Interview with Agricola de cologne
By Jeremy Hight (binary catwalks)

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En[code] ed
an interview with Agricola de Cologne
by Jeremy Hight (July 2005)

1. who are your influences?

Most influence had my parents because they always encouraged me to become and to be an
artist. For me as a very reflecting person already from a child, it was actually my experiences in
life, forcing me to find during all the years continuously new survival strategies ,
which caused reflecting and the need to transform the results or processes of reflecting
into actions or documents of art.
My kind of working, respectively the way of representing is strongly influenced by certain
naturally born characteristics of mine, i.e. to express myself via a metaphorical language, which turns
situations, things, persons etc into symbols of a specific meaning and "encodes" them this way,
resulting a kind of allegorical representation like its principle is also known from 15-17th century
art.
In contrary to this old art, which was based on a clearly defined and fixed pictorial language and
terminology, my pictorial language is in its actual sense no language, because it uses metaphors
which have a specific meaning only in a specific, but beyond that, in no other work or context,
Each work is individually "encoded", and for each work the viewer has to find the proper
"code" for being able to decipher, decode, interpret and follow the course of the narrative.
This type of allegorical representation is used in my work "En [code]ed", for instance.

2. What about new media tools draws to utilize them in your work?

In first place, I use exclusively digital computer based components.
Everything belongs to New Media from its substance, but I use actually only a few tools
as the type of components are also only few.
My computer is a PC, minDV and a digital photo camera deliver the digital image & video
material, and for the rest I use specific software, basically **Adobe Photoshop** for image
processing, **Adobe Premiere** for video processing, the sound processing uses **Soundforge**
software, and for animation, the general project development and the integration and
composition of different media I use the **Flash** software environment. The use of Flash has
in the case of "En [code] ed" a very special meaning, as it allows to program the work in
a non-linear way. This special "encoding" has not only particular relevance in concern of
the general conception of the work, but basically also of optimizing it for the online
presence and streaming.

3. What layers of correlation do you see between "code" and
data, programming, social structures, language and narrative?

Firstly, can be stated that the mentioned terms can be defined as "code based", in so far
the correlation is generally given, further starting with "data"- and ending with
"narrative" there is a line from the "objective" to the "subjective", which may give also
an idea of the general problem of "code", as there is not one single universal code which
would serve as a key for the understanding of anything being.
The digital code can be generally defined as "objective" code, as the coding, encoding and
decoding are exactly defined.

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It is more difficult to face "code" in the analogue field, as it is mostly less obvious.
The type of code as it can be found in "social structures" is principally different from
the digital code, because in this case neither the code, nor encoding and decoding can be
exactly defined , but even from a more scientific (more objective) point of view, there
are different ways of decoding and interpreting, because there are different options to
define the code. The more the field (or term see above) to be viewed turns to the
"subjective", the more options exist, and the last term on the line, ie. "narrative",
represents the most "subjective" one - the more it becomes difficult to give an objective
interpretation, at all. The "narrative" incorporates already too many types of codes
implanted by the "narrator", and countless more by facing all the readers(viewers, users)
who follow the narrative, as each of them follows the course of the narrative from a
personal and individual point of view and decodes, deciphers or interprets the encoded
contents individually. So, in the most extreme case, countless interpretations of the
"encoded" might be possible. My work is visualizing this.

4. Your title...how many resonances of encoding do you see it referencing?

The title already points to the meaning and function of "code" in the context, generally
and not just in this work. The code lies protected as the basic condition in the centre of the work and
the viewer has to search for it. This can easily be done concerning the form of the title, but difficult in
concern of its contents, as in a figurative sense the viewer has to dive deeply into the complex work.
Not even for me, who created the work and viewed it more times than everybody else, is it
possible to say how many resonances would exist, as neither the programming of the work
nor its narrative follow a linear, but non-linear course, consisting of components which
even all may have a different type of encoding.

5. What interplay and tension do you see between filmic language, flash
animation, and static image interplay in terms of subtext and concept?

In the concept of the work, two movements play a basic role, i.e. the movement of the
narrative which describes the turn from the objective to the subjective and at the end of
the work also the reverse, and the visualisation of the function and purpose of a code and the process
of encoding, which does exactly the contrary - the turn from the subjective to the objective, and has
the reverse, the decoding, the re-subjectivation as a basic condition already incorporated.

The filmic language is only able to deal with this controversy between both positions in
a non-linear way, and the non-linear programming of the Flash animation forms the formal basis and
equivalent for that. The static image or better the space it is showing, forms the scenery of this
controversy, makes space available, but in the sense of the controversy it undergoes also the
process of alienation and subjectivation starting from an objective type of space to a
systematically deformed one via continuously new appearing filmic elements.
The film has actually no real end, but the end represents rather a kind of new beginning,
as the work itself turned into a code for what will come.

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6. Your work is visually stunning as well as layered; what layer of reading and resonance do you see in the beauty in tandem with the fragmentation and narrative elements?

You ask me question, which is addressed actually to somebody who has more distance to the work than me as its creator. Not all works of mine use an allegorical representation, but a principle for those who do, is always to find extraordinary aesthetical solutions, showing beauty in different concern
in order to invite the viewer and give him a key for an easier access to the otherwise complicated seeming work.
The function of "beauty" can be defined as "code", it does, however, not represent a general key, but only the key to what is following next in the narrative.

7. What schools of art are you most influenced by ?

Of course, there is no artist who is not influenced by certain art schools whether contemporary or historical.
I do not feel influenced by any contemporary art school nowadays, because I am looking for the experiment, the unknown, the future, my future, not only in the contents, but basically also in the kind of representation, in any concern.
Of course, there is no future without referring to Present and Past, but as I stated earlier already, my life experiences took the part of an influencing instance and the competence on many also not art related fields.

When I studied art, the academy was rather old fashioned and the artistic concept behind
hardly definable. The workshops, however, were excellent and represented good places for learning the craft.
For a person like me who was always an individualist, this lack of conceptual substance was not bad at all, as I was forced to look for a place where I belong to in terms of art, elsewhere, inside of me.
After a turbulent course of life, I am, since I started in 2000 working exclusively with New Media,
for the first time in my professional life content with what I am doing, and what I am doing
incorporates from my point of view wonderful perspectives in most different ways.

Finally, I would not like to forget to mention,
that ancient Greek philosophy which became in Renaissance times also the basis for "humanism"
(I learned at the high school ancient languages) has generally a strong lasting influence
on anything I am doing and particularly in art. One can see in that also the intellectual
basis for the type of allegorical representation, I am dealing with, like it is used in
"En[code]ed". The humanist ideas and humanitarian contexts manifest themselves in really
many art works and art related activities.

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8. how do spaces between and empty spaces play into narrative?

Talking about specific types of "space", one has to recognise that "space" plays a general
key role in the aesthetical development and determines fundamentally the course and speed
of narrative via a progressive deformation, so "space" represents a basic code for the narrative of the
work. "Space" becomes a metaphor for "non-linear" time and the "unexpected".
In fact, the objective space, as it is shown on the first frame does not change at all until the last
frame, it is the perception of space that changes until the end of the film to the extreme subjective.
The narrative is taking place in the "internal" and the visible space is internal space, as a psychological
condition different types of "space" appear and vanish as filmic elements and tools to speed up and
slow down motion. The spaces between offer the viewer new "stages" as starting points for exploring
the narrative from another point of view and speed up the race between the narrator and the viewer.
Empty "space" - spiritual "space" - forms a kind of regulative which is slowing down the speed.

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"en [code] ed"

English
digital video created in Flash by media artist Agricola de Cologne,
inspired by a visit of Thessaloniki.
The work describes the principle of "code" or "coding" in form of an allegory, a metaphoric story
as a ritual of meeting, dominating and resigning. The code is identified as a state of the static,
dogmatic and conservative, which asks for obedience, but gives no chance to escape.
In technological concern, the work is non-linear programmed in Flash and integrates different digital
media, created, modified and remixed by the artist.
Voice and sound performance by Agricola de Cologne.
The movie is edited, directed and produced by Agricola de Cologne.

Français
vidéo numérique créée dans le flash par l'artiste des médias nouveaux Agricola De Cologne, inspirée
par une visite de Thessaloniki.
Le travail décrit le principe du "code" ou du "codage" sous la forme d'une allégorie, une histoire
metaphoric comme rituel de la réunion, dominant et démissionnant. Le code est identifié comme état
du statique, dogmatique et conservateur, qui demande l'obéissance, mais ne donne aucune chance de
s'échapper. Dans le souci technologique, le travail est non linéaire programmé dans le flash et intègre
différents médias numériques, créé, modifié et remélangé par l'artiste.
Exécution de voix et de bruit par Agricola De Cologne. Le film est édité, dirigé et produit par Agricola
De Cologne.

Español
vídeo digital creado en flash por el artista Agricola de Cologne de los medios, inspirada por una visita
de Thessaloniki. El trabajo describe el principio del "código" o "codificación" en forma de una
alegoría, una historia metaphoric como ritual de la reunión, dominando y dimitiendo. El código se
identifica como estado el del estático, dogmático y conservador, que pide obediencia, pero no da
ninguna ocasión de escaparse. En la preocupación tecnológica, el trabajo es no linear programado en
flash e integra diversos medios digitales, creado, modificado y remezclado por el artista.
Funcionamiento de la voz y del sonido por Agricola de Cologne.
La película es corregida, dirigida y producida por Agricola de Cologne.

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Details:
URL http://www.nmartproject.net/agricola/mpc/volume6/encoded.html

In 2003, the video was created, programmed and produced non-linear in Flash for the Internet streaming online as version I.
In 2007, the video was reconstructed, reproduced and reprogrammed and released as a linear digital video as version II.

Year of production: v.1 2003, v.2 2007   Duration: v.1 5:40 , v.2. 5:30
Format : v.1 Flash/html , v.2. video PAL   Aspect ratio: v.2 4:3
Programmed: Flash
Sound: yes   Colour: yes
Exhibition format: Internet, CD-Rom DVD , miniDV (PAL)

Credits:
Director, producer, editor, script/concept, cinematography, programming, sound/music
Agricola de Cologne

Festivals
Version I

Digital Subjects - Fonlad Coimbra/Portugal 2007
Fonlad – Digital Art Festival Bissaya Barreto's Foundation Coimbra/Portugal   2006
Digital Art Festival – Museum of Contemporary Art Maracaibo/Venezuela 2005
Cyberpoem 2.1 Festival Barcelona/Spain 2005
Videoformes International Video & New Media Art Festival Clermont-Ferrand (France) 2005
Binary Katwalk - Binarykatwalk.net 2005
Digital Art Festival Havanna/Cuba 2004
FILE - Electronic Language Festival - Sao Paulo/Brazil - 23 Nov - 12 Dec 2004
AVANCA - Festival for Video and Multimedia (Portugal) 21-25 July 2004
MAEM 2003 - Electronic Art Festival Mostoles -Madrid (Spain) - 4/5 November 2004
Feria Estampa Madrid (Spain) -->MAEM - 26-30 November 2003
Centro de Arte Moderno Madrid (Spain) 2003

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