co.in.cide—The Third Place

x-space | Heimo Ranzenbacher

co.in.cide formalizes the interrelationship of two "places" by means of a system of interaction that mediates between them—the "third place." Whenever the visualizations of visitors' bodies/movements coincide with those of their telematic counterparts, they can open up a channel of verbal communication and establish eye contact. Only those who behave according to the conditions of the "third place" can reach that goal. When congruity is attained, the full image of the particular user's counterpart appears and replaces (assumes the place of) that user's own reflection. Saving and storing the images of the protagonists along with their voices concludes the process. The automatic upload of the file sets up an additional "place" in the Internet *(http://residence.aec.at/ coincide)* made up of visual and acoustic evidence (tracks + traces) of the interaction. The idea of the third place—the concept of decisive importance for *co.in.cide*—posits that the relationship that two places establish between themselves (or in which they are placed) creates for these places, even independently of the actual reference, binding conditions for the respective actions and activities carried out "on site."

Despite the effects of globalization teaching us something that is quite the contrary nearly every day, there are still many who cling to the habit of, for example, regarding one's place of residence as the center*point* of one's life. In doing so, we are presumably being taken in by the illusion of a close-up image, by the proximity of mere topography (topographical illusions). From this intimate relationship, (politically formative) on-site actions and activities are derived. (The greater the supposed sovereignty of a place, the more pronounced its tendency to derive from this illusion of concreteness the mandate and the modes of treating that place.)

Nevertheless, places tend to behave in a way that is contrary to the traditional demands placed on them. Commuters, for example, are only a consequence of this tendency. If

one takes three steps back and imagines the routes of commuters as a form that shapes the *image* of a cityscape, the way one imagines the center*point* of one's life also changes. Aspects that had previously been left out of consideration emerge: relationships, relations to other *points*. The image of the place "radiates" forth …

If a place establishes a relationship to another place via commuters, then this circumstance produces, among other effects—for example, due to municipal expenses and revenues, increased traffic flows, etc.—the "third" place in relation to these two places. It emerges "on site" as a result of certain types of actions or activities having to do with anything from political policymaking to topography. (If, for example, the problem of increasing traffic is solved with a traffic circle or an express bypass, then this can, in turn, have an impact on businesses that are dependent upon high traffic on the old street, etc.) With respect to the cityscape, for example, if the actions or activities were oriented on a particular place's striking cityscape, then this would only be based on appearances. A place is always theory as well—something the faculty of sight might be blind to.

The third place is, to a certain extent, the power at work behind its concrete manifestations, a virtuality that is fed by reality/realities and that, in turn, feeds back on reality to realize itself. The place turns out to be a theoretical (topological) object. Art traditionally operates as it were from the state into which the theorization of things successively leads. The way in which images that make a strong impression on our conceptions of things come about says, as a rule, much more about their content than the pictures themselves. Art is directly addressed here: not as the producer of images (which it basically never was) but rather in its traditional role of focusing attention upon the non-visible aspects of what it shows, and from which what is visible draws its meaning. And this is the reason why the so often evoked school of seeing in art is also a school of political action. Not seeing what is visible but rather recognizing the forces that become visible is the basis of its aesthetic.

Places are communities, people, ideas, projects …

<div align="right">Translated from the German by Mel Greenwald</div>

The programmatic context of *co.in.cide* is *Liquid Music (http://www.liquid-music.org),* a project that has been manifesting itself since 1998 primarily in the form of a small annual festival in the City of Judenburg (in the Austrian Province of Styria, *http://www.judenburg.at).* Just as the city is an integral part of *Liquid Music,* artistic contributions are integral parts of the project. In response to an invitation from Graz 2003 – Cultural Capital of Europe, *co.in.cide* was developed further as Judenburg's contribution to the STADT_LAND_KUNST (City_Province_Art) program being presented as part of the Graz 2003 festivities. The considerations with respect to the significance of Graz as European cultural capital and Judenburg, which has established an artistic relationship with Graz, have gone into the formulation of "The Third Place" as the theme of *Liquid Music 2003.*

A *Liquid Music* project for Graz 2003—Cultural Capital of Europe in conjunction with STADT_LAND_KUNST. Realized at the Ars Electronica Futurelab, Linz.
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