers suggests a degree of civilization. Where else are the giddy ceremonies of a world which so openly celebrates both itself and the circumstance of its demise — the extreme romanticism of a "back to culture" that has long existed only on the death beds of the museums?

That's why the rearview mirror is very simple to construct!

Friends are invited and set out, unprotected, for a period of 10 days, to expose themselves to the locality and to react with their various means and strategies to that which they find. Thereby, the work of the men of steel and that of the children of the city of steel are called into account, just as the feeling of strangeness which arises out of the impossibility of an understanding of life without art.

[The results are presented in a small series of presentations, an exhibition, a round of discussions and a video series.]

Hermann Atzlinger

The product itself does not stand in the foreground but rather the fascination of those variables which make it possible.

Tina Auer



Playing for its own sake, pursued in the diversity of materials and media; to newly define the significance of conditions by means of minimal changes; certain situations in connection with a newly construed context occasionally result in a harmonious relationship which opens our eyes to beauty; functioning in and of themselves, they masterfully defy rational structures and permit us to see that which had been familiar and prosaic in a radiant new light.

Sam Auinger

Grew up where the country meets the city ... the monastery [St. Florian] here, the industry [VOEST] there ... in still-functioning tradition ... there was music [Bruckner's organ] in the church and a radio at home ... blindfolded, we played "which car's comin' up the mountain?" ... a VW Beetle was easy ... an iron pipe to make noise, my favorite toy [...] then I was in a band and things started to get English ... we almost never sounded good ... I wanna be more serious, I wanna get over the "tralla tralla" ... then ... Involvement with composition, psychoacoustics and sound design ... motion makes sound ... spaces and materials have a sound my heart beats a rhythm ... I wanna get closer to my dreams ...

Nicolas Anatol Baginsky



Baginsky's machines, the artificiality of laboratories is artistically treated. He takes up a question inherited from the tradition of scientists and mechanical engineers — what distinguishes human beings? — and he responds as an artist. Human beings are not perfectly calculable creatures, and humanity begins at that point where an individual wrestles with this question of what is human. Baginsky does so by giving expression to strange and awkward customs by means of the motion of machines.

Todd Blair



Todd Blair's work has evolved from extensive collaborative work with artists concentrating in machine, performance and sound art. He uses various industrial technologies to explore our relationship to culturally inherited industrial processes. Changing technologies, shifting perceptions and the inclination for industry to retool has yielded abundant source materials for the projects. By focusing on the transformation of these remains, he has questioned our standard relationship to the industrial environment.

Tim Boykett

Tim Boykett is amongst many things, a mathematician, and is interested fundamentally in emergent structure. Whether it's in groups of people, collections of axioms or interconnected electromechanical systems, the emergent [and usually unexpected] collective properties are his concern. Collaborative work naturally forms a major part of his efforts, though the product-based success of this collaboration is immaterial; the emergent character of the group work in the absence of "management science" is paramount. Warning: DO NOT COLLABORATE!

Brass Band of VOEST-ALPINE Linz



Even before 1950, co-workers in the "former VOEST" got together to play music in their spare time. That year, the "VOEST" Works Brass Band was formally founded and today this impressive Blasorchester includes approximately 55 musicians. Playing in marching formation and wearing the traditional festive costume of mining and metal workers, the group has performed at a wide variety of events including official state visits, jubilees, company celebrations and open-air concerts, at which these outstandingly trained musicians never fail to win the hearts of their listeners.

Denise Caruso

A longtime analyst and observer of the industries of digital technology and interactive media, Denise Caruso writes the Digital Commerce column for the *New York Times* and is executive producer of Spotlight, an executive conference for the interactive media industry. Caruso has served on the board of directors of the *Electronic Frontier Foundation*, and was elected to the

board of the Institute for Alternative Journalism in 1995. She holds a BA in English from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California, and lives and works in San Francisco.

Tatjana Didenko



Tatiana Didenko is a musicologist and television producer for Russian State TV Moscow since 1990. Her outstanding productions have been shown in film and media art festivals internationally. Her unselfish production assistance to Russian artists, and to artists from around the world when they visit Moscow is legendary. She is a member of the New Screen Technology Association. In 1995 she was the Russian TV producer for Checkpoint '95, a live television event between New York, Moscow and Linz for the Ars Electronica.

John Duncan



John Duncan's most recent work includes *THE CRACKLING*, released on Trente Oiseaux [Germany], composed with Max Springer, made at the *Stanford Linear Accelerator Center* [SLAC] for subatomic particle research in Stanford, California; *ICONS*, a series of 4-meter high macro-closeup photographs of the vaginas of six women shot in infra-red black-and-white film, with accompanying brush-drawings of the photographic images drawn in his blood; and *The Ruud.E.Memorial Choir/Psychonaut*, an event for 30-voice choir, released as a 7' clear-vinyl EP [USA].

Chip Flynn



Peoplehater is a collaborative performance coalition started by Chip Flynn. The group creates environments where the distinctions between machines, carnivals and monsters breakdown. We are left somewhere in the shadows between dream and nightmare. Through a team of technicians, seeking redirected amusement, Peoplehater engages us in performances likened to a mechanical puppet show from hell.

L.A. Gladsjø **Rear View Mirror On Technology**

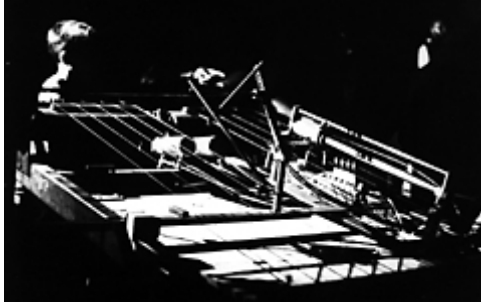
As we speed towards an unknown future, this program of films looks back at previous forms of industrial culture. Perhaps within these documents, culled from the archives of Communist, Nazi, and capitalist societies, there are clues to re-imagining our relationship to technology. In addition to this historical perspectives, the program includes glimpses of new paradigms offered by artists and other visionaries experimenting with possible forms that this relationship may take in the future.

Brett Goldstone



Brett Goldstone's demystification of how mechanical power sources work has drawn him away from traditional applications of kinetic elements such as entertainment and spectacle, and has imbued the works with an underlying political and social significance. He is showing in Europe for the first time at Rear-view mirror to Reality. His aesthetic interests are focused on producing electric motors, steam engines and water turbines that are primary sculptures. These pieces are also power sources for installations of secondary kinetic sculptures.

Matt Heckert



San Francisco based sound artist Matt Heckert's "Mechanical Sound Orchestra" is an ensemble of kinetic machines, conceived and fabricated to generate sounds that surpass regular orchestral instruments in visual dynamics and acoustic ability. The MSO creates a theatrical event through a range of instruments and compositions that incorporate the specification of its performance site. In its instrumentation from the rhythmic section to a string part and virtuoso soloists the MSO reaches its goal of a kinetic sound sculpture.

Rudolf Heidebrecht

1 To remain human/2 To try not to fall for ONE'S OWN tricks./3 A young artist once came to Picasso and asked him: "Mr. Picasso, how can one understand art?" And Picasso responded by posing a question in return: "How can one understand the singing of a bird?"/4 "You must love humanity; only in this way can humanity be understood. You may not regard anyone as too abject, no one as too hateful ..." - Georg Büchner, Lenz/5 "Dying is something terrible, the gods themselves have ordained it so. Since, if dying were something wonderful, the gods themselves would die." — *Sappho*/6 "I get older and learn as I do so" — *Solon of Athens*

Erik Hobijn

Parasites live and feed on other plants and animals. Techno-Parasites use whatever technical systems or apparatuses they can find as hosts, drawing on their output, their energy supplies and cycles to procreate and grow. A Techno-Parasite can be a simple or a complex system which is attentive and adapts to its host's structure where its inventive struggle for survival causes technical disruptions. Techno-Parasites suck other machines empty, disrupt their circuits, effect power cuts, disable them, destroy them.

Kathy Huffmann

Kathy Rae Huffman is a freelance curator, networker, and media art critic. Since 1991, Huffman has been based in Europe. She collaborates with *HILUS intermediale Projektforschung*, Vienna, where her collection of artists videotapes, and her library on media art is available for research use. Huffman conducts seminars and workshops, and lectures on art video, interactive TV, and the history of artists and technology. Her research into the theory and practices surrounding Cyber-intimacy has been presented as a lecture performance internationally.

Laura Kikauka



One non-biographical style miniblurb about Laura Kikauka [selfdefined] technonymph & profi-bastler: I am a collect-o-hollic and can usually be found playing in the entropy of my continuously growing inventory of pertusbing objects. I often claim that I am not searching for them, but they find me ... like a magnet attracts certain metals. My passionate interests lie in the world of electronics and mechanics [which include computer interfacing, circuit design, audio, video, holography, plastics and welding] ... even though I seem to be have been born in a party dress !?!

David Moises

It has to do with machines and playthings and machines that play; and it has to do with the playful approach to pieces of equipment, seeing them, what they can do and how they function [or don't]. Machines carry out actions; they have a user/operator with whom they constitute a unit. For example, does someone playing Jojo on video see the fundamental structure of this toy/this machine? The player plays and the Jojo answers in its special mechanical JoJo language. This language is the machine itself.

Gordon Monahan

Gordon Monahan's works for piano, loudspeakers, video and kinetic sculpture span various genres from avant-garde concert music to multimedia installation and sound art. John Cage once said, "At the piano, Gordon Monahan produces sounds we haven't heard before." Currently his main focus is called "Multiple Machine Matrix", a system of computer-controlled kinetic instruments made from electronic surplus and industrial trash. MMM is a network of musical machine performers that are capable of moving complex layers of acoustically-produced sound in space.

Mathias Moser

I believe that 90% of our words serve to veil the truth. One possibility to draw nearer to it is the light, whereby the question arises of whether every form of light scans only the reflection of surfaces for truth.

Marc 9

The capitalist system will continue in its feverish attempt [fever = sign of sickness] to rescue the "free market economy" from its process of self-destruction. The winners are those who are selling us economic and currency unions and all kinds of other nonsense; who don't want to give us any time to think it over, which is why they are constantly telling us what to do and what to stop doing. Whoever doesn't fit in, or doesn't want to fit in, gets a taste of almighty capitalism. Whoever doesn't perform gets nothing or constantly less. Death to standards [and to capital]!

Linda Nilsson

Linda Nilsson has been exploring materials, experimenting and playing with their functions. This confrontation with sculpture and sound led her to develop moving sound sculpture. The essential aspect of her work is the invention of space/a place which reflects back on that form of research and the emerging room installations.

Fritz Ostermeier

I'm not interested in whether music/art/theory is of relevance. Who's speaking? Who even has the nerve to try to palm off on me as relevant his freakish psychological discharges. Fuck off, relevant thinkers! Fuck off, relevant artists! And you can take the thousands of relevantly creative little half-assed hobby dabblers right along with you. Anyone who doesn't have some obsessions to show can stay the hell away from me.

Martin Reiter

No-place for art, in which a thick-walled subterranean complex is equipped through an Internet address with what is currently the maximum possible speed capacity. The anchor is cast, laying it right on the line with a concrete block, which in its narrow interior represents a concentrated gallery situation. With the exhibition "Art and Action," the no-place becomes the national gallery. What has always been important, then and now, is the participation of so many artists and creative people from Austria and abroad, the direct cultural exchange and flow of information which came about and happened because of this building.

Die Romantiker



Dance music to hear and see. The guarantee of a successful event. Well-known in the dance music scene for 10 years. With heart, musicianship and the joy of performing, The Romantics provide for good times and audience enjoyment at all types of affairs and events with a musical rainbow including standards, Austrian and German pop classics, oldies, hits from the 50s, 60s and 70s as well as today's sounds. Current CD: *Heiss wie Feuer* MPA 1201

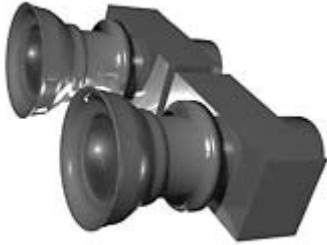
Herbert Schager

"Everything here is the nastiest sarcasm, everything here is innocently childlike; everything gnashes and bares its fangs, whistles and shouts with glee. Unvarnished situation reports from the outside world are joined by encoded communiqués from interior realms housing monstrosities arduously kept in check. It is a primarily compulsive and yet cultically systemized occurrence." Since I see myself rather as a painter and less as a conceptual or installation or any other kind of artist, what I would really like to do is put on a small exhibition entitled "Guardian of the Pictures"

Leo Schatzl

Seeing a lot is interesting

Manuel Schilcher



Sketch for Omniscope Project

Photo: Leo Schatzl

"The function of memory is the protection of impressions, remembrance's aim is their decomposition. Memory is essentially conservative, remembrance is destructive. Consciousness originates instead of the trace of remembrance. Becoming conscious and leaving behind a trace of memory for the same system are incompatible with each other. Remnants of remembrance are often strongest and longest-lived when the occurrence which left them behind has never entered one's awareness." G. Deleuze

Franz Selbst

Digital and analog machine in no context

Suzanne Stephanac

After resuming her freelance writing career for three years, Stephanac returned to *Macworld* in the fall of 1994 in order to launch *Macworld Online*, a service that resides on the World Wide Web [<http://www.macworld.com>] and America Online [keyword: macworld]. As editor of *Macworld Online* she manages the content, technology, and, at least to date, the business sides of the new venture, relishing the chaos and potential inherent in such an endeavor. Stefanac is a faculty member with the Stanford Professional Publishing Course lecturing on web publishing.

Gordon W

As a fanatic ex-monk, performance interventionist and founding neoist, Gordon W is feared within Toronto's subculture. W's "One World Cuisine" is renowned in film production circles for extravagant catering. [W. Shatner: "Best catering I've ever had on the Enterprise. Simply out of this world." And Jerry Lewis on W's Jerry Lewis ersatz lamb made from gluten: "Your meat was so tender, it was a party in my mouth."] In his Berlin irritainment concourses, Gordon W would like to serve up a new version of the biodynamic cuisine taught by Rudolf Steiner.

Doris Weichselbaumer

So what is it about anyway?/Make it up as you go./Search [pathetic]. Confusion [always]./> What is YOUR reality ?/games [>fool yourself!]/NOT getting STUCK AT ALL the wrong places./Could you be serious ?—————/We all know better. But you knew that.

Jim Whiting

Jim Whiting's pneumatic mechanical installations illustrate the rudimentary physical properties of technology. His re-animated wash tubs, driving bedrooms, and roving over coats, represent the natural extension of the biomechanical world to the existing structural mechanical world. His self described muscle technology [a self constructed cylinder consisting of fire hose] parallels the human-like endeavors of his creations. As advancements in technology challenge the current relationship we have to machines, his work reminds us that we model technological achievements on our own human systems.

Kathrin Wilkes

Kathrin Wilkes work examines the adoption and subsequent creative abuse of technology and new media in the realm of machine, mixed media and performance art. Using documentation together with demonstration as a platform, she investigates the reimaging of industrial culture by various artists. By juxtaposing work in progress with elements drawn from everyday life, a retrospective view of our connection to technology emerges.

Liz Young

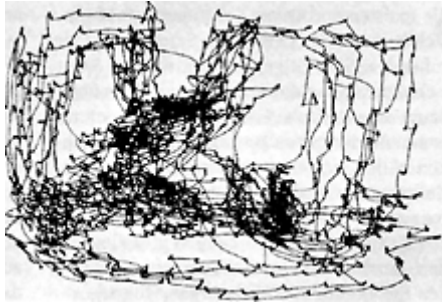


Within my work I transform the audiences' perception of the familiar and expected by altering the work to reflect a critical approach to our cultural paradigms. This transformation occurs with the use of materials and processes that are often contrary. Incongruity draws out the irony of the work and the elements of living are recontextualized to demonstrate the absurdity of modern day living. This cynical approach to the nature of our lives is however not without the recognition of the power of human dignity. Perhaps this attitude underscores the basic relationship we have to the comedic tragedies that are omnipresent in our lives.

Erwin Zepezauer

The apparatus as a time storage device concretizes moments snatched from the stream of time. Moments whose emergence into the foreground begins in one's head are projected outward in the picture or through it.

Berthold Zettelmeier



Surrounded by high-tech prostheses, the human being stands before his own body, its ways of functioning and its flaws. The further he searches, the clearer it becomes that an unknown is at the controls. Brain function processes are more complex than any AI. If the socially determinative parameters speed and information quantity are raised, however, speed and the compliance with it ignore the mind in favor of control by instinct. Stimulus reaction mechanisms appear, set up interfaces marking the borders of the will and serving as the basis for artistic creation.

Alex Zuljevic

Over and over again, we are stunned by the following lines from Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*: "The phases of human existence are not phases of happiness, the phases of happiness are like empty pages within it." Heinrich Himmler incisively formulated his idea of "final victory": "We have no more teachings to offer to the Untermenschen; all they need to know is one simple little lesson and the traffic signs so they can keep out of the way of our Mercedes'." All that remain for us is to resist any form of absolutism and to fight all those who would impose their will upon us, so that the tender coating of fertility never tears.

The project *Rückspiegel zur Realität* [Rearview towards Reality] is sponsored by BMWVK; O.OE. Kultur; Linz Kultur; V-A Stahl, ACE Auto & Scrap, S.F.

Photos from Norbert Artner, Tina Auer, Anita Gratzner, Manuel Schilcher, Bert Zettelmeier