ABSTRACTS

Leen Bedaux
Mail Art
Een sociaal netwerk voor de kunst
Mail Art
A social network for the arts

Mail Art is a 1970s art movement that involved visual artists, performance artists, writers, poets and curators. It was initiated by people who disregarded the prevailing artistic conventions and started to send parcels and stencilled art publications around the world by post. Mail Art was a fundamentally innovative organisation mode which allowed participants to breach the barriers that divided Western and Eastern Europe. Bedaux suggests that Mail Art can be seen as a precursor to the present digital networks because it was a system that was publicly accessible and its aim was to give everyone the opportunity to express themselves. It was also a democratic system of communication in the sense that it strove for the equality of sender and receiver. Bedaux analyses Mail Art's potential and context citing two examples from the manifestation *I am* (International Artist Meeting) which was held in 1978 in Warsaw. Finally, she deals extensively with the views expressed by Ulises Carrión (whose views differed from some of his fellow artists) regarding the struggle between Mail Art and the forces of society which he dubbed 'the Big Monster'.

Tanja von Dahlern
Revisiting the future
Strategies of transformation in Gerard Byrne's
1984 and Beyond

1984 and Beyond (2005-2007) is a work by video artist Gerard Byrne showing a literally transferred re-enactment of a roundtable conversation on the future originally published in 1963 by *Playboy*. As opposed to most adaptations in a new medium, *1984 and Beyond* does not conceal its derived nature. The actors struggle to express in a natural way the lines that were originally edited from spoken language to fit the written medium, and being Dutch, all do so with a distinct accent. To speak about the future through a variety of anachronisms brings to the fore an intricate dialogue between past and future, mediated by a layered artwork that evaporates any sense of the present. Von Dahlern uses this case to show how a disrupted viewing experience directs attention to the functioning of the different media and the transformation process. Thus, reuse and transformation changes the character of the source material and dominates the formal aspects of the adaptation.

Roel Griffioen
Imaging purity
The rhetoric of the photographic image in Le Corbusier's Vers une architecture

In the 1920s, photography played a crucial role in the construction and promotion of modern architecture. Evolving printing technology and distribution infrastructure, combined with the internationalization of intellectual and cultural discourses, gave photographic representations of architecture an advantage over architecture itself. It allowed 'the cathedral [to leave] its site to be received in the studio of an art lover,' as Walter Benjamin remarked. What effect did this have on the ontological relationship between the image and the object? By analysing *Vers une architecture* (1923), arguably Le Corbusier's most important book and indisputably a key document in the historiography of the Modern Movement, Griffioen shows how the architect-author skilfully mobilized photography to establish the ideal of a 'pure' architecture. Griffioen uses this case to explore the question whether architectural photography functioned as a pedestal to showcase the actual architecture or in fact demote the building to an appendix of the image.

Daniël van der Poel
Shell-shocked again and again
Regarding Harun Farocki's Immersion

Immersion (2009) is a twenty-minute video by Harun Farocki which shows a psychologists' workshop held in 2009. In the workshop, therapists demonstrated *Virtual*

Iraq, a therapeutic computer simulation that helps Iraq war veterans to recover from PTSD. *Virtual Iraq* allows a patient to relive critical experiences in an immersive virtual reality while a therapist provides verbal guidance. *Immersion*'s complex two-channel montage consists of scenes set in the actual workshop (where therapists role-played *Virtual Iraq* sessions) and in *Virtual Iraq* (as seen by a 'patient'). These two diegeses are often juxtaposed which tends to frustrate the viewer's immersion in either of them. Using Bolter and Grunsin's medium-oriented concepts of *immediacy* and *hypermediacy*, Van der Poel identifies how and when *Immersion* variously 'pulls in' and 'pushes out' the viewer. However, he finds that the empathic relations between the viewer and the various actors present within *Immersion* create *affects* which interfere with the medium's *effects*. A subsequent, more detailed analysis of *Immersion*'s diegeses and actors points to Farocki's deliberate use of both effect and affect in order to confuse the viewer's perception of reality and fictitiousness. Van der Poel considers this confusion a starting point for further exploring *Virtual Iraq*'s curious interlacing of war, videogames and psychotherapy. Viewed as such, *Immersion* fits with Farocki's other recent works which deal with the way computer image technology gradually influences man's view of himself and his surroundings.

Jens Schröter
Analogue/digital
Referentiality and intermediality

Schröter challenges the dichotomy between so-called reality and manipulation that underpins the ongoing debate on the authenticity of the (digital) photographic image. He argues that this dichotomy is based on two false assumptions: that there is such a thing as an 'untouched' image that truthfully represents reality, and that manipulating an image will remove it from reality. Citing examples from the fields of astronomy and physics, he demonstrates how photographic images in science are manipulated precisely because this increases their *referentiality* – that is, the way an image points to a fact in reality in a comprehendible manner. Thus, the claim that analogue photography is more 'truthful' because of its rather strict causality (as opposed to digital photography which allows for easily manipulation) is flawed. The very need for manipulation can also be deduced from the fact that a photograph, analogue or digital, needs to be taken in a specific manner and under certain circumstances

in order to effectively represent an aspect of reality (e.g. it should not be underexposed, overexposed, blurred, et cetera). Schröter points out that regardless of these shared characteristics of analogue and digital photography, the technology and manner of circulation differ between them. In many cases, photographic referentiality requires additional textual contextualizing which ties the two types of photography to certain discursive practices and thus to historical and social conditions.

Sami Siegelbaum
Authentic mediation
Art, media, and public space in May '68

During the Paris student revolts of May 1968, protesters occupied a print studio. The witty political posters that were produced by Atelier Populaire are often seen as emblematic for the period. Siegelbaum shows how these posters have inaccurately gained a reputation of immediate and authentic transmission of news and ideas. The posters are products of mixed ideological underpinnings rather than the results of a univocal youngsters' holler for more freedom. According to Siegelbaum, the May '68 posters should be seen as liminal objects caught between the desire for unmediated communication and the desire to transcend the social and spatial divisions of the built environment. While the massively used transistor radios offered a sensation of immediate information, the street posters were assumed to provide a more genuine exposition of news facts. The sense of transcending the old infrastructure and limitations of the built environment, thanks largely to electronic media and urban redevelopment, prompted a rediscovery of the street as the privileged site of politics and the place to overcome social boundaries.

Laurence Schmidlin
The intermediality of drawing
Towards a theory of reception?

The artistic discipline of drawing has seen a major accumulation of forms and usage since the 1960s. No longer confined to the support of paper, nor even necessarily to the act of inscribing, the notion of 'drawing' has come to be manifested indexically as well as metaphorically. Schmidlin shows how drawing has been historically reframed to an intermedial category, initially as a function of an overall shift towards a reinforced consciousness

of space. This implied a detachment from the traditional material configuration of the medium, and at the same time, an aperture onto an infinite blow-up of the appropriate size of a drawing. Such works are not merely drawings but also show sculptural features, while sometimes the sculpturality of a work overrules its influences from drawing. Schmidlin explores the reception of these changes and detects a broadening of the usage of the medial category to the point where 'drawing' seems to be used as an allusion. Not only the historical development, but also the critical discourse, has left and continues to leave its mark on what we perceive as drawing.

Ginette Verstraete
Intermedialities
A brief survey of conceptual key issues

Intermediality refers to the various interrelations between and within the arts and media. While the term is associated with media studies, Verstraete argues that most research in the field of intermediality is conducted in closely related fields such as literary studies, art history, and philosophy. Intermediality allows researchers in these fields to deal with (digital) media that cross or fall in-between traditional disciplinary borders. Verstraete provides an overview of eight principles that shed light on the meaning and application of intermediality within such diverse fields of study. These principles are: i) medium versus intermediality, ii) relation to disciplinary topics, iii) disciplinary historiography of intermediality, iv) geographical historiography of intermediality, v) intermediality versus multimediality versus transmediality, vi) political implications of intermediality, vii) plurality of intermediality.