

The Network – a challenge in New Media

by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne

“The Network” is the abbreviation for [NewMediaArtProjectNetwork]||cologne, an experimental project environment for art and new media developed, created, curated and directed by Wilfred Agricola de Cologne (AdC), a multidisciplinary media artist, New Media curator and media art activist from Cologne/Germany.

Starting on 1 January 2000 as his big life experiment, he uses the Internet as a tool, as an art medium in its complexity and a platform for creating a new type of art, based on communicating – a big challenge in many concerns, also because its purpose is merely non-commercial, it does not require a membership, registration or password.

“The Network” represents a hybrid, simultaneously a media art project, a manifestation of philosophical ideas around the themes “memory” and “identity”, a research and curatorial project, a composition of dynamic social contexts in progress, a virtual and physical network on different levels, but also a multi-dimensional event environment organised completely online, however, not institutionally structured or associated, but realised in form of an independent art project. AdC himself is acting as a hybrid of different identities, not just as an artist, but also as the programmer, multimedia developer, curator, director in different functions and other virtual and physical instances of different kind, one might even say, he is representing *“the Network”* himself, re-creating himself continuously, he exists through others.

What is now manifesting itself as *“The Network”*, was not planned like that. It developed from a small cell through exploring the Internet for what is Internet specific in terms of art. One can divide the evolutionary processes abbreviated in three phases, which, however, did not follow one after another in a linear way, but non-linear sometimes parallel, at the same time or temporarily displaced.

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The 1st phase started in 2000, when *A Virtual Memorial – Memorial Project Environments against the Forgetting and for Humanity* (AVM), was launched online, not more than just a raw construction of ideas, not really structured yet, but in this way a fertile soil for exploring, experimenting, and learning by doing.

Based on the artist's very personal views, perceptions and philosophical ideas about human memory, humanity and a positive globalization, focussing on how people coming from most different cultural, religious, social, political or ethnic backgrounds deal with memory and the essential questions of life, AVM grew rapidly as a multi-media online context in quite a short time and became the framework for numerous subordinated theme related projects exploring Internet specific participatory, collaborative and networking aspects by inviting artists for participating and collaborating – just to mention a few project titles: “*Memorial for the Victims of Terror*”(2001), “*Violence Online Festival*” (2002), “*Rainforest Memorial* (2003) “*Women: Memory of Repression in Argentina*” (2004) “*://selfportrait – a show for Peace*” (2006). The ancient idea of the finished and completed art project, was replaced by the new type that was ongoing, to be updated and extended this way and changing continuously, offering the visitors or users permanently new reasons to revisit the online environment again and again, resulting a kind of community on a voluntary basis. In these terms, the ideas behind AVM became the fundament of all activities within “*The Network*”, how different they may be.

Based on all those experiences promising perspectives for the future, the 2nd phase (starting in autumn 2000) is marked by AdC's specific method of working on different project ideas and their realisation, and thematic and technological aspects at the same time.

The idea of a virtual museum was actually not really new, *JavaMuseum – Forum for Internet Technology in Contemporary Art* – gave this idea its specific structures dedicated to the needs of a new art genre (Internet based art). The social aspects got a new dimension in form of curating, ie. taking another type of responsibility. AdC's curating is not reduced to just selecting art works, contents and artists, collecting links and posting them online, but he curates also virtual space, that space, that is visible on a user's computer monitor i.e. he designs/ programs specific visual contexts or interfaces for each new project realisation. Curating becomes this way an expression of a new type of artworking. JavaMuseum realised since 2001 besides some global competitions, more than 20 showcases of “netart in a global context” and hosts this way a comprehensive collection of works (1000) from the high time of netart (2000–2004). JavaMuseum stands for a wide range of projects followed in sequence.

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The 3rd phase starting sometimes in 2002 parallel to phase 1 & 2, was based on the perception, that the virtual space of Internet gets actually it really meaning when it is confronted with the physical space. One might call it the cross-platform phase, cross-platform in terms of combining the basics of already existing or future project environments, since they showed how closely woven their structures are and how much they complement each other, on the other hand to realise new projects according to those perceptions in an exchange between virtual and physical space. But essential was, AdC had finally become aware that all those projects he had realised until now individually were all standing in a common all encompassing context, i.e a network. *The new Network* to be created by re-structuring anything done before went hand in hand with the new project platform to be developed. *NewMediaFest* was thought to act as a framework for new type of experimenting, see-> *Violence Online Festival* (2002-2004), followed by *[R][R][F]200X → XP – global networking project* (2004 -2007). Two of its “Memory Channels” dedicated to specific media, video and sonic art, i.e *VideoChannel* – and *SoundLAB*, became soon acting independently combining all perceptions AdC made during the years, resulting in 2006 also the foundation of *CologneOFF – Cologne Online Film Festival*, a new type of mobile film and video festival taking place simultaneously online and in physical space in cooperation with partner festivals.

From the beginning, AdC’s activities were addressed to an and the audience, all project environments became social contexts. After *The Network* had entered the discussion as an idea, new service platforms for participating artists and curators and users in general, were created: see -> *JIP – JavaMuseum Interview Project* (2006), *VIP – VideoChannel Interview Project* (2007), *AND - Artists Network Database* (2006) – central place for organising the 1400 biographies of the participating artists and curators –, and *netEX – networked experience* – a publishing platform for announcements and calls (2005).

Long before experts were considering a WEB 2.0, AdC was already working on his personal Web 2.0 as a kind of open system. He sees his multi-facetted work on *The Network* as his specific type of artworking, where he can develop his abilities to the full.

While the success of *The Network* is manifesting itself visually online to each visitor, the site statistics show how many visitors came: 500 000 hits in 2000, and more than 10 million hits and 2 million unique visitors during the past 12 months (July 2007–June 2008).

Certainly, some of the incorporated project environments can be considered as completed, *The Network* as such as a dynamic work in progress, however is ongoing with an open end.

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The Network ~

[NewMediaArtProjectNetwork]:||cologne – experimental platform for art and New Media

<http://www.nmartproject.net/>

NetEX – networked experience (2005–)

<http://netex.nmartproject.net/>

AND – Artists Network Database (2006 –)

<http://and.nmartproject.net>

VAD – Video Art Database (2008–)

<http://vad.nmartproject.net>

A Virtual Memorial – memorial project environments (2000 –)

<http://www.a-virtual-memorial.org/>

Memorial for the Victims of Terror (2001–)

<http://terror.a-virtual-memorial.org>

Memorial for the Victims of Aids (2001–)

<http://aids.a-virtual-memorial.org>

Tsunami Memorial (2004 –)

<http://tsunami.a-virtual-memorial.org>

Family Portrait (2001–2005)

<http://familyportrait.engad.org/>

Women: Memory of Repression in Argentina (2004–)

<http://argentina.engad.org>

::/selfportrait – a show for Bethlehem (2006–)

<http://self.engad.org>

JavaMuseum – Forum for Internet Technology in Contemporary Art (2001 –)

<http://www.javamuseum.org/>

JIP – JavaMuseum Interview Project (2006 –)

<http://jip.javamuseum.org/>

Cinematheque – streaming media project environments (2001 –)

<http://cinematheque.le-musee-divisioniste.org/>



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NewMediaFest – festival project environments (2002 –)

<http://www.newmediafest.org/>

Violence Online Festival (2002–)

<http://violence.newmediafest.org/>

[R][R][F] 200X – global networking project (2004–2007)

<http://rrf200x.newmediafest.org/>

IMPACT event series project (2005)

<http://impact.newmediafest.org/>

VideoChannel – video project environments (2004 –)

<http://videochannel.newmediafest.org/>

VIP – VideoChannel Projectenvironments (2006–)

<http://vip.newmediafest.org>

SoundLAB – sonic art project environments (2004 –)

<http://soundlab.newmediafest.org/>

SIP – SoundLAB – Interview Project (2006–)

<http://sip.newmediafest.org>

CologneOFF – Cologne Online Film Festival (2006 –)

<http://coff.newmediafest.org/>

Agricola de Cologne site (2000–)

<http://www.agricola-de-cologne.de/>

Agricola de Cologne Moving Picture Collection (2001 –)

<http://movingpictures.agricola-de-cologne.de/>

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Partner and exhibition contexts 2000-2008

Since all art related activities are combined in the Network, more than 350 exhibition contexts are the result since the year 2000, like festivals of media art shows, presenting either the Network in its totality or parts of it, like project platforms, individual art projects and/or films/videos:, here is a selection:

2001 –16th Videoformes Festival Clermont Ferrand (F) , NCCA Kaliningrad (Russia), HICETNUNC 10 – San Vito a/T (Italy), Boston Cyber Art Festival (USA) , Net-z-lab Internet Award 2001 – Nomination Chemnitz (Germany), Sonar Festival Barcelona 2001 (Spain) , Biennale Venezia 2001 (Italy), File – Electronic Language Festival 2001 – Sao Paulo (Brazil), File – Electronic Language Festival at Curitiba City (Brazil), Biennale de Cerveira 2001 (Portugal), Media Art Festival Friesland 2001 (The Netherlands), Digital Media Festival 2001 Manila (Philippines) , Computer Space 2001 Festival Sofia (Bulgaria) , Museum of New Art – MONA Detroit (USA), McLean Project for the Arts (Virginia/USA), Viper Media Festival (Switzerland) , Prix Ars Electronica (Linz – Austria) Netcellence, Matsushita Museum of Art 2001, 2002 (Japan), Pixelpoint Computer Art Festival 2001 Nova Gorizia (Slovenia), Watershed Media Centre Bristol (UK)), **2002** – Digital Clip Festival 2001, 2002 Torino (Italy), Medienturm Graz (Austria), Mediahexa Festival Seoul (Korea), Medi@terra – Festival Athens (Greece), 43th International Filmfestival Thessaloniki (Greece), File 2002 – Electronic Language Festival Sao Paulo (Brazil) , Cyborg 01 Festival – III International Arts Festival Valencia/Venezuela , X Canarias International Festival of Video & Multimedia, Art Festival Klodzko Art Centre (Poland) , Computer Space Festival 2002 Sofia (Bulgaria) , Liverpool Biennial (UK) – Violence Online Festival – Istanbul Museum Istanbul (Turkey), Asolo Art Film Festival – Asolo (Italy, ISEA 2002 Nagoya (Japan) , 49th Pula Filmfestival – Pula (Croatia) , Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (USA) , THAW 02 – film, video, digital and sound festival – Iowa City (USA, 17th Videoformes Festival – Clermont Ferrand (F) , Violens Festival Tábor – (Czech Republic) , Museum of Contemporary Art Bucuresti (Romania) , Cardiff School of Art & , St. Kilda Film Festival – Melbourne (Australia) – 2002 International Flag Art Festival Seoul (Korea) , Kunstverein Frankfurt (Germany), Free Biennial New York (USA) , Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) Dublin , Prix Ars Electronica Linz (Austria), **2003** Electronic Art Festival Madrid , Computer Space Festival Sofia(BG, MAEM 2003 – Electronic Art Mostoles –Madrid (Spain) , Gradec Gallery, Zagreb/Croatia , Venice Biennale – Venice (Italy) – Wandering Library Project curated by Doron Polak , File – Electronic Language Festival Sao Paulo (Brazil) , th International Festival of New Film – Split/Croatia , Pula off – 50th Pula Filmfestival, New Forms Festival Vancouver (Canada), Film and New Media Festival Lancaster (UK) , Interactiva'03 – Museum of Contemporary Art Merida/Mexico, PEAM 2003 – Electronic Art Festival 2003 Pescara/Italy , Chiang Mai 1st New Media Art Festival – Chiang Mai (Thailand) , Videoformes – 18th Video and Multimedia Festival Clermont–Ferrand (France) , (6th) Media Arts Festival, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Machinista Media Festival Perm/Russia, 3rd Audiovisual Festival Lille/France , National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest/Romania, New Media Festival Bangkok/TH **2004** Version Festival Chicago (USA), *Basics Festival Salzburg/Austria, *Electronic Art Meeting – PEAM 2004 Pescara/Italy, Festival of New Film and Media Split/Croatia , Seoul Festival for Internet & Film , *Avanca Film & Videofestival 2004 Avanca/Portugal – *public_space_festival Yerevan/Armenia , Westcoast Numusic & Electronic Art Festival Stavanger/Norway, *Ars Electronica – Linz/Austria – *Biennale of Electronic Art Perth/Australia , *Biennale de Montreal 2004 , Visual Art Center Santiago/Chile (C.A.V.S.) , Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Fe (Argentina) , *FILE – Electronic Language Festival Sao Paulo/Brazil, Museum of New Art – MONA – Detroit/USA – Videoformes 20th International Video & New Media Art Festival Clermont–Ferrand (France), Musée du Ranquet Clermont–Ferrand (France) – Festival Audiovisual Zemos98_7 Sevilla/Spain , ZKM Karlsruhe/G – Museo National Arte Contemporanea Reina Sofia – Espacio de Arte Contemporáneo de Almagro, Hospital de San Juan de Dios/Spain **2005** Images Festival Toronto –Version'05 Festival Chicago/USA – Israeli Digital Art Lab Holon/Israel –SENEF – Seoul Film Festival, Hic et Nunc – San Vito a/Tagliamento/Italy –Arcipelago – International Festival for Shortfilm and New Images Obsession – International Audio & Video Festival Istanbul/Turkey ,Hic et Nunc – San Vito a/Tagliamento/Italy – 51th Venice Biennale – Isola della Poesia – Museo de Arte Contemporáneo del ZULIA, MACZUL – Maracaibo/VE 2005 – 2nd Synch Festival, Lavrio Technological & Science Park Athens/Greece, Norwich Gallery Norwich/UK –3rd 0110 Digital Film Festival New Delhi/India – Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Fe/Argentina, Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos (CAB)/Spain – Artium, Centro–Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo, Álava/Spain, Regina Gouger Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University Pittsburg/USA, FILE – Electronic Language Festival Sao Paulo/Brazil, FILE – Hipersonica, Centre d'Art la Panera Lleida/ES, Biennale of New Media Art Santiago de Chile, Filmoteca Canaria del Gobierno de Canarias. Tenerife y Las Palmas de Gran Canaria/Spain, Contemporary Art Centro Párraga, Murcia/Spain:, Bethlehem International Center /Palestine Cave Gallery

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2006 Officyna Art Space Szczecin/Poland, MAC – Museo de Arte Contemporaneo Santa Fe/Argentina, Casoria Contemporary Art Museum Naples/Italy, MAXXI Museo nazionale de Arte XXI secolo Rome/IT, Video Dialoghi Centre Cultural Francais Turin/Italy 8th CHROMA – Festival de Arte Audiovisual –MAEM – Arte Electronico Madrid–Mostoles/ES, 5th Salon de Arte Digital Maracaibo/Venezuela , Canariasmediafest '06 – Gran Canaria/Spain, International Panorama of Independent Film and Video Patras/Greece, FILE – Electronic Language Festival Sao Paulo/Brazil – FILE Poetry , Al Kahf Art Gallery Bethlehem/Pa, VIVA – Vital International Video Art – De Stad als Theater Zwolle/Netherlands, Moskow International Film Festival , D-NEFF – experimental video festival Vitoria–Gasteiz/Spain, Into Out – Digital Art Festival Thessaloniki/Greece, MAF'06 – Media Art Festival Bangkok/Thailand , Pixeldance Festival Thessaloniki /Greece, Bele.ArteLamia 2006 – Lamia (Greece), Athens Video Art Festival – Athens/Greece –FILE – Electronic Language Festival Rio de Janeiro – Cultural Center Telemar , Festival Audiovisual Zemos98_8 – Sevilla/Spain, Videoformes 21th International Video Art Festival – Clermont–Ferrand (France), 5th Biennale de la Photo et des Arts visuels de Liège MAMAC , Metu Video Festival – Ankara/Turkey, Japan Media Arts Festival Tokyo/Japan, Fundación Luis Seoane, La Coruña, Mediateca –CaixaForum–, Barcelona/ES, Paço das Artes Sao Paulo/Brazil, India International Center New Dehli – CeC & CaC, The Art Gallery of Knoxville/USA – “Global Groove”

2007 MACRO – Museum of Contemporary Art Rosario/Ar, Bigscreen Festival Kunming/China , Instant Video Festival Marseille/France , 2nd Bursa International Film Festival Bursa/Turkey, Meneer De Wit Gallery Amsterdam/NL , VIP Art Gallery Belgrade/S, Experimental Film Festival Cyprus, Optica Video Festival Gijon/Spain, FIFE 2007 – Experimental Film Festival Baia Mare/Romania, Szemlétek Audiovisual Filmfest and Art Meeting Pécs/HU, DigiFestival Florence/Italy, 1st Digital Art Festival Bahia Blanca/Argentina, ShootOFF L'Espace Canopy Paris International Documentary Film Festival Srebrenica/Bosnia–Hercegovina, SENEFF – Seoul Net & Film Festival Seoul/South Korea, Signal 5 Festival – INSIDE OUT Crystal Palace London/UK, Centro de Arte Contemporaneo Pecci Prato(Italy) , FILE Hipersonic Festival Sao Paulo/Brazil, FILE – Electronic Language Festival Sao Paulo/Brazil, Mobile Institute – Cinema Styx Bruxelles/Belgium , International Shortfilm Festival Budapest/Hu, P'Silo/Festival Images contre Nature – Marseille/France , Video Art Festival Celje/SI, ENTER Caravansarai Istanbul/Turkey, ArtChannel Paris – “13Sévigéné” Gallery Paris, Documenta 12 Kassel/Germany, 52 Venice Biennale, Kibbutz Art Gallery Tel–Aviv/Israel, Jerusalem Artists' House Jerusalem/Israel, Izolenta – Digital Film Festival St. Petersburg/ Russia, Quarteirão das Artes Montemor–o–Velho /PT, The Nunnery Gallery London/UK ,Version07 Festival – Chicago, USA, Dutch Electronic Art Festival R'dam/NL, Zemos'98 – Videofestival Sevilla/ES, FILE – Electronic Language Festival Rio de Janeiro – 01 Futuro Cultural Center , Museum of New Art Detroit/USA Videoformes – International Festival of Video and New Media Clermont–Ferrand/Fr – India International Center New Dehli – CeC & CaC

2008 FocFest 2008 – Fábrica do Braço de Prata Lisbon (Portugal) , ACCEA – Armenian Center of Contemporary Art Yerwan (Armenia)– Ciplak Ayaklar Studio Istanbul/Turkey, FIFE 2008 – 3rd Experimental Film Festival Baia Mare /Ro, Shoot OFF Video Festival – Espace Canopy Paris/F, Instants Video Marseille, 24 Hours of Nuremberg Shortfilm Festival – Nuremberg/GER, Optica Videofestival Gijon/Spain, Sound: Space 2008 at MediaLAB South Hill Park Bracknell/UK, 13th Canariasmediafest 2008 Gran Canaria /ES, Optica Videofestival Madrid/ES, Instants Video Marseille/Saint Denis (France), Museum of Contemporary Art MACZUL Maracaibo/Venezuela, Digital Fringe Melbourne/AU, 2nd AZA Digital Cinema Festival Thessaloniki/GR, MiniMinutes Film & Video Festival Muenster/GER, One Minute Film & Video Festival Aarau/CH, Videoholica – August in Art Biennial Varna/BG, Madeira International Art Biennale, Yeosu International Art Festival Yeosu/South Korea, FILE – Electronic Language Festival Sao Paulo/Brazil, FILE 2008 – Hipersonica Festival Sao Paulo/Brazil, ISEA 2008 Singapore, Videofestival Celje/Slovenia, Videoart Festival Miden Kalamata/Gr, Experimental Film Festival Images contre Nature Marseille/F, International Film Festival Naoussa/Gr, Cyprus International Short Film Festival Nicosia/Northern Cyprus, Athens International Video Art Festival 2008 (Gr, Artpool Budapest/Hungary – Budapest Spring Festival, Videoformes – Int. Festival of Video & New Media Clermont–Ferrand (F), Traverse Video Festival Toulouse/France , The French Cultural Centre André Malraux Sarajevo/Bosnia–Hercegovina – Videosalon 3, FILE – Electronic language Festival Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, CeC & CaC – India International Centre New Dehli/India, Les Inattendus Film Festival Lyon/F, Kinolevchyk Videoart Festival Lviv/Ukraine, 1st International Videoart Festival Örebro/Sweden, Busho – Budapest International Shortfilm Festival