Access

Public

public-access.org.uk

Public Access

The first 'Speed Show' in London,
for one night only.

Tuesday 12 June 2012
4.30 – 9.00pm

Living Space Internet Café
1 Coral Street
London SE1 7BE

Artists

Natalie Bookchin
Double Happiness
Parker Ito
Geraldine Juarez
Kristin Lucas
Caleb Larsen
Eduardo Navas
Jon Rafman
Gustavo Romano
River of the Net
Brad Troemel and Jonathan Vingiano

Contributors

Kenneth Goldsmith
Marialaura Ghidini
Marc Garrett

Curators

Rachel Falconer
Ruth Hogan
Augustina Matuseviciute
Youna Shin

Introduction

Public Access is an exhibition of Internet-based works by a group of artists originating from the Americas. The exhibition is presented as a 'Speed Show', which has become a popular exhibition format in the US, but is the first of its kind in the UK. Conceived by artist Aram Bartholl in 2010, a speed show entails creating a gallery private view for browser based Internet art in a public cyber-café for one night. The exhibition format is free and can be applied by anyone, anywhere, any time.

Public Access presents a selection of works by Internet artists who address the nature of public participation and relational platforms. Since the advent of social networking, Internet art has occupied a critical position between mass media and social movements, exposing their impact on human behaviour in the public sphere. In an age of increasing dependence on both human and corporate online presence, nearly every online activity is exploited by Web 2.0 software. The spontaneous nature and dynamic context of the 'Speed Show' situates Internet art at its most vibrant in the act of dialogue, connection and exchange.

In keeping with the networked modes of distribution, *Public Access* takes over Living Space; a pioneering social enterprise Internet café in Waterloo that has been offering low-cost Internet access to the local community since 2003. This pop-up exhibition is located in the natural habitat of Internet art as opposed to enclosing it in the traditional gallery environment. Simultaneously the location highlights the fact that the Internet café, once hailed as a utopian blueprint for social hubs, may soon become an obsolete model due to more widespread availability of Wi-Fi via mobile technologies.

An exhibition catalogue will be available to download from the *Public Access* website from 12 June 2012, with written contributions from Marc Garrett, Kenneth Goldsmith and Marialaura Ghidini.

Works

List of Works on Monitors

Terminal 1
Eduardo Navas
Minima Moralia Redux (2011 –)
www.minimamoraliaredux.blogspot.com/p/
public-access-exhibit.html

Terminal 2 & 13
River of the Net (2010 –)
www.riverofthe.net

Terminal 3
Geraldine Juarez
HFH: High Frequency Horizons (2012)
www.thingiverse.com/thing:23628

Terminals 4, 5, 6
Natalie Bookchin
Testament (2009)
www.bookchin.net

Terminal 7
Gustavo Romano
The IP Poetry Project (2006)
www.gustavoromano.org

Terminal 8 & 14
Brad Troemel & Jonathan Vingiano
Blind Mist (2011 –)
www.blindmist.com

Terminal 9
Double Happiness
Untitled (2012)
www.doublehappiness.ilikenicethings.com/
london

Terminal 10
Caleb Larsen
A Tool to Deceive and Slaughter (2009)
www.caleblarsen.com

Terminal 11
Jon Rafman
You, the World and I (2010)
www.jonrafman.com

Terminal 12
Kristin Lucas
Everyone Loves My Cocoa Krispies
(2010)
www.kristinlucas.com

List of Works on Projection Screen

Parker Ito
Frozen-Saxophone (2) (2012)
33:57 mins

Natalie Bookchin
Mass Ornament (2006)
7:11 mins

Kristin Lucas
Refresh (Re-enactment) (2012)

For *Public Access,* this performance will
be re-enacted live with the participation of
the audience, a performance artist and the
artist via a Skype conversation at 7.30 pm.

Artists

Eduardo Navas (USA/Salvador)

Eduardo Navas researches the crossover of art, culture, and media. His production includes art and media projects, critical texts and curatorial projects.

Minima Moralia Redux (2011–ongoing) is a selective remix by Eduardo Navas of Theodor Adorno's *Minima Moralia*. Starting on October 16, 2011, an entry every one to two weeks is to be rewritten until the 153 aphorisms of *Minima Moralia* become part of the online art project. This means that *Minima Moralia Redux* will be active for at least three years, perhaps longer.

Theodor Adorno's aphorisms are carefully analysed and reinterpreted in order to explore the principles of selectivity in remixing, often found in music and video. Selectivity in remixes consists of adding to or subtracting material from a pre-existing source. A visualization of the original text is at the top of each entry; a thumbnail image of the same text is available at the bottom of the page along with a visualization of the remixed text; these images give users an idea of how the remixed text is derived from the original. In this fashion, Adorno's aphorisms are rewritten to make evident how his voice is still relevant in our time of networked media. www.minimamoraliaredux.blogspot.com/p/public-access-exhibit.html

Jon Rafman (USA)

Jon Rafman is an artist, filmmaker and essayist who lives and works in Montreal, Canada. He holds a BA in Philosophy and Literature from McGill University and a MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

His films and new media work have been exhibited in various group exhibitions such as 15th Slamdance Film Festival, Utah, 'Repair' Ars Electronica Festival, Linz, 'Fotographia Festival Internazionale di Roma' at Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome and New Museum, New York.

You, the World and I (2010) is a romantic narrative in the form of a visual essay, collated from selected imagery found on the Internet and Google Street View. The story addresses Google Street View software as a melancholic device, which contains the imagery of the Earth. As tenuous storage for images that contain sensitive information, Google Street View not only empowers through its open access, but also induces melancholia. It promotes unprecedented interaction with the world, yet when it comes to emotional connection, true memories prove irreplaceable. This short film tells a story through the detached gaze of a satellite image or an automatic Street View camera, which speaks of human consciousness whose ability to seek connectedness and meaning has already been compromised. www.jonrafman.com

Parker Ito (USA)

Parker Ito is an Internet based artist. He has created works under various pseudonyms such as Deke McClelland Two and Olivia Calix, as well as working collaboratively with JstChillin.org. His practice focuses on the distribution and realization of objects and user identity through networked cultures.

Frozen-Saxophone (2) (2012) is a work made in collaboration with the artists Body by Body (Melissa Sachs and Cameron Soren).

The imagery of *Frozen Saxophone (2)* alludes to 'saxing', a popular Internet meme in which users record saxophone solos over pre-existing songs, thus creating a new song. There are no rules in length, genre or mood one can sax. The only thing that is required is a saxophone and loads of sensual passion. The film is a collection of users engaging with this meme.

'Can counterculture still exist? What does it mean when countercultural figures (historical or otherwise) are ripped out of their context… where it becomes possible for 50s Americana to simultaneously co-exist with Japanese tentacle rape, Victorian-era fetishism, and Industrial Revolution speculative fiction.
The soundtrack to this scorched earth is provided by the Pitchfork media behemoth, a satellite hydra transposing one of its many insidious micro-genres over the terrain like a second skin… Our subconscious desires filtered through image aggregators, converted into algorithms and passed like currency

through the mind-hands of digital pimp-engineers and distant GUI slaves in India'.

www.parkerito.com

Double Happiness (USA)

Double Happiness is an Internet surf club whose members are Bennett Williamson, Borna Sammak, Jeff Sisson and Eric Laska. Bennett Williamson is a Los Angeles based artist and DJ whose work has been shown in New York, London, and Berlin, and has had a radio show on WFMU. Jeff Sisson and Borna Sammak are both New York based artists. Eric Laska is a New York based artist working with sound and digital media.

Untitled (2012) was specially commissioned for *Public Access*. The new work addresses Internet user behaviour patterns.

'This is the *Double Happiness* version of an infinite scroll, but one that is truly infinite, and should you scroll really far it will break your browser before you're able to see the end (which was another common side effect of viewing the original double happiness surf site). Instead of showing you new things it just adds the next thing on top and then stretches each image as you scroll, with an appropriately stretched soundtrack… With the advent of blogs and particularly Tumblr with it's 'infinite scroll' function, in ways it feels like scrolling is the only action left on the Internet, the only verb. So in *Double Happiness* style we're playing with that convention, that expectation'.

www.doublehappiness.ilikenicethings.com

Geraldine Juarez (Mexico)

Geraldine Juarez makes work that attempts to understand the spaces that emerge when property, the Internet and power collide, with an interest in piracy, open technologies and economies. She is member of the Free Art and Technology Lab (FATLAB), has been a resident artist at inCUBATE in Chicago, Timelab in Belgium and JA.Ca in Brazil and was one of the recipients of the Makers Muse Award in 2011. Her work has been shown internationally in group exhibitions such as 'Interference, Feedback and Other Options' at Eyebeam, New York; 'Los Impolíticos' at Palazzo delle Arti Napoli; 'Secret Project Robot', New York and 'State of the Art: New York at URBIS Manchester among others.

HFH: High Frequency Horizons (2012) was specially commissioned for *Public Access. HFH: High Frequency Horizons* is a series of designs for 3D prints of 'Flash Crashes', which occurred on the financial stock market. In fashioning these 3D print designs of networked financial reporting systems, Juarez presents the viewer with an alternative fiscal archive.

www.thingiverse.com/thing:23628

River of the Net (USA)

River of the Net (2010) was a project conceived by David Karp (founder of Tumblr) and Ryan Trecartin, a collaboration initiated by the Rhizome conference 'Seven on Seven' held at the New Museum, New York in 2010.

River of the Net is a crowd-sourced video project utilising live user-generated film. The website collates a continuous stream of ten-second videos uploaded by users, which are sequenced and tagged by the user using a maximum of three terms. These terms are then collected at the bottom of the site's home page forming an ever-expanding list. *River of the Net* incorporates the image collation of Tumblr and the associative arrangement of YouTube videos, which proposes a credible future for user-dictated social media engines and resembles a human stream of consciousness.

www.riverofthe.net

Natalie Bookchin (USA)

Natalie Bookchin's videos and installations explore new forms of documentary, addressing conditions of mass connectivity and isolation and exploring the stories we are telling about the world and ourselves.
Her work has been exhibited widely including at LACMA, PS1, Mass MOCA, the Generali Foundation, the Walker Art Center, the Pompidou Centre, MOCA Los Angeles, the Whitney Museum, Tate, and Creative Time. She has received numerous grants and awards, including from Creative Capital, California Arts Council, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Durfee Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, California Community Foundation, New York State Council for the Arts, Daniel Langlois Foundation, a COLA Artist Fellowship and most recently, two awards from The Center for Cultural Innovation.

Mass Ornament (2006) is a video installation in which hundreds of clips of people dancing alone in their rooms is edited together, creating a large dance with waves of synchronized movement. The dance recalls historical representations of synchronized mass movements of bodies in formations.

Testament (2009) is an ongoing series of video installations made from fragments from online video diaries, or 'vlogs' that explores contemporary expressions of self and the stories we currently tell online about our lives and our circumstances.

www.bookchin.net

Caleb Larsen (USA)

Caleb Larsen's conceptual practice takes its form through sculpture, print, drawing and computer programming. He situates his practice 'at the intersection of material culture and immaterial data-space'. His work deals with the notion of the artwork as commodity; in particular, the economic workings of art world institutions and how immaterial labour and the act of exchange can be viewed as a commodity. He has exhibited in numerous exhibitions such as Ars Combinatoria in Orlando, the Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, Detroit International Video Festival, Flux Factory in New York, 911 Media Arts Center in Seattle, and Tjaden Gallery at Cornell University.

A Tool to Deceive and Slaughter (2009) exists in two parts – as a physical sculpture as an eight-inch, high gloss acrylic black box and as an immaterial presence in the virtual realm. Through electronics, software and a live Internet connection, the sculpture continually places itself for sale on the auction website ebay.com. For the work to exist, it must be connected to the Internet, which means that it is perpetually for

sale. The terms and conditions of the sale of the work stipulate that the work, once in the possession of the current owner, must be connected to the Internet in order to continue the cycle of commodification.

For *Public Access*, the live Ebay auction will show the physical sculpture for sale in situ in the group exhibition, 'Yes, We're Open' at the Nederlands Instituut voor Mediakunst (NIMK), Amsterdam.
www.caleblarsen.com

Gustavo Romano (Argentina)

Gustavo Romano is an artist who works in a variety of media including actions, net art, video, installations and photography. He uses media and technological devices as well as domestic objects in an effort to decontextualize them and reconsider our daily routines and preconceptions. He is the director of PSYCHOECONOMY!, an artistic platform for research towards alternative resolutions to global issues. He was the director of Medialab Cultural Centre of Spain, Buenos Aires from 2004–08 and received the Guggenheim Fellowship in 2006.

The IP Poetry Project (2006) involves the development of a software and hardware system that uses text from the Internet to generate poetry that is then recited by automatons connected to the web. The different search instructions and the recital mode and sequence dictate the structure and form of each IP poem. The search results are sent to the automatons (IP Bots), which convert the search results into pre-recorded sounds and images of a moving human mouth.
www.gustavoromano.org

Brad Troemel and Jonathan Vingiano (USA)

Brad Troemel is an artist and writer living in New York. His work focuses on the liberatory potential for the Internet to serve as an alternative exhibition space to institutions dominated by the art market. He is currently an MFA candidate and adjunct professor at NYU. Troemel has exhibited internationally and his writing has been featured in publications such as Rhizome and Art Fag City.

Jonathan Vingiano is a creative technologist based in Brooklyn, New York. Vingiano is interested in the intersection of art and technology, memetics, programming language, and digital aesthetics. He graduated from Emerson College in Boston, MA with a degree in Experimental Media. He runs OKFocus, a design and technology studio and recently completed a project for JstChillin's 'Serial Chillers in Paradise'.

Blindmist (2011–ongoing)
Blind Mist is a system of images, generated by URLs of websites provided by visitors. Blind Mist is constantly sourcing images from the user-submitted URLs to add images to the system. There are over 300,000 images in the system and no two visitors will share the same experience. Blind Mist debuted on March 17, 2011 at 319 Scholes Gallery in 'Read/Write', curated by JstChillin. Blind Mist won a Rhizome Commission as part of the 2011 commission cycle.
www.blindmist.com

Kristin Lucas (USA)

Kristin Lucas is a multi-disciplinary artist working in video, installation, performance and interactive Web projects. She has had numerous solo exhibitions such as Postmasters Gallery, New York; And/Or Gallery, Dallas; Windows, Brussels, Belgium; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; O.K. Center for Contemporary Arts, Linz, Austria; and FACT (Foundation for Art & Creative Technology), Liverpool, England, among others. Her work was included in the 1997 Biennial Exhibition of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and in group exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, Artists Space, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York; The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri; steirischer herbst 9, Graz, Austria; the 7e Semaine Internationale de Video, Geneva, Switzerland; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Dunedin Public Gallery, New Zealand, among others, and at festivals in Mexico City, Montreal, New York and San Francisco. In 2003, she received an Urban Visionaries Award for Emerging Talent from the Cooper Union.

'I am creating a discourse within which to elucidate my relationship toward the electronic dream. I unravel the complexity of this relationship by setting up virtual interactions with mediated devices, such as automated tellers, public access television, computer games, and the World Wide Web.'

Refresh (2007)
On October 5, 2007 Lucas became the most current version of herself when she succeeded in legally changing her name from Kristin Sue Lucas to Kristin Sue Lucas in a Superior Court of California courtroom. On the name change petition that she submitted, she wrote: 'Refresh', as the reason for the change. After a philosophical debate on perception of change, and two hearing dates, the presiding judge who granted the request said: 'So you have changed your name to exactly what it was before in the spirit of refreshing yourself as though you were a web page.'

For *Public Access,* this performance will be re-enacted live with the participation of the audience and the artist via a Skype conversation at 7.30 pm.

Everyone Loves My Cocoa Krispies (2010) In *Everyone Loves My Cocoa Krispies*, Lucas recites past and present marketing slogans and taglines culled from the web to a soundtrack of royalty-free beats. Using her own vocal chords, and a contemporary self-broadcasting method, she re-transmits phrases that continue to give shape to the culture that informs her consciousness and identity – resulting in critical, humorous, hypnotic, programmatic, and nostalgic delivery.
www.kristinlucas.com

Contributors

Kenneth Goldsmith

Kenneth Goldsmith is the author of ten books of poetry; founding editor of the online archive UbuWeb, and editor of 'I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews'. From 1996 to 2009, Goldsmith was the host of a weekly radio show on New York City's WFMU. He teaches writing at The University of Pennsylvania, where he is a senior editor of PennSound, an online poetry archive. He held the Anschutz Distinguished Fellow Professorship in American Studies at Princeton University for 2009-10 and received the Qwartz Electronic Music Award in Paris in 2009. In 2011, he co-edited, 'Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing' and published a book essays, 'Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age'. Goldsmith will participate in dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, Germany, 2012.

Marialaura Ghidini

Marialaura Ghidini is a curator, researcher and writer based in the UK. She is founder and director of the web-based curatorial platform www.or-bits.com, a project devoted to promoting practices and dialogues across and beyond media and exploring the creative and critical possibilities of the web as a language, medium and subject. She is currently a PhD researcher with CRUMB (Curatorial Resource for Upstart Media Bliss), a research unit into curating new media art, at the University of Sunderland, researching in the field of online curating with a specific interest in the theory and practice of artistic and curatorial work operating between the online and offline dimensions. She is co-curator at Grand Union, Birmingham, for which she has organised the residency programme 'Search Engine' and a series of collaborative exhibitions and sound performances.
www.or-bits.com

Marc Garrett

Marc Garrett is co-director and co-founder of the Internet arts collectives – Furtherfield.org, Furthernoise.org, and Netbehaviour.org. He is also the co-founder and co-director of Furtherfield Gallery, London. He is co-editor of 'Artists Re:Thinking Games' and hosts Furtherfield's critically acclaimed weekly broadcasts on UK's Resonance FM Radio.

The Digital Flood: You'd Better Start Swimmin' or You'll Sink Like A Stone

Kenneth Goldsmith

Stephen Burt is drowning in the digital deluge. He's up to his eyeballs in information and he can't take it anymore. It's just too much. Too many blogs, too many Facebook pages, too much discussion, too many Tweets: 'I'm sorry,' he says. 'I just can't do it. I don't have the energy. Maybe I never did.' Burt's complaint is a common one; after all, who hasn't felt that way? But instead of bemoaning what is inevitable, many poets are seeing this condition as an opening, a celebration, a new linguistic terrain, raw materials out of which they're mining an entirely new literature. While it's not the only response to the digital age (Robert Archambeau, has posited that 'crawling into a cave and trying to write runic poetry on stones, if one did it now, would be a response to our times'), I will claim, once again, that it is the most relevant, contemporary, and engaged response.

These new writers are language hoarders; their projects are epic, mirroring the gargantuan scale of textuality on the Internet. While the works often take an electronic form, there is often a paper version that is circulated in journals and zines, purchased by libraries, and received by, written about, and studied by readers of poetry. While this new writing has an electronic gleam in its eyes, its results are distinctly analog, taking inspiration from radical modernist ideas and juicing them with twenty-first century technology. This ain't E-poetry or Net Art: this is all about a basic change in the ways in which we use language. We will never write the same way again.

Over the past five years we have seen works such as Simon Morris's retyping of Jack Kerouac's On the Road in its entirety, a page a day, every day, on a blog for a year; Robert Fitterman's list poems that are often nothing more than reframing listings of stores from a shopping mall directory into a poetic form; an impoverished writer, Matthew Timmons, who has taken every credit card application sent to him and bound them into eight-hundred-page print-on-demand so costly that even he can't afford a copy; Craig Dworkin's parsing of the text of an entire nineteenth-century book on grammar according to its own methods, even down to the book's index; A lawyer, Vanessa Place, who re-presents the legal briefs of her day job as poetry in their entirety without changing a word; Caroline Bergvall, who spent days at the British Library copying down the first verse of Dante's Inferno from every English translation that the library possesses, one after another, page after page, until she exhausts the library's supply; Darren Wershler and Bill Kennedy, who have built a spider to scoop status updates off social networking sites and assigns them to names of deceased writers ('Jonathan Swift has got tix to the Wranglers game tonight'), creating an epic, never-ending work of poetry that rewrites itself as frequently as Facebook pages are updated; Christian Bök, who ran PERL scripts through millions of sequences in order write a poem encoded into a strand of DNA; Chris Alexander, who has constructed a book-length poem by harvesting online references to Kung-Fu Panda; and my own appropriation of the complete text of a day's copy of the New York Times published as a nine-hundred-page book. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Yet while Burt has been fretting about this condition, entire movements celebrating information overload have already come and gone. Flarf was one of them (co-founder Nada Gordon recently proclaimed the movement dead), which was based on grabbing the worst of Google search results: the more offensive, the more ridiculous, the more outrageous, the better. The Flarf Collective was active for over a decade.

In the face of this information torrential downpour, there's at least one corner where Burt feels he's safe: 'I think I can keep up with books, more or less, which are countable, finite sets of things (especially since they do come in the mail).' Think again. There's a ten-year old phenomenon called Lulu, that blows away the idea of paperbound finitude. Lulu allows any writer to publish as many books as they want as print on demand. Tan Lin has used Lulu to spawn dozens of remixes of his Seven Controlled Vocabularies, all in paper. Each week, I get dozens of books in the post of re-appropriated texts, from god knows where. My snail mailbox is stuffed with more books than it was a decade ago.

Vanessa Place has taken Lulu to an even more extreme level. She's created what she calls The Factory Series, which she describes as 'A series of chapbooks 'by Vanessa Place' whose content has been dictated by other artists/writers, who, in turn, have appropriated content from other artists/writers. Production is overseen by a

writer's assistant. The chapbooks are published as print on demand, and are uniform in appearance. No longer unique, no longer limited in edition, no longer touched by the authorial hand, bearing no necessary relationship to the writings of Vanessa Place, the Factory series simply preserves the place of poetry.' Thus far, 'Vanessa Place' has 'authored' paper books of the works of Andy Warhol, Charles Reznikoff, Herman Melville, Eileen Myles, William Carlos Williams, Aram Saroyan, Gertrude Stein and dozens of others are in the works.

While once easy to dismiss as yet another case of Goldsmith's theoretical pranksterism, this writing has become as prevalent as the flood of data it is mining. And it's only getting worse. The tide is rising: accept it that soon you'll be drenched to the bone. You've got a couple of tough decades ahead of you, Stephen Burt.

Posted in Criticism, Group Blog on Sunday, April 24th, 2011 by Kenneth Goldsmith.

New Forms for Old Places and Other Ways of Looking
Passé hardware and altered gazes
Marialaura Ghidini

It's quite common these days to come across online articles about one's *browsing experience*[1]; how to enhance web surfing activities, be emancipated from the social restrictions dictated by walls, such as those of an office, but also – and this is a very recent corporate-induced desideratum – how to be liberated from the encumbrance of *passé hardware*.

To give an example, if all our data can be stored in a *cloud* – and the name itself is revealing in that it contradicts the substantial presence of internet cables running along the sea-floor, as well as the solidity of buildings housing web servers, what we are indirectly induced to do is to *minimize* the amount of our hardware possessions. In fact, according to this logic, they should total in a smart phone synced with a laptop/desktop computer, and ideally a tablet. All this, I'd like to emphasize, being transportable, carry-able in a small bag and often pocket-friendly. All this, pointing to the fact that hardware is physical, thus heavy and so, inconvenient.

This could be seen as the epitome of Sony's past endeavours to combine communication technology, information and entertainment with portability, from the Walkman after the transistor radio to the smart phone, in just about 20 years and with the latter encompassing all media in one device.

Fig. 1

Considering the above, the question which occurs to me is: what has happened, socially speaking and in terms of access, between our current portable browsing experience and earlier public accesses to the realm of the internet? And with that earlier, I am referring to the environment of the Internet café; that semi-public place which enabled the encounter between a person and the internet by means of entering it and buying time slots.

Apparently[2], the first internet café was founded by Wayne Gregori in San Francisco in 1991 and was called *SFnet Coffeehouse Network*. From there, from the land of the then counterculture techno-utopianism of *Californian Ideology*, it sprang what might be termed as the internet cafés phenomenon, with multiplying shops which allowed public access to information on the internet for a small hourly fee. These environments were a mixture of sociality, in the form of available hot drinks and snacks in a coffee shop-like setting – but more often, especially in Europe, in an office-like one – and utopian dreams of interconnectedness with the whole world from one's seat. And in this, internet cafés held a real social function.

However, these spaces for public browsing have become an image of that which has now gone; they are old places that have increasingly disappeared, closed down at their own owners' will or at that of the authorities[3].

The very same place hosting this pop-up exhibition, *Living Space*, was once temporarily closed down. Established as a social enterprise cafe, *Living Space*, through combining various services for young people along with free internet access to over 50s and unemployed, has taken the model of the internet shop as a sociable space for web surfing to that of a socially engaged activity. Despite this, in October 2010 Lambeth Council decided to terminate its internet services in order to 'meet

1
I will not name names as it is sufficient to input the two terms in a search engine to obtain a long list of references, often related to creative digital agencies.

2
The following information was sourced from Wikipedia on 1st May 2012; at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_caf%C3%A9

3
Looking at the other side of the coin, internet cafés have been increasingly associated with the image of places providing cover for illegal activities.

4

'Lambeth Council shuts down Waterloo social enterprise café' by London SE1 website team, Wednesday 6 October 2010; available at http://www.london-se1.co.uk/news/view/4859

5

Several Italian cities provide free Wi-Fi hotspots to their residents, see Free Italia Wi-Fi website at http://fiwen.provincia.roma.it/whats-free-italiawifi

reductions in Government funding' so that it could 'save [*other*] critical services' [4]. The internet facility is now fully operating since early 2011 but its discontinuation is indicative of the uncertain role that *Living Space* holds (and will have) in the social life of the borough of Lambeth. The internet café as a place unmethodically adorned with old computer machines, screens of all sizes and shades, various cables now and then tangled, wall clocks covering most of the world time zones as well as sets of instruction to *log-in onto the internet* are not very useful anymore. This is both because we are now all geared up with our portable computer and smart mobile devices, thus there is no need for providing hardware, and because Wi-Fi hotspots are spread across most of the cities of industrialised countries, from chain cafes to piazzas [5].

What has changed is the way we access the internet; we seem to fear walls inasmuch as we try to avoid fixity, there are new forms of browsing enabled by technological developments and marketing strategies, so that the way we relate to web content is altered, and so too are our gazes.

Fig. 2

On resuming old places and new artistic forms

The shift from fixity to mobility does not proclaim the death of the internet café, not yet, at least for its value as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The internet café is a place still surviving in our cities (even if with a mixed function, often between a pound shop and a money transfer service) and it has attracted the attention of artists concerned with what internet culture might be and mean nowadays. In fact, the internet café with its bulky and maybe outmoded equipment is somewhere at the origin of the process of alteration of our *browsing experience* and gazes.
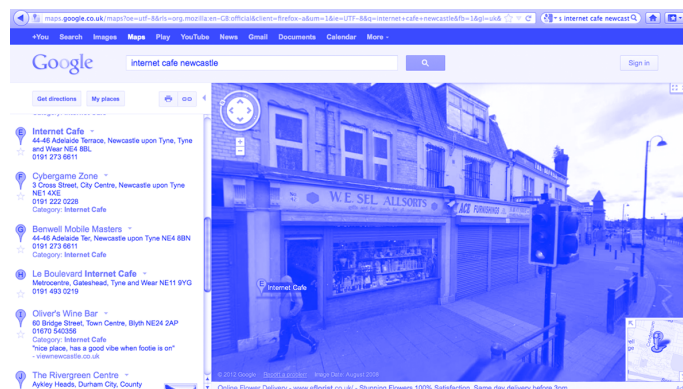

Fig. 3

6

Espenschied, D., and Lialina, O., 2009. *Digital Folklore Reader*. Stuttgart: merz & solitude.

7

For more information on this project, see Olia Lialina's research blog *Still There*, available at http://contemporary-home-computing.org/still-there/belhuizen.html

An example could be that of Olia Lialina, a pioneer net.artist whose work and research have a focus on the vernacular of the web or digital folklore (to use the title of her latest book) [6]. Lialina is currently working on a research project for which she is exploring Rotterdam's internet cafés with the aim of investigating 'the 'low forms' of digital culture in real life' [7] and, to me, she does so by also bringing the versatile

actuality of human exploration and scrutiny into the supposed fixity, or declining status, of these spaces.

There is a surging fascination with the materiality of the digital, or in Lialina's instance, with *the every-day of internet culture*, and the internet café has a role in this because of its being the social-hub from which the internet was firstly experienced as a public space by common users. After her many visits to various Dutch internet cafés, Lialina stated: 'these [*the internet cafés*] are the most joyful places I have ever seen, because you can see all the computers' [8]; you can see the hardware, which is what has operated as a mediating object between us and the internet, and thus the socio-cultural forms generating from and through it.

If there will be something interesting to emerge from seeing through the encumbrance of *passé hardware* it has yet to been seen. Maybe current *techno-minimalism* will overthrow the old, but it might also be that *passé hardware* holds significance in relation to the place that collects it, and for the social relationships the latter has made possible.

Similarly, artist Aram Bartholl, the creator of the *Speed Show*, has resumed these places for artistic purposes, *saving them* from their fate of disappearance. He has turned them into somewhat fashionable get togethers, perhaps also by stressing the fact that internet cafés are, or were, the natural habitat in which web content was experienced.

Till today [9] there has been 30 *Speed Shows* taking place from Berlin to Chicago and Ciudad de México, with titles ranging from *Your Browser is My Kingdom* to while loop is true and *ReadMe.txt*. Each of them adopted the same structural framework and followed the same set of instructions; but each instance was a unique variation of an 'exhibition format', which 'is free and can be applied by anyone, at any place'.

8
From the artist's presentation during the *Unstable and Vernacular: Vulgar and Trivial Articulations of Networked Communication* conference, Transmediale 2012, Berlin.

9
Information taken from list of shows listed on *The Speed Show* website on 3 June 2012 as for all the following quotes; available at http://speedshow.net/
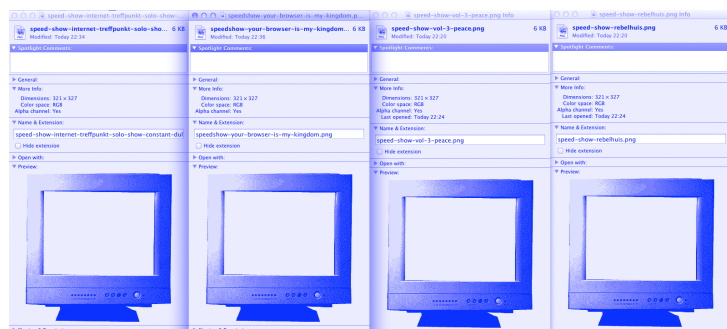

Fig. 4

Not exactly portable, the *Speed Show* could probably be defined as a mobile curatorial device; it has a loose and open conceptual framework based on 6 elementary rules [10] that migrates from site to site in the form of a pop-up event in an internet café. According to Bartholl, it is 'a gallery-like opening situation' for browser based art; according to me it is the enactment of an instruction-based curatorial format, which, with a touch of sharp irony, brings together the outmoded and the current state of our experience of and on the internet.

Rule 4 states the following:

Known issues: Some Internet shops have very old machines with outdated browsers or a slow internet connection. You might wanna have a back up plan for HD vimeo pieces and such. Each machine hosts one piece. Set it to homepage in the browser and tell everyone to hit home if they are not sure what they are looking at. Yes, people will surf away! (and check their FB) It makes sense to make a tour once in a while and hit home everywhere.

This highlights the complex relationship existing between the user/viewer and browser-based, or to be more inclusive, internet art, and the extent to which the support – the hardware – affects it.

At the core of the mobile curatorial device that is the *Speed Show* there is the audience, and the way in which they might relate to the digital work in the realm of internet art and the modes in which the work is conveyed. What seems to be central is

10
How to set up A SPEED SHOW set of instruction can be found on the project website at How to... http://speedshow.net/how-to/

that the audience might enter into a relationship with the space holding the exhibition, the internet café, for the duration of an event, with all the issues and unforeseeable possibilities related to this.

Spatio-temporal ways of looking

In an essay titled *From space to the gaze*[11], Marc Augé discusses social meaning in a way in which the object is seen as the mediating element between a space and the relationships between people within it. He then attempts to define the art object by referring to what Alain Badiou had previously written about a poem of Mallarmé: 'the poem is an operation, it is also an event. The poem takes place'. Augé, through aligning himself to Badiou, offers a method for looking at the significance and value of the work of art as something dependent to 'the public space where the object takes place'.

11
Augé, M., 2008. *From Space to the Gaze*. In Muntadas, A., 2008. On Translation: *The Audience*, ed. by Octavi Rofes, Muntadas and Witte de With. Rotterdam: Witte de With.

Fig. 5

There is probably nothing new in the above; anyone who has organised an exhibition, has had a work in an exhibition or has visited an exhibition, knows that the art object inescapably enters a set of relations with other works, becoming part of a series of spatial and conceptual vectors depending on the critical framework and the surrounding space.

But what seems interesting for the context of this text is that Augé's stress is not on abstract and theoretical relationships between objects, but on their relationship according to the ethnographer's point of view; a perspective for which 'contemporary art must also restore [– *along with 'the omnipresence of the image and history'* –] the place of the social relation at the origin and at the end of the work'.

And that which is at *the origin and at the end* of internet art, or art which is native of the internet, is somehow still to be explored from a broader perspective: a viewpoint which might include its physical materializations, in the form of exhibitions in actual places perhaps; its relationship with the support, the mediums via which we experience it; as well as its socio-cultural origins and manifestations.

Functions change to meet new needs and models as we might see by reflecting on the changes of our browsing behaviours, as well as their reasons and consequences. We have been told that it is through obsolescence that the possibilities of a medium can be stretched, bent and tested . But this seems to not be possible without adopting historical approaches and perspectives, or without embedding artistic objects, researches and phenomena into their social milieu

[...]he questioning of the real formulated by the artwork only has meaning if it is shared, if the work is an appeal to a witness, and therefore itself a social act and a social creation.

So this text wants to end with Augé to propose his ethnographic perspective as another way of looking; a way which takes into consideration the spaces and history of contemporary artistic phenomena, perhaps even if in the guise of an erratic chronicle.

Fig.1
Combination of found web images.
Clockwise: location_independence_laptop_outdoors from http://www.stevescottsite.com/work-anywhere-by-being-location-independent; Intel Team Inside Facebook Data Center published on Flickr by IntelFreePress, taken on January 18, 2012.

Fig.2
Combination of found web images.
Clockwise: Internet Cafe' published on Flickr by Michael Coghlan, taken on July 20, 2005 in Hoi An, Quang Nam, VN; Broadway malls, Jun 2008 – 062 published on Flickr by Ed Yourdon, taken on June 27, 2008 in West Side, New York, NY, US; Amsterdam EasyInternet internet cafe published on Flickr by redjar, taken on February 28, 2001; ehh-300-man-using-phone-istock-300w unknown source; 041124-patrick-martin published by Clay on July 5th, 2005 at http://boards.bootsnall.com/wondering-about-wireless-internet-while-driving-t27386.html.

Fig.3
Screenshot of GoogleMap search for internet cafe newcastle, taken in June 2012.

Fig.4
Screenshots of the image files of the various Speed Show exhibition.
Taken in June 2012 from the Speed Show website, http://speedshow.net/

Fig.5
The Internet Cafe at Stonelake Farm published on Flickr by davidsilver, taken on July 22, 2010.

The Future is Now
Marc Garrett

Instead of being held in a traditional art venue, *Public Access* is hosted at the 'Living Space Internet Café'. Surprisingly, it has taken two years for the *Speed Show* format to reach the UK and this is the first time. The format was originally termed and conceived by artist Aram Bartholl in June 2010. The concept is simple, you hire an Internet-cafe, rent all the computers and have a one-night show of your computer art with others. Another example of how artists are engaged in creating imaginative strategies for showing their work is, a project called BYOB (Bring Your Own Beamer) [1]. A group of artists get together for a series of one-night-exhibitions showing their art on their own projectors.

Public Access, a curatorial proposal written by Rachel Falconer, is an exhibition of artists originating from the Americas. Like BYOB's, the *Speed Show* format has become a flexible strategy for collectively or collaboratively getting Internet-based artworks presented. This process, quite naturally opens up numerous possibilities which can involve co-curation as well as offer a spontaneity whilst using an infrastructure already in place. Conceptually, this format works because it is shown in an environment closer to its roots being that material and content is Internet-based.

There is an important historical relationship between artists and Internet Cafés in the UK. Artist, writer and entrepreneur Ivan Pope, whom had previously worked at Goldsmiths' College Computer Centre in early 1993; was asked to curate an internet component for an arts symposium held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London. 'Inspired by reports of a cafe with bulletin board access in the US, he created a one weekend cybercafe in the ICA theatre, placing internet access Apple Macs on the café style tables and creating the first internet cafe as well as coining the word 'cybercafé' [2].' Soon after this Keith Teare, Dave Rowe, Gene Teare, Gené McPherson and Eva Pascoe founded Cyberia in London, September 1994. Internet Café's are now a dying breed. Yet, it is still regularly used by immigrants living in the UK contacting their families around the world.

Then there was Backspace [3]. Originally founded by a loose group of individuals who met in London between 94 and 95, which included artist Heath Bunting and techie and entrepreneur James Stevens. Backspace was a creative hive of activity and open for anyone who wished to be part of it. Along with James, about six or seven individuals during the period 96-99 shared a flexi-role of looking after the space, as well as supporting those who were just learning the technology. 'Over the first year, over 400 people took email addresses and used the space, we held web site launches, group meetings, film screenings, events, and mini conferences.' [4] (Stevens 98). It was an essential hub where contemporary artists met and collaborated with each other in making digital art projects, much of it was made for the Internet. Backspace was the birth place of various net art collectives and media art orgs such as Furtherfield. These pioneering individuals and groups inspired each other, and have inspired many others since. Backspace or spc.org continues as DECKSPACE in Greenwich, London, still actively incorporating forward thinking networked art projects, on-line and physically.

Before the Internet, artists usually complied to a set of rules which involved submitting and adapting not only their work but also altering their own values in order to be accepted into more established exhibiting formats and venues. The Internet has changed all this, with on-line art communities and peer 2 peer collaborations; more people (including curators) are viewing Internet artworks and sites as much as attending brick-and-mortar museums. Not only has the Internet changed the way everyday people view, experience and think about today's art practice; but artists, designers, engineers, curators, and theorists, have collectively opened a door that can never be closed.

Art culture is gradually adapting its focus and accepting media art in the form of hybrid exhibitions. Some presume this claiming of technology as only a contemporary factor, in reality, the context of mass inclusion has always brought about creative, evolutionary change. Education, learning new skills and control over one's means of thought and creation is a revolutionary act. It can create massive shifts in culture. One example is punk music and its socially aware (some of it unaware), Situationist influenced antics, in the late 70's and early 80s. It advocated that anyone could be different, be independent thinkers, and question the validity of the established hegemony. This flexible blueprint of being critical in an imaginative way influenced a

1
BYOB. A series of exhibitions hosting artists and their projectors. http://www.byobworldwide.com/

2
Invention of the Cybercafe. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_Pope#Invention_of_the_Cybercafe

3
Backspace. http://bak.spc.org

4
James Stevens Interview with Matt Fuller. 19 Aug 1998 Nettime. http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-9808/msg00049.html

huge mixture of genres for years to come. Breaking down the borders between the audience and the musicians playing on stage. It was a legacy that not only gave us great music but included ideas and actions around building your own record labels, setting up your own pirate radio stations, self publishing and other ventures. The Internet has given us a similar ground-breaking, cultural shift to exploit.

Public Access is a meeting of two generations. Natalie Bookchin, Eduardo Navas and Gustavo Romano, before the emergence of Web 2.0 with many other independent minded individuals and collectives, forged their (respected histories and) own paths using the Internet as a central theme and practice. They looked at what was inside the computer, behind the interface, studied and made projects and artworks with the actual code and understood the profound meaning of what networks actually mean, aesthetically, socially, technically and culturally.

With the inclusion of artists Double Happiness, Parker Ito, Geraldine Juarez, Caleb Larsen, Kristin Lucas, Jon Rafman, River of the Net, Brad Troemel and Jonathan Vingiano; this meeting of two generations offers us a glimpse of a possible future. In an age where the 'New' is rabidly hyped via consumer babble and neo-liberal agendas. This exhibition presents to us a combination of necessary factors, an ad-hoc, cultural remix. Here we learn through practice and experience that if you claim control of the means of communication, it then becomes part of the creative production. This is a positive message. The 'Now', the 'Past', the 'Future', is all here at once, this is our legacy, perpetually and forever ours to change at will.

Credits

Curated by Rachel Falconer, Ruth Hogan, Augustina Matuseviciute and Youna Shin, a group of MA students from the Curating Contemporary Art programme at the Royal College of Art.

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Monique Beudert Fund

The Monique Beudert (1950–1999) was a gifted curator who worked for eleven years at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and five years at Tate, London. She was widely respected as a curator who had a special sympathy for artists and an exceptional ability to present contemporary artworks in a museum context.

The Monique Beudert Fund was set up by a group of friends in her memory. Each year since 2001, the Fund has given curating students at the Royal College of Art, London and Bard College, New York the opportunity to realise projects with artists from the other side of the Atlantic. This brief has enabled curatorial experimentation in the realization of small-scale projects and the exchange of ideas between Europe and the Americas. The Monique Beudert Fund provides financial support to the Curating Contemporary Art Department each year to work on a suitable small project. The brief is to research the work of an artist or artists from the Americas and to find an appropriate means of presenting that work publicly.

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