

od hardwarea do softwarea from hardware to software

sl. 1: A. Kulunčić, *Zatvorena zbilja-Embryo* (Gallery of newborns); embryo.inet.hr/gallery.php3



¹ <http://members.ams.chello.nl/fritzd>

▼ *Kasnije, kad je izumiranjem pasaža flanerija izišla iz mode, a ni plinsko svjetlo više nije slovilo kao otmjeno, posljednjem dokoličaru koji je žalosno lutao praznim pasažom Colbert činilo se da plamsanje ulične laterne pokazuje još samo strah svojih plamena da ih potkraj mjeseca više neće moći platiti.*
(Walter Benjamin, *Estetički ogledi*)

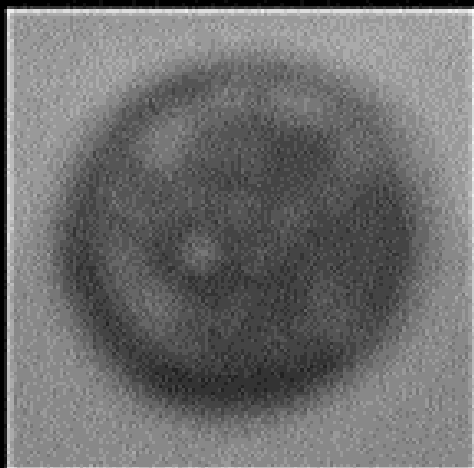
Nakon pojave fotografije i, poslije, Duchampova pretpostavljanja ideje njenoj realizaciji, masovni su mediji šezdesetih, do kraja zaoštrivši raspravu o potencijalu i potežnosti umjetnosti, zadali posljednji udarac pitanju originala i vrijednosti umjetničkog djela. Predmet umjetnikove znatiželje već nekoliko stoljeća, tehnologija postaje njegov najjači saveznik, što ne samo da je uzdrmajalo tradicionalne estetske sudove i otvorilo nove mogućnosti u praksi, naročito putem videa i računala, nego je promijenilo i poziciju promatrača - ako je šezdesetih bio sudionikom umjetnosti, u vrijeme sustava umjetne inteligencije je, po Franku Popperu, promatrač postao njenim interaktivnim subjektom. Novi oblici komunikacije, omogućeni eksplozivnim širenjem World Wide Weba, i umjetnika i promatrača postavili su u ravnopravan odnos opsesivnih tragača za identitetom. Osvajanjem (tele)komunikacijskog prostora umjetnik, računajući na sudioništvo promatrača, teži kritičkoj, romantičnoj ili anarhičnoj provjeri alternativnih ideja u čijim se fluidnim sjenama ocrtavaju i naznake moguće cyber-estetike. Operirajući po kriptama mreže on drsko okreće leđa moćnoj instituciji galerije, otimlje se birokratskoj kritici i teži uspostavi novih pravila koja će tek pokazati kolike su stvarne mogućnosti net-umjetnosti, njena sagledavanja i nadasve sustavna kritičkog prosuđivanja.

Ozbiljniji zamah online stvaralaštva počinje sredinom devedesetih, a u Hrvatskoj prve radove pratimo u zadnjih nekoliko godina, otprilike od vremena kada se i ovdašnji prosječni potrošač uključuje u opći surferski trend. Fenomen novog komunikacijskog prostora počinje zanimati i umjetnike vezane uz elektronske medije, ali i one koji se bave performansom, instalacijama, ambijentom, stripom ili arhitekturom. Osim što je otvorio put za pionirsku web-umjetnost, Internet je privlačan i za "klasičnu" prezentaciju projekata, kakva je, primjerice, *Kraj poruke - sveukupni arhivi*¹ Darka Fritza u kojoj on afirmacijom multimedijskog aparata intelektualno i estetski pokušava detektirati današnju poziciju umjetničkoga djela. Počevši od 1995., umjetnik se tri godine bavio, praktički ne ispuštajući niti jedan elektronski ni dig-

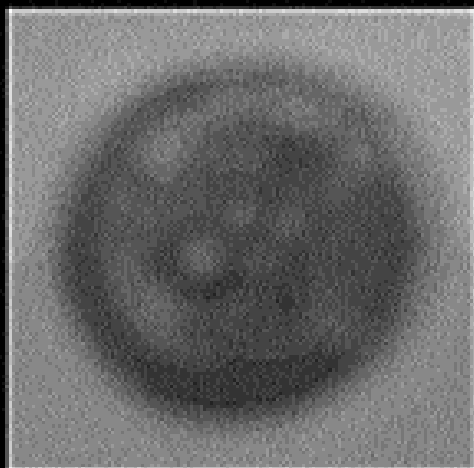
● *In time, when passages started to disappear and wanderings became a thing of the past, when gas-lights were no longer seen as fashionable, it seemed to the last idler who was sadly roaming through the empty Colbert passage that the glow of the street lanterns reveals nothing but the fear of its flames which by the end of the month it would not be able to afford.*
(Walter Benjamin, *Aesthetic Reflections*)

With the advent of photography and later on with Duchamp's giving priority to the idea over its realisation, the mass media of the sixties, having fully sharpened the discussion of the potential and extendness of art, have delivered the last blow to the question of the original and the value of an art work. Having attracted the artist's attention for a few centuries already, technology has become his strongest ally, and this has not only shaken traditional aesthetic criteria and opened up new practical possibilities - in particular through the video and computer - but has also put the viewer into a new position; if in the sixties he was a participant in art, now in the times of the artificial intelligence system the viewer has, according to Frank Popper, become its interactive subject. New forms of communication, enabled through the explosive World Wide Web expansion, have placed both the artist and the viewer into an equal position of obsessive identity seekers. By using (tele)communication space and counting on the participation of the viewer, the artist aims for the critical, romantic or anarchic verification of alternative ideas, the fluid shadows of which outline the indications of possible cyber aesthetics. While operating through the crypts of the web, he impudently turns his back to the powerful institution of the gallery, he breaks free from bureaucratic criticism, and tries to establish new rules to show the real possibilities of net art, its comprehension and above all systematic critical consideration.

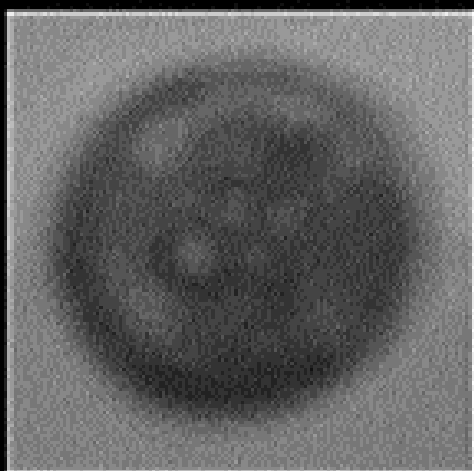
A more serious momentum in online creativity began in the mid-nineties, and in Croatia the first works connected to it can be traced back to a few years ago, when approximately an average cosumer joined the global surfing trend. The phenomenon of the new communication space became the subject of interest to artists involved in electronic media and equally so to those doing performances, installations, ambience, comics or architecture. Apart from paving the way for the pioneering web art, Internet has also become attractive for "classical" project presentations, such as *End of Message - Total Archives*¹ by Darko Fritz, who intellectually and aesthetically tries to detect today's position of an art work



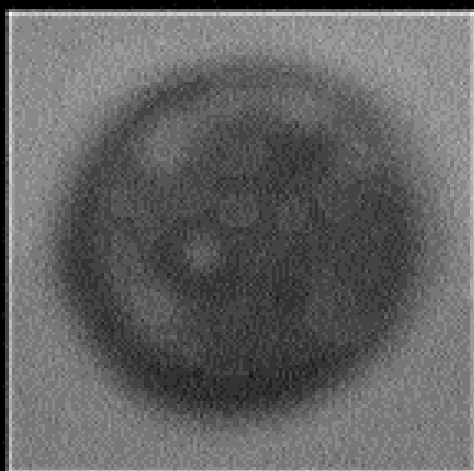
Baby Nr. 287



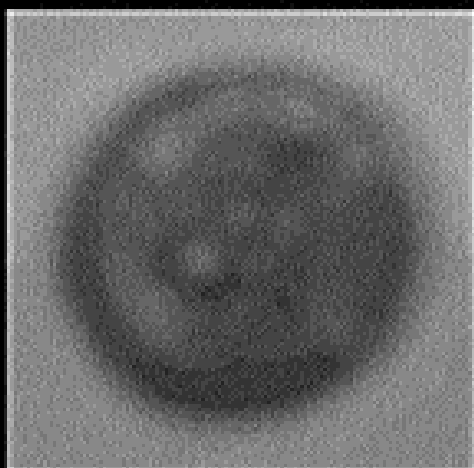
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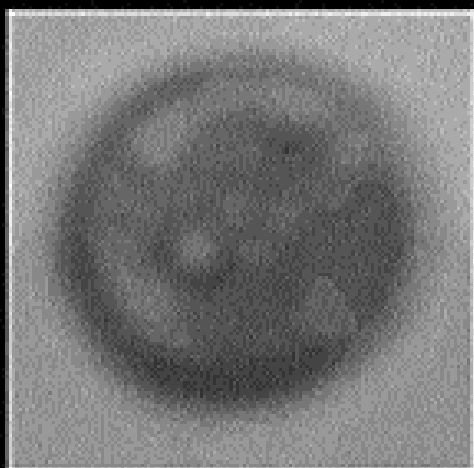
Baby Nr. 284



Baby Nr. 283



Baby Nr. 281



Baby Nr. 280



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sl.2, 3: D. Fritz, *End of the Message - total archives*; members.ams.chello.nl/fritzd/projects/end/endtot.html
sl.4-6: B. Karešin, *Oxyd*; www.arkzin.com/oxyd



² Darko Fritz na Internetu nudi i 13 minuta "stvarnog video formata".

³ <http://members.ams.chello.nl/fritzd>

⁴ www.arkzin.com/oxyd; karesin-www.arkzin.com;

⁵ www.lonelyplanet.com

⁶ www.haa.hr/kraljevic ili

<http://phoebe.haa.hr/tomislav/>

² Darko Fritz also presents on the Internet the 13 minutes of the "real video format"

³ <http://members.ams.chello.nl/fritzd>

⁴ www.arkzin.com/oxyd; karesin-www.arkzin.com;

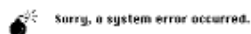
⁵ www.lonelyplanet.com

⁶ www.haa.hr/kraljevic or

<http://phoebe.haa.hr/tomislav/>

italni medij iz vida, upravo komunikacijskom opsesijom s kraja stoljeća. Podijelivši rad u sedam faza, u prvoj je naznačio temu koju će poslije, "nadgledanjem" kroz video, TV program, video i zvuk, radio emisiju, zamrznute video snimke, site specific instalaciju i faks sliku, objediniti u "totalnom" video iskazu otvorenom za daljnje mutiranje. Elektronskim medijima Fritz je, u početnoj fazi, bio suprotstavio djela velikih majstora iz Rijksmuseuma, da bi na taj način, uzimajući u obzir medij, prostor i trajanje re-prezentacije, isprovocirao pitanje o prosudbi i recepciji umjetničkog djela. Rad je na kraju preseljen i na Internet, ali samo kao jedan od oblika prezentacije, dakle, nakon izložbi, kataloga i videa, kao krajnji oblik pohrane rada. Međutim, iako na mreži nudi tek "zamrznutu sliku"², umjetnik se u tom projektu, kao na primjer i u radu *Katedrala*³, neprestano doticao problema net-umjetnosti. Naime, i "bezazlenim" pojavljivanjem na Internetu projekt postaje metom pretpostavljene nove publike pa je stoga podložan i drugačijim kriterijima gledanja, shvaćanja, pa i ocjenjivanja.

Mikrorevolucije u kulturi s kraja osamdesetih - rave, techno, extasy, trainspotting, cyberpunk ili net-umjetnost, kulturološki su fenomeni što su dobili publiku i komentatore i u ovdašnjoj generaciji bez uporišta i moći, spremnoj da svoje (ne)postojanje obistini u dijalogu pomaknutom u cyber-prostor. U doba izmicanja središta, i vremenskog i prostornog, Internet je postao još jednim od mjesta propitivanja gubitka stvaralačkog



uporišta i novih pokušaja njegove uspostave. Imajući na umu tu generaciju tehno-ovisnika, svakako treba spomenuti rad Blaženka Karešina, dizajnera časopisa *Arkzin* i autora online projekta *Oxyd*⁴ što je, kako se ocjenjuje na stranicama *Lonely Planeta*⁵ "najluđa stvar došla s Balkana". Karešinov "ručno rađeni e-zine za računalo i IRC", tipičan u prisvajanju svekolikog vizualnog i znakovnog repertoara pop-kulture devedesetih, subverzivan, ludički i narcisoidni uradak u kojem, nakon što umjetnik ironično izdeklamira svoje baratanje subkulturalnim rječnikom, pravo na glas dobiva i jedna krava, žene se nađu u zasebnoj rubrici, a između mnogih čuda Karešin urbanom surferu nudi i naputke kako napraviti svoju Internet stranicu (u ovo doba neimaštine).

Online projekt Tomislava Pavelića "*Peeping Tom*" sreće *Ivicu i Maricu*⁶ primjer

through the affirmation of multimedia apparatus. Since 1995, the artist has been working for three years on the communication obsession from the end of the century and has taken every electro or digital medium into consideration. Having divided his work into seven phases, in the first phase he indicated the topic to be later united - through video (TV programme, video and sound, radio show, frozen video stills, site specific installation and fax image) "supervision" - in a "total" video format open for further mutation. In the initial phase Fritz contrasted the electronic media with master-pieces from the Rijksmuseum only to provoke in such a way, considering the medium, space and the duration of the re-presentation, the question of judgement and reception of an art work. The work was eventually presented on the Internet, but only as one possible form of presentation, as one final form of work storage, which means after the exhibitions, catalogues and video. However, although the web offers only the "frozen still"², the artist has in this project, as in for instance in the project "*Cathedral*"³, touched upon the issue of net art. Even with a "harmless" appearance on the Internet the project becomes the target of the supposed new public, and thus subject to different criteria of viewing, comprehending and even judging.

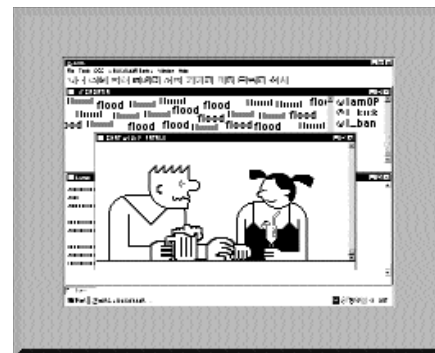
Microrevolutions in the culture at the end of the eighties - rave, techno, ecstasy, trainspotting, cyberpunk or net art, represent a cultural phenomena attracting both the audience and commentators within this generation which has no foothold or power, and is prepared to realize its (in)existence in a dialogue moved to cyberspace. In the age of the evasion of the centre, both in terms of time and space, Internet has become another place where the loss of the creative foothold can be questioned and renewed attempts of its reestablishment made. Having this generation of techno addicts in mind, one should not forget to mention the work of Blaženka Karešin, the *Arkzin* designer and author of the *Oxyd*⁴ online project which, according to *Lonely Planet*⁵, is "the funkiest thing to come out of the Balkans". Karešin's "hand-made e-zine for computers and IRC", specific in seizing an entire visual and semiotic repertoire of the pop culture of the nineties, is a subversive, ludicrous and narcissistic piece of work in which, after the artist ironically declaims his knowledge of the subcultural vocabulary, a cow also gets a right to speak, and women find themselves in a separate column. Among many wonders offered by Karešin to an urban surfer, there are also instructions on how to design one's own web page (in this time of poverty).

je kako posebnost rada na Internetu, možda više nego kreativni ulog, uvjetuje i konačni rezultat. Pavelića zanima nekoliko problema što ih novi medij stavlja pred umjetnika i korisnika, onih koji bi, zbog njegova fluidnog karaktera, mogli ostati kronično nerješivima. On u tipičnoj maniri devedesetih ironizira današnje romantično viđenje novih tehnologija. Računalo, odnosno na njemu ostvaren rad, sugerira umjetnik, nije nedužno područje interakcije, nego frustrirajućeg osjećaja izmanipuliranosti nakon što smo, provirivši u zonu naslade, kao u filmu ili bajci, otkrili da ondje nema ama baš ničega od onoga što je obećano. Na samom ulasku u njegov web rad nude se dvije mogućnosti - "konstrukcija" i "dekonstrukcija". Međutim, odbrojavanje od deset do nule sve će one zakašnjelih reakcija odvesti u prostor s porukom: "Oprosti, bio si prespor, pokušaj ponovno!" Prilikom novog pokušaja opet čeka poruka: "Ovdje nema varanja, ponovno uključi pretraživač ako želiš više akcije!" Ako je surfer sada i brži od raspoloživih deset sekundi, Pavelić neće ispuniti njegova očekivanja. Akcija se svodi na malo statistike i komentara, od kojih jedan pomijne da surfanje ne isključuje odgovornost. Osim što je skeptičan prema internetskoj interakciji, Pavelić poručuje i da je tomu tako zbog brzine imanentne današnjem načinu života. Sugerira da fizička reakcija, pokret ruke, više nije dovoljan u hrvanju s produbljenim poljem privida kojim težimo ovladati⁷. Ali sugerira možda i to da radi u uvjetima u kojima je ovakav škrti iskaz jedini moguć.

U trenutku kad Internet iz zapadne postindustrijske i neoliberalne perspektive zapljuskuje svijet, Hrvatska je, tek izašla iz komunizma i rata, ušla u novu krizu traganja za identitetom. Andreja Kulunčić, koja se u Hrvatskoj najsustavnije bavi online-projektima, u posljednjih je nekoliko godina ostvarila radove koji su tematski vezani uz lokalno socijalno i političko stanje. U interaktivnom projektu *Komunikacija država - građanin*⁸, predstavljenom u okviru akcije *Internet.galaxis`98* u Budimpešti, umjetnicu zanima odnos društva i pojedinca u okolnostima u kojima zemlja ulazi u krizno razdoblje tranzicije. U projektu *Pismo*⁹ bavi se sličnim problemom, ali u hrvatskim uvjetima, a aktualnost PDV-a bilježi u projektu 22%¹⁰. U svim tim projektima Andreje Kulunčić zamjetno je da se današnji odnos umjetnika prema stvarnosti kreće oko uočavanja krize i ukazivanja na nju, a komentar je svjesno ironičan. Naime, pokušala se doista i djelovati u njenim interaktivno zamišljenim projektima, surfer mora na koncu pristati na unaprijed zadanu shemu. Umjetnica sugerira da kao što ona nama ne daje

The online project by Tomislav Pavelić "Peeping Tom" Meets Ivica and Marica⁶ is an example of the specific nature of working on the Internet which determines, possibly even more than the creative input, the final result. Pavelić is interested in a few problems the new medium is putting before the artist and the viewer, problems which, for reason of its fluid character, might remain chronically unsolved. In a typical manner of the nineties, he treats with irony the prevailing romantic view of new technologies. The computer, or the work created on the computer, is not, as suggested by the artist, an innocent area of interaction, but gives a frustrating feeling of manipulation following the discovery, after we peeped into the zone of delight, like in a movie or a fairy tale, that there is nothing there that was promised to us. As soon as we enter his web work, we are faced with the choice between two possibilities - "construction" and "deconstruction". However, the countdown from ten to zero will take all those belated in their reactions to a space with the message: "Sorry, you have been too slow, try again." A new attempt results in a new message: "No cheating here, restart browser if you want more action". Even if the surfer is now quicker than 10 seconds, Pavelić is not going to fulfill his expectations. It all comes down to some statistics and comments, one of which reminds you that surfing is not excluded from responsibility. Pavelić, apart from being sceptical towards Internet interaction, suggests that this is because of the speed immanent to the modern life style. He suggests that a physical reaction, a move of the hand, is no longer sufficient to fight the deepened area of illusion we are trying to master.⁷ But he also points out that he may be working in conditions in which this sparing expression is the only possible one.

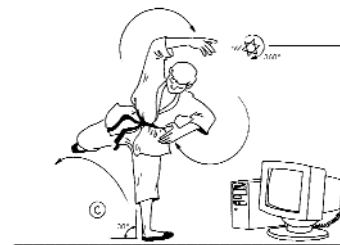
At the time when, from the Western post-industrial and neoliberal perspective, Internet is taking over the world, Croatia, with communism and war just behind it, has entered a new crisis of searching for an identity. Andreja Kulunčić, whose work with online projects is the most systematic in Croatia, has in the last few years realized projects thematically connected to the local social and political situation. In the interactive project *State - Citizen Communication*⁸ which was presented within the *Internet.galaxis`98* event in Budapest, the artist was concerned with the relation between society and the individual in circumstances when a country enters the critical period of transition. In the project *Letter*⁹ she is concerned with similar problems, but within the Croatian context, and the current issue of VAT has been addressed in the project 22%¹⁰. It is visible in all these projects



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⁷ "Usluge oftalmologa na taj način više nisu samo potrebne zbog nekog nedostatka ili bolesti nego i radi bolje iskoristenosti pogleda, pri čemu dubinu ljudskoga vidnog polja postupno preuzimaju tehnike čovjekova služenja stroju; elektro-optičke tehnike kojima je svima cilj organizacija i najnesvjesnijih vizualnih refleksa ne bi li se u isti mah poboljšalo primanje signala i vrijeme odgovora svjedoka." Paul Virilio, *Brzina oslobađanja*, Karlovac 1999., str. 135

⁸ www.haa.hr/kraljevic

⁹ ibidem.

¹⁰ ibidem.

⁷ "In this sense, the services of ophthalmologists are not only required for an impairment or an illness but also for improving eyesight, and while doing so, the depth of the human field of sight is gradually taken over by the technologies of man's serving of the machine; these are electro-optical technologies whose aim is to organise even the most mechanical visual reflexes in order to momentarily improve the reception of signals and the time required for the witness's response." Paul Virilio, "Speed of Liberation", Karlovac 1999., p. 135

⁸ www.haa.hr/kraljevic

⁹ ibidem

¹⁰ ibidem

radu, snimala je i fotografije koje su bile osnovom za CD-ROM s tri odvojene/povezane priče. Tragajući u njima za osobnim identitetom - *Zvezdane staze* iz djetinjstva, preodijevanje u seljačku odjeću ili ulazak u nuklearnu centralu sagrađenu u godini njena rođenja, kritične su točke u tom preispitivanju - umjetnica ne samo da je uspjela dokazati kako interaktivni rad može biti vizualno uvjerljiv, nego, uvelike se služeći poetikom filma, i formalno zahtjevan.

Nesigurnost, nelagoda i zatvorenost, valovi ksenofobije i nacional-romantizam devedesetih nisu, dakle, bile idealne pretpostavke za bavljenje virtualnom stvarnošću, ali na određeni je način takvim stanjem ono potaknuto. Izoliranost isprovocirana patologijom društvene zbilje, nasuprot onoj na Zapadu gdje opstaje kao kontinuirana reakcija na pritaženi instinkt dominiranja nad idejama, jedan je od čimbenika okretanja ovdašnjih umjetnika novim oblicima komunikacije. Podjele na Sjever i Jug, kaže Paul Virilio, više nisu važne, svijet će se raskoliti na "virtualnu zajednicu svjetskog grada" koja će djelovati u "stvarnom vremenu" i ostale, koji će "u većoj nestašici nego ikad dosad, preživjeti u stvarnome prostoru mjesnih gradova, u tom velikom planetarnom predgrađu koje bi sutra trebalo okupiti, ovaj put uistinu, stvarnu zajednicu onih koji više ne posjeduju zaposlenje niti stanište kadro promovirati skladnu i trajnu socijalizaciju"¹³. Hrvatsku još vidimo u ovoj drugoj, rekli bismo, elektrificiranoj slijepoj ulici iz koje se tek sporadično ulijeva u digitalnu autocestu informacija. Dok virtualna klasa paradira u svijetu doživljenom preko računalnog ekrana u "stvarnoj je zajednici" ona još zakrita slikom s televizijskog ekrana. Tehnološka revolucija uvjetovala je u razvijenom svijetu "volju za virtualnošću"¹⁴ koja u planetarnom predgrađu postoji tek u iskrivljenom, spekulativnom obliku. Ondje je bijeg u virtualnost također posljedica sveprisutne krize gubitka orijentacije u svakodnevnici, ali uzrokovana nemogućnošću uklapanja u metropoliziranu sliku svijeta. Paradoksalno, otuda težnja da se s istih onih prepostavki koje su u "svjetskom gradu" dovele do "volje za virtualnošću", dakle, uspostavljanjem poželjnog zapadnog tipa demokracije, krene u njenu kritičku dekonstrukciju¹⁵.

Još uvijek daleko i od prvog vala potrošačkog raja - Jean Baudrillard se njime bavio prije trideset godina i nešto poslije ga utopio u svekoliki simulakrum - hrvatsko se društvo umjesto teletgovini utječe hodočašćima u svetišta *Bille* i *Mercatonea*, umjesto telerada grca u nezaposlenosti, dok umreženost, kako pokazuju novija istraživanja tržišta¹⁶, ne pokazuje pretjerani rast. U

levels. Apart from combining them in a video work, she also took photographs to form the basis of a CD-ROM with three separate/related stories. Searching in them for a personal identity - *Star Track* from her childhood, putting on a peasant dress or going inside a nuclear power station that was built in the year of her birth, represent the critical points in this - the artist not only succeeded in proving that interactive work can be visually convincing, but, using film poetics to a large degree, formally demanding as well.

Insecurity, uneasiness and clannishness, waves of xenophobia and national-romantism of the nineties presented hardly ideal preconditions for the practice of virtual reality, but in a way this reality was exactly stimulated by such a situation. Isolation provoked by the pathology of social reality, in contrast to the one in the West where it remains as a continued reaction to the suppressed instinct of the domination over ideas, is one of the reasons why the local artists turned to new forms of communication. The divisions between the North and South are, according to Paul Virilio, no longer important, the world will be split into "the virtual community of a world city" which will operate in the "real time" and others which will "in poverty larger than ever, survive in the real space of local cities, in this huge planetary suburb about to gather tomorrow, this time for real, the real community of those who have no employment, no habitat capable of promoting a harmonious and permanent socialisation"¹³. We still see Croatia in this other, we would say electrified dead end street which only sporadically joins the digital information highway. While the virtual class parades in a world experienced over the computer screen, in the "real community" it is still hidden behind the picture on the television screen. In the developed world, the technological revolution has conditioned the "will for virtuality"¹⁴ which exists in the planetary suburb only in a distorted, speculative form. There the escape into virtuality is also the consequence of the overall orientation crisis in everyday life, which has been caused by the impossibility to become integrated into the metropolised picture of the world. Paradoxically enough, this is the source of the tendency to embark on, on the basis of the same assumptions that lead to the "option of virtuality" in the "world city", the founding of a desirable western type of democracy, and start its critical deconstruction.¹⁵

Still far from the first wave of consumer paradise - Jean Baudrillard was preoccupied with it thirty years ago and blended it later into the global simulacrum - the Croatian



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sl.10,11: B. Zdravec, *Egomania*; www.najob.com




¹³ *Brzina oslobađanja*, Paul Virilio, Karlovac 1999., str. 106

¹⁴ www.ctheory.com : "Tehnološke fiksacije neoliberalala se, naravno, sada s virtualne proizvodnje šire na virtualnu kulturu: na tehnouznanost i cyber-kulturu, uključujući i kulturu kiborga, cyber-feminizma, cyber-prostora, cyber-atoavanja i cyberumjetnosti... Ali ove se tehnologije, ovi asambleži, trebaju ocijeniti po onome što jesu - sintetički materijali transformirani u instrumente "volje za virtualnošću" ili priključenja ljudskog bića - čak njegovo "nestajanje" - u kibernetiku mašineriju. Tehnologije cyber-kulture su agenti fizičke kolonizacije, imperijalisti ljudske osjetilnosti, stvoreni, kao Frankenstein, našom vlastitom sirovom željom."; John Armitage, *Resisting the Neoliberal Discourse of Technology*; www.ctheory.com

¹³ "Speed of Liberation", Paul Virilio, Karlovac 1999, p. 106.


¹⁴ "The technological fixations of the neoliberals are, of course, presently extending themselves from virtual production to virtual culture; to technoscience and to cyber-culture, including the culture of cyborgs, cyberfeminism, cyberspace, cyberwarfare, and cyberart... These technologies, these assemblages, though, need to be appreciated for what they are: synthetic materials transformed into instruments of "the will to virtuality," or of human incorporation - even "disappearance" - into cybernetic machinery. Cybercultural technologies are agents of physical colonization, imperialists of the human sensorium, created, like Frankenstein, by our own raw desire." John Armitage, "Resisting the Neoliberal Discourse of Technology"; www.ctheory.com



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takvim je okolnostima nestvarno računati s uspostavljanjem veza između korporacijskih sponzora, vlade i kulturnih institucija, jedinog mogućeg zdravog priključka za podršku i promociju umjetničke produkcije. Umjetnici tek izašli s Akademije vrlo se brzo suočavaju s novčanim teškoćama pri nabavi osnovnog materijala za rad, mnogi moraju odustati od zahtjevnijih projekata već na prvom koraku, a situacija je jednako kritična i za one spremne istraživati nove medije (neposjedovanje osobnog računala, neumreženost i izostanak tehničke i stručne podrške koju takav rad podrazumijeva). Hrvatski su umjetnici, kao i oni u drugim bivšim komunističkim zemljama, u devedesetima gotovo u potpunosti za ostvarenje online projekata novčanu i logističku pomoć dobivali preko međunarodnih stipendija i, naročito, Instituta *Otvoreno društvo* Georgea Sorosa. A nakon što je, smatra se, država ispunila većinu pretpostavki za funkcioniranje demokracije, treba očekivati i da će pomoć za istraživanje i rad u novim medijima prijeći na leđa društva i potencijalnih sponzora pa je stoga prilično neizvjesno što će se na polju hrvatske net umjetnosti ududuće događati. Dakle, na umjetnicima ostaje da se snalaze, a mnogi će vjerojatno, kao i dosada, morati pronalaziti načine za



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rad izvan zemlje. Online umjetnost, nadalje, u Hrvatskoj zasad ne može računati niti s većim komunikacijskim prostorom, niti s novom publikom. Iako je Internet kao medij nad medijima gotovo romantično shvaćeno demokratsko sredstvo percipiranja i uobličavanja svijeta te dokidanja bilo kakve hijerarhije, ne može se reći da u Hrvatskoj išta znači mogućnost umreženja "iz bilo kojeg domaćinstva". Oni koji prate novu umjetničku produkciju uglavnom surfaju s radnog mjesta ili čekaju rijetke prilike da se neki projekt predstavi u nekoj galeriji. Opsesivni "kućni tragači", pak, ne samo da za mnoge od zahtjevnijih online radova i "neznam-gdenabaviti" CD-ROM-ove moraju posjedovati moćna računala, nego računati i s frustrirajuće visokim telefonskim računima.

Dakle, kada kažemo da u proteklom desetljeću iskustvo sučeljavanja sa smrću, gubitkom, borbom za preživljavanje, ali i uspostavom novih vrijednosnih sudova o

society, instead of teleshopping, turns to pilgrimages to the sanctuaries of *Billa* and *Mercatone*, and instead of teleworking, it chokes in unemployment, while the number of networked people, as the latest market research shows¹⁶, does not indicate significant increase. It is unrealistic to expect that in such circumstances the connections between corporate sponsors, government and cultural institutions, will be established, which is the only possible and sound solution for the support and promotion of artistic production. Very soon, artists fresh from the Academy have to face financial problems when purchasing some basic working material, many of them have to give up some more demanding projects in their initial phase, and the situation is equally critical even for those who are ready to explore new media (not having a personal computer, inability to connect to the Internet, and absence of technical and professional support which naturally goes with this kind of work). In the nineties, Croatian artists, like those from other post-communist countries, received financial and logistical help for the creation of online projects almost only through international scholarships, and in particular through George Soros's *Open Society* Institute. And after the state supposedly fulfilled most of the requirements for the operation of democracy, one should expect that the society and potential sponsors would take care of the research and work in the new media. It is therefore quite uncertain as to what will happen with Croatian net art in the future. Artists are left on their own, and many of them will probably, as before, have to go to work abroad. Furthermore, online art in Croatia cannot at present count either on bigger communication space or a new audience. Although the Internet as the medium of all mediums is almost romantically perceived as a democratic means of perception and shaping of the world, and also as an abolition of every kind of hierarchy, it is difficult to say that the possibility of connecting to the Internet "from any household" means much in Croatia. Those who follow the new artistic production mostly surf from their working places or wait for the rare occasions for a project to be presented in a gallery. It is not only that for many of the more demanding online projects and "don't-know-where-to-get" CD-ROMs, obsessive "home searchers" have to possess powerful computers, but they also have to count on frustratingly big telephone bills.

When we therefore say that in the past decade the experience of facing death, loss, struggle for survival, but also establishment of new values of a nation's identity, and therefore also individual, was not in favour of



¹⁵ Zanimljivo je ukazati na ironiju i sumnju u nove medije u Rusiji. Usporedi npr. Lew Manovich, *Behind the Screen / Russian New Media*: "Za umjetnika sa Zapada, interaktivnost je odlično sredstvo i za predstavljanje i za širenje ideala demokracije i jednakosti; za post-komunista to je još jedan oblik manipulacije u kojoj umjetnici koriste novu tehnologiju za nametanje totalitarne volje drugima. Nadalje, zapadni umjetnici obično tehnologiju uzimaju potpuno ozbiljno, očajavajući kada ne radi; post-komunistički umjetnici, s druge strane, znaju da je u prirodi tehnologije da ne radi, da će se sigurno pokvariti. Odrastajući u društvu u kojem istina i laž, stvarnost i propaganda uvijek idu ruku pod ruku, post-komunistički je umjetnik spreman prihvatiti osnovnu istinu života u informatičkom društvu (napisanu u Claude Shannonovoj matematičkoj teoriji komunikacije; svaki signal uvijek sadrži i neki šum; signal i šum su kvalitativno isti; što je šum u jednoj situaciji može biti signal u drugoj.": Lev Manovich, "Behind the Screen / Russian New Media", www.ctheory.com

¹⁶ www.ipsa.hr

¹⁷ <http://jagor.srce.hr/germa/>

¹⁵ It is interesting to point out the irony and doubt about the new media in Russia - "For a Western artist, that is, interactivity is a perfect vehicle both to represent and promulgate ideals of democracy and equality; for a post-communist, it is yet another form of manipulation, in which artists use advanced technology to impose their totalitarian wills on people. Further, Western media artists usually take technology absolutely seriously, despairing when it does not work; post-communist artists, on the other hand, recognize that the nature of technology is that it does not work, that it will necessarily break down. Having grown up in a society where truths and lies, reality and propaganda always go hand in hand, the post-communist artist is ready to accept the basic truisms of life in an information society (spelled out in Claude Shannon's mathematical theory of communication): that every signal always contains some noise; that signal and noise are qualitatively the same; and that what is noise in one situation can be a signal in another.": Lev Manovich, "Behind the Screen / Russian New Media", www.ctheory.com

¹⁶ www.ipsa.hr

¹⁷ <http://jagor.srce.hr/germa/>

identitetu nacije, pa onda i pojedinca, nije pogodovalo upošljavanju novih medija, mislimo na ekonomske razloge, ali jednako tako i na moć kulturno-političkih komesara po kojima nije bilo vrijeme za umjetnost koja ne bi predstavljala, i po mogućnosti angažirano, korespondirala sa stvarnošću, ne toliko socijalnom, koliko ideološkom. U cijeloj priči opstanka na margini ne treba zaboraviti ni institucionalno ignoriranje alternative. Dika i Mile, potpisnici projekta *Germa*¹⁷, nagrađenog na natječaju za net umjetnost Multi-medijiskog Instituta iz Zagreba¹⁸, vrlo jasno to kažu opisujući svoj rad. *Germa* je, objašnjavaju, zbirka, "neka vrsta kućne radinosti. Nema tu nekog promišljanja ili programatskih stavova. Internet je dobra prilika za napraviti ono što je zanimljivo u nekom trenutku i odmah to pokazati...bez gnjavaža koje nameće likovnjački *community*."

Ekperimentalni oblik Interneta, projekt Arpanet, nastao je 1969. unutar Ministarstva obrane Sjedinjenih Država kao model komunikacije u slučaju nuklearnog udara, a poslije je uveden u sustav Pentagona i činio se čudesnim izumom rezerviranim za vojsku, znanost, industriju i istraživanja računalnih entuzijasta¹⁹. Hladnoratovsku ideološku histeriju zamjenjuje, međutim, nakon trideset godina, u vrijeme pada komunizma i posljednjih izdisaja kolonijalizma, fetišističko obožavanje digitalnih medija kojima se uz ovisnike i promotore konzumerizma podjednako utječu i vjernici u globalni anarhizam cyber-prostora (Mile i Dika). "Internet je najsnažniji medij osobne promocije u cjelokupnom rasponu od ozbiljne i poslovne, do maštovite i ekshibicionističke. Na suprotnoj strani veze neprestano je i sveprisutno zanimanje za narav drugog čovjeka... Cilj je stvoriti stjecište svih koji su sami sebi najdraži objekti, omogućiti što lakšu usporedbu i time pridonijeti stvaranju što sočnijih osobnih siteova." - tim je riječima, pak, popraćen online projekt *Egomanija*²⁰, grafičkog dizajnera i pjesnika Bojana Zdravca koji ne odolijeva propagiranju internetskog *wunderkammera*. Očaran hiperprostorom koji mu je nadohvat ruke, on teži i fragmentaciji svog bića, samoljubivo se ogleda u društvu globalnih egomanijaka i traži publiku među dokonim voajerima koji će, nakon što izgube strpljenje gledajući i čitajući Zdravca, biti ispraćeni u ribolov. Riječju, njegova je taktika preblizu onoj konzumerizma, a da ne bismo zaključili da net-umjetnost voli koketirati i s cyber-kičom.

Stvarnu paranoju iz vremena kibernetičke revolucije šezdesetih zamijenili su u

the new media, we refer here to economic reasons, but equally so to the power of cultural-political commissioners who claimed that the time was not right for the art which would not correspond with reality in a representative and engaged way, this reality not being so much of a social, as of an ideological nature. In the whole story of survival on the margins, one should not forget about the institutional ignorance of the alternative culture. Dika and Mile, authors of the project *Germa*¹⁷, which won an award at the net art competition of the Multimedia Institute from Zagreb,¹⁸ state this very clearly when talking about their work. *Germa* is a collection, "some sort of cottage industry. There are no reflections or agendas there. The Internet is a good opportunity to create whatever is interesting at one moment and to show it right away... without going through problems forced by the art *community*."

An experimental form of the Internet, the so-called Arpanet project, which was created in 1969 at the US Ministry of Defense as a model of communication in case of nuclear attack, and was later introduced to the Pentagon system, seemed like a marvellous invention reserved only for the army, science, industry and researches of computer enthusiasts.¹⁹ During the time of the fall of communism and the last gasps of colonialism, the cold-war ideological hysteria was replaced, after thirty years, with fetishistic admiration of a digital media which is equally turned to by addicts and promoters of consumerism as well as believers in the global anarchism of cyberspace (Mile and Dika). "Internet is the most powerful medium of personal promotion ranging from a serious and a business one to an imaginative and exhibitionist one. On the other line there is a constant and all pervasive interest for the character of the other person... The aim is to create a meeting point for all those who think of themselves as their favourite objects, to enable the easiest possible comparison and thus contribute to the creation of the juiciest personal sites possible" - these words marked the online project *Egomania*²⁰ by the graphic designer and poet Bojan Zdravec who doesn't resist the promotion of the Internet *wunderkammer*. Fascinated by the hyperspace within his reach, he is even aiming for the fragmentation of his own being, self-admiringly looking around in the company of global egomaniacs and is searching for an audience among idle voyers who, after they lose their patience watching and reading Zdravec, will be escorted to fishing. To summarize, his strategy is too close to that of consumerism to prevent us from concluding that net art is fond of flirting with cyberkitsch.



¹⁸ Prva net-art-nagrada nije dodijeljena, a Dika i Mile dijele drugu s Andrejom Kulunčić (*Zatvorena zbilja - embrio*). Predsjedavajući žirija, Slovenac Vuk Čosić, takvu odluku pripisuje tomu što su prijavljeni otprije postojeći radovi, tj. "nepri održavanju teme". S Čosićem se može složiti, ali upravo je to primjer koji govori o prisiljenosti autora da stvaraju u okvirima (financijskih) mogućnosti. Posljedica čvrste logike izbornika je neiskorištenost prve nagrade i dijeljenje druge na dva dijela, dakle, i opet nemogućnost da se s dobivenom novčanom nagradom eventualno pokrene novi projekt; www.mi2.hr

¹⁹ Vladimir Bonačić, lani preminuli znanstvenik i kibernetički umjetnik, od sredine se šezdesetih bavio računalnom umjetnošću, što je tema koje se u kontekstu net umjetnosti nismo posebno doticali.

²⁰ www.haa.hr/kraljevic/online/egoman.htm ili <http://www.najob.com>

¹⁸ The first net art prize was not awarded, and Dika and Mile shared the second with Andreja Kulunčić ("Closed Reality - Embryo"). The president of the committee, the Slovene Vuk Čosić, explained this decision claiming that the works which had entered the competition were not new, or that they were not "keeping to the subject". One can agree with Čosić, but this is an exact example of a situation in which authors are forced to create within their (financial) possibilities. Because of the selector's firm logic, the first prize was not awarded, and the second was divided into two parts. This resulted in the impossibility of the authors to initiate a new project with the award money; www.mi2.hr

¹⁹ Since the mid-sixties, Vladimir Bonačić, a scientist and cybernetic artist who died last year, worked with computer art, a topic which, within the context of net art, we haven't touched upon in greater detail.

²⁰ www.haa.hr/kraljevic/online/egoman.htm or <http://www.najob.com>

FORM1 is not defined.



²¹ U razgovoru s Ružicom Šimunović, *Virtualna embriologija*, "Vijenac" broj 148, 4. studenog 1999.

²² <http://embryo.inet.hr/>

²³ "Interaktivna online umjetnost nadopunjavala se elementima work-in-progress-a, mail-art-a, umjetnički koncipiranog projekta, site-specific i konceptualne umjetnosti, videa, društveno angažirane umjetnosti...Lista nije iscrpljena", Branko Franceschi, pogovor kataloga *Zatvorena zbilja - embryo*, Zagreb, 2000.

²⁴ embryo@inet.hr

²⁵ Iako u e-mail razmjeni ima dopisivanja na hrvatskom jeziku, uglavnom je ono na engleskom. Pitanje jezika zasebna je tema WWW. Engleski je na Internetu općeprihvaćen jezik komunikacije, a iako smo radove umjetnika u tekstu prevodili na hrvatski jezik, treba kazati da su svi oni ostvareni dvojezično ili isključivo na engleskom.

²¹ Talking to Ružica Šimunović, "Virtual Embryology", "Vijenac", No. 148, 4 November 1999

²² <http://embryo.inet.hr/>

²³ "Interactive online art was being supplemented with elements of work in progress, mail art, artistically conceived projects, site-specific and conceptual art, video, socially engaged art... And that is by no means everything", Branko Franceschi, afterword of the catalogue "Closed Reality - Embryo", Zagreb, 2000

²⁴ embryo@inet.hr

²⁵ Although some of the e-mail correspondence is in Croatian, most of it is still in English. The language is a separate issue related to WWW. The English language is the generally accepted language of communication on the Internet, and although the works of artists we mentioned here were all translated into Croatian, we need to mention that all or most of them were created bilingual or exclusively in English.

devedesetima mikro-udesi, u kojima se zbilja doživljena metaforički filtrira kroz komentar osobnih, tehnoloških i kulturoloških neuroza. Umreženi pojedinci dodiranjem tipke računala ukazuju na novu prijetnju fašizma, bave se ozonskim rupama, govore o pravima životinja, izvanzemaljcima, i najavljuju kraj svijeta infantilno angažirani, svjesni da nisu drugo nego *flâneuri* na senzacionalističkoj mapi svijeta. Nakon medijske obrade i pohrane u vrtlog podataka, na izboru je još postojećeg institucionalnog dijaloga ili pojedinca ustrajnog u prožimanju sa svijetom, da se uključi u prividno, *point & click* razrješavanje problema. U globalnom društvu u kojem se, nasuprot desecima milijuna gledatelja entuzijastički uključenih u povijesno slijetanje Apolla 11 na Mjesec, o MIR-u lansiranom 1986. govori samo ako nešto krene krivo, tehnologija je izgubila aureolu utopijske vizije i postala, nakon prvog ushita, banalnim dijelom svakodnevnice. Otuda ta ravnodušnost, nemogućnost isključenja, ali i učinkovitog djelovanja na krizu što ju je prođubio nezamjenjivi stroj. Internet je do apsurdna umrtvio unutarnji sukob poljuljanog subjekta, omogućio da se uključanjem, primjerice, u *mailing* rasprave, ne samo oni izravno, nego svi zainteresirani, bave ratom na jugoistoku Europe, prijetećom pojavom Jörga Haidera ili, kao Zdravec, širenjem egomanije. Tek u onim slučajevima kada umjetnik artikularno veže svoje diskurzivno djelovanje s teorijama simulacije, komunikacije i cyber-prostora, otvara se kritični prostor, ne toliko za provokativno seciranje izobličene naravi novog vrtlog svijeta, koliko za njegovu latentnu kritiku, parodiranje i

The real paranoia from the times of cybernetic revolution of the sixties has been replaced by mycro accidents of the nineties, where the reality experienced metaphorically is filtrated through the comment of personal, technological and cultural neuroses. Childishly engaged networked individuals, who are aware that they are nothing but the *flâneurs* on a sensationalist world map, point with a simple touch on the keyboard to the new threat of fascism, deal with ozone holes, discuss animal rights, aliens and announce the end of the world. After the media processing and storage into a whirl of data, the still existing institutionalised dialogue or an individual persistent in his permeation with the world, are left with a choice to join the seeming *point & click* solving of the problems. In the global society where in contrast to the tens of millions of people watching enthusiastically the historical landing of Apollo 11 on the Moon, the MIR launched in 1986 is the subject of conversation only if something goes wrong, technology has lost its appeal of the utopian vision and has become, after the initial enthusiasm, a trivial part of everyday life. This is the origin of this indifference, of the impossibility to disconnect, but also to effectively work on the crisis only intensified by the irreplaceable machine. The Internet has made insensible the inner conflict of the weakened subject almost to the point of absurdity, it has enabled, by way of *mailing* discussions, that not only those directly involved in these discussions, but anybody interested can talk about the war in south-eastern Europe, the threatening phenomenon of Jörg Haider or, like Zdravec, expansion of egomania. It is only when the artist articulately connects his discourse work with the theories of simulation, communication

ironiziranje. Takvim utopijskim negiranjem ideologija svjesno se, međutim, gradi nova ideologija, uporište subjektu koji se narcisoidno laća preslagivanja postojećeg.

“Otkad radim s Internetom zanima me odnos čovjeka i stroja, problem samog stroja i što biva kada se on konačno isključi. Znači, koliko se mijenjamo samim tim što smo bili u cyber-prostoru, koliko to utječe na naše poimanje svijeta i komunikaciju s ljudima. U ovom radu, čini mi se, prilično sam oštro zasjekla u taj problem”²¹, kazala je Andreja Kulunčić objašnjavajući svoj online projekt *Zatvorena zbilja - embryo*²². U ovom se multimedijском radu²³ umjetnica uspjela dotaći niza posebnosti vezanih uz stvarnost protegnutu kroz labirintičnu dubinu računalnog ekrana. Projekt u kojem umjetnica s nizom suradnika eksperimentalno prati genetski inženjering ukazuje na probleme vezane uz nezadrživi razvoj znanosti i manipuliranje etikom, a na svim je razinama pokazao kako je stroj doista postao mjestom oblikovanja svijesti. Otvorena e-mail²⁴ rasprava zaintrigirala je surfere najrazličitijih profila i interesa pa se ondje našlo ozbiljnih razmišljanja o genetici, primjedbi o jeziku na kojem se rasprava vodi²⁵, kao i teorije Slavoj Žižeka. Nakon šest mjeseci u cyber-prostoru u kojem je ponuđeno i sudjelovanje u stvaranju vlastita genetski izmanipulirana embrija, projekt je bio potican i raspravama, što su se, sudjelovanjem publike i stručnjaka s područja medicine, biologije, filozofije i sociologije, nastavile uz konačnu izložbenu prezentaciju dobivenih rezultata u galeriji Miroslav Kraljević. *Zatvorena zbilja - embryo* bit će dostupan i u obliku video zapisa, tiskanog materijala i CD-ROM-a, pa je Andreja Kulunčić ovako zahtjevnim projektom, između ostalog, otvorila prostor i za jednu moguću kulturološku raspravu o kritičnom utjecaju tehnoscience na odabir umjetničkih tema. †

and cyberspace, that a crytical space is opened, not so much for the provocative dissection of the distorted nature of the brave new world, as much as for its latent criticism, parody and irony. With such an utopian negation of ideologies, a new ideology is being built, a stronghold for the subject which is narcissoidly taking up the rearranging of the existing.

“Ever since I started working with the Internet, I have been interested in the relation between man and the machine, the problem of the machine itself and what happens when it is finally turned off. This means that I am interested to see how much cyberspace changes us when we visit it, how much this influences our perception of the world and communication with other people. With this work I think I have rather sharply touched upon this problem”²¹, said Andreja Kulunčić when explaining her online project *Closed Reality - Embryo*²². In this multimedia project²³ the artist has touched upon a range of particularities connected with the reality expended through the labyrinth-like depth of the computer screen. The project in which the artist, together with a team of collaborators, experimentally monitors genetic engineering, indicating the problems related to the irrepresible development of science and manipulation of ethics, has at all levels demonstrated that the machine has become the point of forming a consciousness. Open e-mail²⁴ discussion intrigued surfers of various profiles and interests and that resulted in serious reflections on genetics, remarks about the language of the discussion²⁵ and theories of Slavoj Žižek. After six months in cyberspace, where one could participate in the creation of one's own genetically manipulated embryo, the project was stimulated through discussions which continued, with the participation of the public and experts from medicine, biology, philosophy and sociology, at the final presentation of the compiled results at the Miroslav Kraljević gallery. *Closed Reality - Embryo* will also be available in the form of a video recording, printed material and CD-ROM, whereby Andreja Kulunčić with this demanding project opened up the space for one possible cultural discussion about the crytical influence of technoscience on the selection of artistic topics. ●

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