

Agricola de Cologne interview

by: [agricola de cologne](#) (2005/08/18)
How do you define "soundtoys" ?

A toy represents an object which gets its meaning through interactivity with a user. The kind of interactivity, in which way the object is used defines this object as a toy or not. The object becomes a toy when it has a "play" character. A "Soundtoy" represents a toy which has sound as an essential and interactive element.

On a personal level, why do you make this work?

Why does an artist any work. He does it or does it not. He has to do it. Working with New Media represents on one hand always an experiment, particularly by following the fast developments in technology and perception, on the other hand, much more than conventional art, interactivity, communication and a variety of optionally media to be used play the most dominant role.>

What is your project and your work about?

Any art, any artistic expression represents from its basics and since the beginning of human civilisation a form of communicating. Using the Internet as artistic environment, communication gets much more relevance than in any other environment, since interactivity demands the more or less active and immediate involvement of the viewer/user. Therefore communicating represents also the essence of my art working, assuch. All projects I realize in Internet have the meaning the create images of different kind and on different levels of perception, by integrating the viewer/user and thus, communicating with the user in most different ways but also communicating between different levels of perception. Intended or not, a gigantic virtual scupture consisting of collective memory is developing. The NewMediaArtProjectNetwork, my actual net based environment of working incorperates different single universes (websites/imaginary enviroments) communicating with each other.

My "soundtoys" project is intending to do the same of the lower and smaller level on one hand, but on the other hand to complete the superordinated whole with new aspects, new features. The project "Transience" incorperates sound/music as main component, moving images and poetic words/text as equal partners. The visual component looses its dominance while becoming partner of other senses and levels of perception which are involved. As partners the different media components depend on each other. The work is a good example for one of my experimental working principles - Simultaneous Associative Media Art Composing (SAMAC) One result is the creation, enforcement and development of associations communicating with each other, which form again the basis for building and creating images inside of the viewer/user.

How long have you been working in this area?

As an (non-educated) artist since 1967, as a (educated) artist since 1979, as an artist using computer (since 1986) and computer aided works/installtions since 1994, but at that time this had no dominance. This changed, when I decided to focus my art working entirely on New Media and Internet in 2000.

Were you an artist/ musician first who got into using computers/the net, or did you respond to the net as a medium in an artistic way?

I was and I am in first place a 'visual' artist, even if music and musical components and elements played always an essential role (I learned a variety of instruments and studied classical singing for many years), also when creating art, as such. When I was 24 years old I had to decide whether I should make a career in musical theatre I decided finally to continue being creative in the visual arts fields since it was a much stronger passion. I felt always as a painter, even if I do not paint in the actual sense of the word since years. Painting means for me a certain approach to art and a certain use of media also music, which is less driven from intellectual concepts or calculation but rather, from intituiton and the chaos principle. Even nowadays

working with New Media I see myself rather as a painter. The challenge is to bring the calculatable and the non-calculatable to a unity of different kind. The musical component which is much more immediately connected to the factor emotion has an essential role in this kind of associative working.

What/ who has influenced you in your work? (themes, other artists etc)

Everybody is influenced by his environment. Artists are always influenced by other artists, either living or dead, whether they want it or not. I have been influenced by certain Renaissance artists, since they were universal characters, artists, philosophers, scientists, musician etc in one single person. In a certain way, I see myself in this tradition. Philosophical and scientific background had also the Pointillist artists of 19th century, the Divisionism, the scientific method of painting of Seurat influenced profoundly my personal vision of an individual philosophy manifested in my art working, a kind of collage principle. Thus, when influence at all, then less on an aesthetic, but rather philosophical level. On the other hand, there were certain historical events which influenced my life and also my artistic working profoundly: The Fall of Berlin and the connected visits in Poland afterwards, which confronted me with the German Nazi history in Poland, which determined my working between 1989-1998. The most influence still has the terrorist attack, which destroyed in autumn 1998 not only a part of my art working, but also my professional career as artist at this time and nearly my physical existence. After more than one year of horror and despair, I started on 01 January 2000 a come back as an artist focussing my working entirely on New Media and Internet. The subjects of work is very often influenced by my horrible experiences.

Are there any other artists covering the same field as you?

I do not think so, maybe someone who has a similar personal history.

Do you see this work as art?

Of course.

With regard to 'soundtoys' especially, why do you think the audio visual form is so key to the net?

The audio visual, the multi-media component represent an essential key because they are addressed directly to the senses and sensual perception. This is of particular relevance in the Internet environment since art and art work experienced through a filtering medium cannot be experienced in the immediate way as physical art works can be perceived. The audio-visual components allow a personal emotional involvement and thus, a self identification of the user with the object to be perceived.

What defines the aesthetics of new interactive art.?

I think, one should not make an attempt to look for binding definitions. New Media as media in art production are very young media, the ways that Internet offers are still at the beginning, even if some people say, it would be already the end of development. Any definition represents a kind of dogma, something static, and this New Media environment is really anything else than static. Actually the art and the artists working in this area are continuously in the state of experimenting, and before having finished this state, the developments in technology and perception have already run ahead. No definition, please!

How important is the visual aspect in the 'new' relationship of the audio visual.?

How important the visual sense generally seen is, shows the example of blind people. Seeing people define themselves through the visual sense, all other senses, also the sense of hearing follow afterwards in the scale of relevance. The visual sense represents the more concrete and the sense of hearing the more abstract. In this way audio-visual is the perfect combination. However, since the Internet/or New Media environment are primarily visually perceived, this sense represents then also primarily the gateway to the audio component. However once installed this combination, both components seem to be equal in their relevance and force interactivity of different kind.

Does the net promote visual awareness that is unique to it?

In a certain way, yes. This has to do with the concrete situation of user sitting interacting in front of a monitor instead of sitting passively in his chair and watching/consuming. The user can take active influence of the perceived and can give the stream of thoughts and associating a new, unexpected direction and thus a different meaning.

How novel do you feel generative music and interactivity is?

I do not know, whether there is really something novel. In all cultures, music and interactivity, the common experience with other people, communicating through interacting represents something socially normal and usual. Generative music may be probably a contemporary expression, also forced by new technological standards. But the combination with interactivity seems to be most normal, one would rather say, if there would be no interactivity, then something would be wrong, even if interactivity may be interpreted differently.

Do you think there is a history to audio visual work?

Because time exists, there is a history to anything, there is also a history to audio visual work.

Would you describe yourself as a multimedia artist, a net.artist, programmer, or none of the above?

Are they artists, at all, or do they have to be proofed as artist, yet? Categorizing represents delimiting, reducing and restriction. Acting in a system of categories, I often enough describe myself as media artist or in certain circumstances as net artist since they explain that I do not use conventional media, even if noone knows exactly what a net.artist is; the term media artist is actually really stupid: every artist is using media, thus everybody is a media artist. Actually, for me it is enough to be an artist, because this characterizes my individual approach to life, environment and anything, my point of view, as such. Using multi.media or Internet or any other field defines how I deal with these specific environments. Being solely an "artist" allows me to work that way I like, today with New Media, but tomorrow maybe with different media and tools of expression, not delimited and restricted by opinions, definitions or categories. Artist! and no category!

What software do you use most and why?

My favourite software represents Flash, because this allows an interdisciplinary approach and the transformation of artistic ideas and it corresponds completely with my personal structures, it combines intellectual calculation with intuitive associating. In combination with graphic software as Photoshop, music software as SoundForge video software from Adobe or ULEAD and some other smaller third party applications it is absolute sufficient for creating complex net based interdisciplinary art content.

Can you recommend three urls to soundtoys?

No.

.....

Copyright © 1998 - 2005 soundtoys.net™
All rights reserved.