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EDITORIAL
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Editorial

by Nisar Keshvani

This issue Jos□-Carlos Mari#tegui, scientist, media theorist, and Alta Tecnolog' a Andina (ATA) president previews electronic art in Peru before exploring closed-circuit video projects in Peru, and highlighting important works.

Catch a glimpse of Leonardo's spanking new 35: 3 (2002) issue via the table of contents and abstracts. In the Leonardo Digital Reviews, Stephen Wilson reviews Biorobotics, and much more of the latest in the publishing world.

We present the table of contents and abstracts of the Leonardo Journal, Volume 35: 2 (2002) issue. And in the Leonardo Digital Reviews section, Mike Mosher reviews 'Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde', and Robert Pepperell examines Arthur C. Danto's 'The Body/Body Problem: Selected Essays'

Please bear with us as the new editorial and design team sinks its teeth into our envisioned LEA. You can expect the next few issues to be released a few weeks apart, and we hope you enjoy the thematic issues we have planned for the latter half of 2002.

As always we would love to hear from you, and are constantly on the lookout for new ideas. Drop us a line at:  
lea@mitpress.mit.edu

Watch this space!

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LEONARDO JOURNAL
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ARTIST' S ARTICLE

PHILLIP GEORGE: Mnemonic Notations: A Decade of Art Practice  
within a Digital Environment

ABSTRACT The author's work Mnemonic Notations represents the  
evolution of one computer graphic file, first generated in 1990.  
The author has modified the file for over a decade in response to  
exposure to many ideas and influences. The Mnemonic Notations  
file has been output and visually represented as paintings and  
prints. Mnemonic Notations files were also used as the basis of  
the Mnemonic Notations CD-ROMs and interactive installations, as  
well as digital photographic works dealing with fictional  
documentations.

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GENERAL ARTICLES

ALEKSANDRA MACZAK: The Ecological Imperative: Elements of Nature  
in Late Twentieth-Century Art

ABSTRACT  
The author draws attention to visual artworks of the 1980s and  
1990s in which the artists, drawing upon diverse trends,  
disciplines and artistic generations, applied materials directly  
from the surrounding environment in pieces called

eco-installations. The text attempts to explain certain creative postures and artistic decisions in the context of our advanced civilization - its achievements and threats alike. The eco-installations - subtle, subdued, gentle, fragile, fleeting, whose finite existence (like that of living organisms doomed to pass away) reflects the artists' own decisions - are in urgent need of identification, analysis and documentation. Among artists recognized in international circles, the author situates two Polish artists perhaps less well-known than their colleagues.

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STEVE TOMASULA: Genetic Art and the Aesthetics of Biology

ABSTRACT

The creation of Alba, the first mammal genetically engineered to be a work of art, accents the increasing number of artists who take as their medium plants, cells, genes and other biological materials. Like traditional artists, these bio-artists raise traditional art issues; but since their work collapses the gap between art and science, representation and biological form, they also marry the rich tradition of manipulating nature for aesthetic reasons, the ethical complexities created by today's biotech revolution and the historical ramifications of applying aesthetic judgment to humans.

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THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE ARTS, SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

VLADIMIR M. PETROV: Entropy and Stability in Painting: An Information Approach to the Mechanisms of Artistic Creativity

ABSTRACT

The author presents a method for identifying the sequence of stages of the creative process in painting, specifically an artist's decisions about such parameters as genre, composition, color structure, etc. The method is based on the calculation of the coefficients of informativity relating to the distribution (and hence, entropy) of the artist's works over the above parameters. Using this method, 240 paintings by three famous Russian artists (Pavel Kuznetsov, Constantin Korovin and Ilya Mashkov) were studied. Both the common features and the individual peculiarities of their creativity are revealed, including the "integral stability" of each artist's creative process and its changes over time.

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SPECIAL SECTION: Genetic Algorithms in Visual Art and Music

Guest Editors: Colin G. Johnson and Juan Jesus Romero Cardalda

ARTEMIS MORONI, FERNANDO VON ZUBEN and JINATAS MANZOLLI:  
ArTbitration: Human-Machine Interaction in Artistic Domains

ABSTRACT

In this article, the authors analyze the process of human-machine interaction in the context of artistic domains, as a framework for exploring creativity and producing results that could not be obtained without such interaction. ArTbitration denotes a process aimed at improving users' aesthetic judgment involving evolutionary computation and other computational intelligence methodologies. The authors interpret it as an interactive,

iterative optimization process. They also suggest ArTbitration as an effective way to produce art through the efficient manipulation of information and the proper use of computational creativity to increase the complexity of the results, without neglecting the aesthetic aspects. The article emphasizes the spoken, visual and musical domains, since these are generally characterized by the lack of a systematic way to determine the quality of the result.

DUNCAN ROWLAND and FRANK BIOCCA: Evolutionary Cooperative Design Methodology: The Genetic Sculpture Park

ABSTRACT

The Genetic Sculpture Park seeks to engage artists and observers in a creative dialogue and to empower novices in the creation of complex computer-graphic models. Each visitor to the park experiences a unique set of sculptural forms and takes part in a cooperative conversation with the computer to produce more aesthetically pleasing designs. Inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution, the project uses genetic algorithms to allow visitors to breed forms tailored to their individual sense of aesthetics. In this article, the authors recount investigations into evolutionary design methodologies (using shampoo bottles and three-dimensional head models) and describe their implementation in the Genetic Sculpture Park, an interactive Java/Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML) world.

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TATSUO UNEMI: SBART 2.4: An IEC Tool for Creating Two-Dimensional Images, Movies and Collages

ABSTRACT

In this article, the author gives an overview of SBART 2.4, an interactive system used to create abstract two-dimensional images, collages and movies. The system, one of the successors of Karl Sims' system, runs on a small computer that uses a function to calculate the color value of each pixel as a genotype. All of the ranges and domains are three-dimensional vectors. The system utilizes a multi-field user interface to enhance the diversity of production and has optional facilities that allow the creation of collages of external images or short movies.

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SPECIAL SECTION: A-Life in Art, Design, Edutainment, Games and Research

Guest Editor: Christa Sommerer

MAURO ANNUNZIATO and PIERO PIERUCCI: Relazioni Emergenti: Experiments with the Art of Emergence

ABSTRACT

Progress in the scientific understanding and simulation of natural evolutionary mechanisms may be creating the basis for a new stage in evolution: the coming of artificial beings and artificial societies. Culture itself, aesthetics and intelligence are coming to be seen as the emergent, self-organizing qualities of a collectivity, evolved over time through both genetic and linguistic evolution. This paper sketches the development of hybrid digital worlds, in which artificial beings are able to evolve their own cultures, languages and aesthetics. Finally, the

authors discuss their interactive audio-visual art installation *Relazioni Emergenti*, based on artificial-life environments. In this work, digital beings can interact, reproduce and evolve through the mechanisms of genetic mutation. People can interact with these artificial beings, creating hybrid ecosystems.

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ELEONORA BILOTTA and PIETRO PANTANO: *Synthetic Harmonies: An Approach to Musical Semiosis by Means of Cellular Automata*

ABSTRACT

The authors explore the creation of artificial universes that are expressible through music and internally comprehensible as complex systems. The semiotic approach this paper presents could also allow the development of new tools of investigation into the complexity of artificial-life systems. Through codification systems using musical language, it is possible to understand the patterns that the global dynamics of cellular automata produce and to use the results in the musical domain. In the authors' approach, music can be considered the semantics of complexity. The authors identify analogies between elements of cellular automata and elements of musical form, creating a narrative musical framework that has allowed them to develop a productive, computational and semantic methodology. Music fosters an increased capability for analyzing and reconstructing complexity, providing unexpected insight into its organization.

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CHRISTA SOMMERER and LAURENT MIGNONNEAU: *Modeling the Emergence of Complexity: Complex Systems, the Origin of Life and Interactive On-Line Art*

ABSTRACT

The origin of this paper lies in the fundamental question of how complexity arose in the course of evolution and how one might construct an artistic interactive system to model and simulate this emergence of complexity. Relying on the idea that interaction and communication between entities of a system drive the emergence of structures that are more complex than the mere parts of that system, the authors propose to apply principles of complex system theory to the creation of *VERBARIUM*, an interactive, computer-generated and audience-participatory artwork on the Internet, and to test whether complexity can emerge within this system.

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LEONARDO DIGITAL REVIEWS 2002.03
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In this month's *Leonardo Digital Reviews*, Frieder Nake's review continues to track the project in mainstream art history to recover direction in thematic approaches by the integration of art and the visual aspects of science. In his review of "Spectacular Bodies," the anatomical epistemology of the renaissance is clearly evident. This trend is subtly mirrored in

Kevin Murray's comparison of two recent books covering the human genome project. According to Robert Pepperell, biology is also the unstable locus of Arthur Danto's collection of essays on the "Body/Body Problem." In such a publishing environment, it comes as something of a contrast that Mike Mosher's two reviews and David Topper's reflect an alternative engagement with the world. Topper's consideration of "The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs," by Brenda Denzler is a timely reminder that as we contemplate the demise of the ten-dimensional universe and ascendance of the eleventh, there is possibly much more "out there" than we would often happily admit to. Mosher's review of Bill Nichols' compendium of essays, entitled "Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde," similarly brings back into focus the power of the poetic and the mysterious, not simply to ameliorate the relentless rhetoric of the rational but to color our experience of the diversity of the universe in ways that evade the legacy of quattrocentto epistemologies.

These reviews, as well as the material that has been submitted by our panel over the past year, are all available at the Leonardo Digital Reviews website.

Michael Punt

Editor-in-Chief  
Leonardo Digital Reviews

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New this month at Leonardo Digital Reviews  
<<http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/Leonardo/ldr.html>>.

The Misunderstood Gene, by Michel Morange Reviewed by Kevin Murray

Genes, Peoples And Languages, by Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza  
Reviewed by Kevin Murray

Spectacular Bodies: The Art and Science of the Human Body, from Leonardo to Now, by Martin Kemp Reviewed by Prof. Frieder Nake

The Body/Body Problem: Selected Essays by Arthur C. Danto  
Reviewed by Robert Pepperell

Approaches to Understanding Visual Culture, by Malcolm Barnard  
Reviewed by Mike Mosher

Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde, edited by Bill Nichols  
Reviewed by Mike Mosher

The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs, by Brenda Denzler Reviewed by David Topper

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< Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde >

Edited by Bill Nichols. Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, CA, U.S.A., 2001. Paper, 332 pp., illus. ISBN: 0-520-22732-8.

Reviewed by Mike Mosher, <[mosher@svsu.edu](mailto:mosher@svsu.edu)>.

To many film students of the 1970s, Maya Deren (1917-1961)

remained but a mysterious name and a memorable face, the one who Anais Nin compared to a Botticelli painting, gazing from a window in Meshes of the Afternoon. Deren's work, including her footage of dance in Haitian Voudoun ("voodoo") ceremonies, was often cited but, until the 1980s and 1990s, too rarely shown. All artists and cultural critics interested in the history of independent cinema should familiarize themselves with this substantive and eclectic artist and theorist. In this collection, she is center-stage, lighted and shot from many sides.

Deren, born Eleanora Derenkowsky in Kiev, emigrated to the United States with her parents as a child. A teenage socialist activist, she married young, studied literature and helped administer the Katherine Dunham Dance Company before making her films. Her second husband, Alexander Hammid, was a Czech filmmaker who collaborated with her and encouraged her individual flowering. Deren moved during her twenties, a richly creative decade for her, within a milieu of New York cineastes. Although she was insulted and lampooned by Dylan Thomas at Cinema 16's "Poetry and the Film" symposium in 1953 for her ambitious ideas, her "modernist poetics" can now be clearly located among Rudolph Arnheim's formalism, Andre Bazin's realism and Sergei Eisenstein's dialectical montage.

Deren worked with African American dancers like Talley Beatty, acted uncredited in many of her own films and sometimes saw her character merging with those played by Rita Christiani or Anais Nin. An attraction to motifs of ritual, water and transformation drew Deren to study and document Voudoun rites in Haiti. Her writings documenting this experience were given a frosty reception by academia, for Deren claimed, in the book's footnote, to have experienced possession by the spirits at one Voudoun event. She supported younger unconventional filmmakers such as Stan Brakhage and inspired others she never met, such as the appreciative Barbara Hammer. Deren's work also looks back to the turn-of-the-century trickster aesthetic of Georges Melies, though she felt unfairly lumped in with the surrealists by enthusiast Parker Tyler and others.

The essays in this collection explore all the above aspects of Deren's life and work and the book closes with her own 52-page film theory text, "An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film," published in 1946. Like many works published shortly after a World War (from Andre Breton's "Surrealist Manifesto" to Vannevar Bush's "As We May Think"), it is forthright in its dedication to a new path, cleared in sweeping, yet sometimes labored, world-historical and scientific language. The nine chapters of Deren's "Anagram" are readable in two different sequences, shown upon a two-dimensional grid. Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde borrows this anagrammatic (perhaps, more accurately, acrostic) form in its title page to order its essays in two separate sequences as well. In light of this experiment in literary structure, one wonders what Maya Deren - with her eye for visually memorable characters' navigational fluidity, enhanced with poetic cross-cutting - might have done in the medium of hypertext.

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< The Body/Body Problem: Selected Essays >

by Arthur C. Danto. Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, CA, U.S.A., 2001. 246 pp., paper. ISBN: 0-520-22908-8.



Reviewed by Robert Pepperell, <pepperell@ntlworld.com>.

Anyone acquiring this book solely on the basis of Arthur Danto's reputation as an art critic might be disappointed. The testimonials on the back of this edition are somewhat misleading in emphasizing his track record as an art historian since there is little, if any, specifically aesthetic theory in this collection of philosophical essays, spanning some 30 years. With a Library of Congress data classification of "Representation (Philosophy)," the question of how ideas about the world are held in the mind is clearly one of Danto's central preoccupations here, along with history, science and the nature of bodily action. The matter of art, therefore, is dealt with more obliquely through general problems of representation, although Danto often uses examples from art history to illustrate more philosophical points.

As the title declares, this is a book of problems, and the problems are largely tackled through the methodology of analytical philosophy - that branch of enquiry that proceeds by trying to decompose complex processes into a sequence of logically coherent statements. Thus Danto frequently frames propositions in the algebraic style typical of this discourse. Sentences like "Let the unconscious element be  $W(p)$ ... Let the manifest element be  $W(p^*)$ " (p. 134) might not endear him to the general reader but are, nevertheless, some guarantee of the authenticity of Danto's philosophical voice.

The twelve essays collected here cover an impressive range of subjects, some of little more than local concern to the field of academic philosophy, while others push at the very bounds of our self-knowledge. Within the confines of this review, it would not be possible to do any more than indicate some recurrent themes before considering what are some of its most significant ideas. In the introduction, Danto says: "...here I am concerned primarily with the philosophical anatomy of beings composed of representations - of beliefs and thoughts, feelings and intentions, desires and regrets" (p. 13). Like other philosophers in his tradition, he tries to arrive at some clear truth about our composite representations - a notoriously difficult task, given the ambiguities and paradoxes of the vehicle of language through which those truths have to be expressed.

We are immediately confronted with problems in the first essay, "Representational Properties and Mind/Body Identity," in which Danto critiques the implausibility of the materialist position that thoughts (mental representations) are identical with "brain-states." This quickly becomes a discussion on the categorization of certain properties of representations in terms of their relation to reality. Here, art becomes an illustrative case study in defining the connection between an object and its representation that, for Danto, is analogous to the connection between the brain and thought. He concludes that the implausibility of materialism does not necessarily invalidate it, implying that dualism, by contrast, is impotent: "If a bit of mere paint can be of the Passion of the Lord, why on earth cannot a state be of our brain?" (p. 30).

This theme is extended in chapter six, "Depiction and Description," which addresses various "immanentist" theories of depiction in relation to the early thought of Wittgenstein. Immanentism, in the sense used here, refers to the belief in the presence of the object in its representation or, as Constantine V argued at an Ecumenical Council called to ponder the matter: "an

image is made of the same substance as the original," which Danto terms the "iconodule thesis" (p. 101). In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein writes something similar: "In the picture and the pictured there must be something identical" (p. 105). Danto is mainly concerned here with the distinction, first drawn by Plato, between depictive (mimesis) representation as compared with descriptive (diegesis) representation, and whether in fact a purely pictorial language would be able to describe the world for us; he concludes it would not.

Danto tackles wider problems of representation in several other essays, arguing consistently that both history and science, and especially the history of science, are representative as much as explanatory. In "History and Representation," he warns against the dangers of attributing intentionality to insentient systems (such as protozoa) whilst arguing, against eliminativism, that neurochemical descriptions of the brain will not necessarily yield semantic insights into our thoughts and feelings. On more than one occasion, he states that histories of science are histories of representation (p. 202), which often do not allow room for their own presence: could neurochemistry explain the chemical basis of the belief in neurochemistry?

More philosophically specialized are the essays on basic actions and sentential states (essays 3, 4 and 5), which are tough going for an outsider but that exposed, for me, an interesting current in Danto's thought and point to the significance of the book's title. I suspect that if he had to choose, Danto would be on the side of those acknowledging the inherent sentience of the body as opposed to those regarding the body as merely a glorified podium for the brain. He recounts both Sartre's and Merleau-Ponty's attempts to reconstitute the body and the mind (p. 65) within the context of the development of theories of action which, as Danto sees it, demand an acknowledgement of the "embodiedness" of the human brain and thought.

This brings us, in chapter ten, to the man credited with inflicting the mind/body split on western metaphysics in the first place - a philosopher whose presence imbues this whole book. Descartes explicitly states, more than once, that the mind is composed of a different substance to the body. Yet Danto here shows that the subsequent branding of Descartes as the epitomic dualist are simplistic and unfair. In "The Sixth Meditation," he just as explicitly declares the "fusion" of mind and body, on the grounds that his mind consists in anything he knows to be true, and as he knows his body to be true, it is also part of his mind (the argument could equally be extended to the world, which he also admits to being true, so the mind, body and world become "tightly bound"). For Danto then, Descartes' division lies not so much between the mind and the body as between the body "known" and the body "unknown," which becomes the "body/body problem" of the title.

This is an extraordinarily difficult book to try and summarize with any justice, given the importance and complexity of much of its content. Danto's style is not always easy to follow and the philosophizing processes can sometimes obscure the narrative. His reputation as an original art critic is secure; whether he deserves another reputation as an original philosopher is less certain. But he would probably not accept the difference. He writes, "Philosophy and art are not discontinuous fragments of a divided subject, but facets of a single unitary philosophy, which thinks of art philosophically and philosophy from the perspectives of art" (p. ix).

Given that art and philosophy are concerned with the status of representation, while also being kinds of representation, there are few other thinkers who could address the resultant complexities with such rigor, buoyancy and color.

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< The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs >

By Brenda Denzler. Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2001. 313 pp., trade. \$35.00. ISBN: 0-520-22432-9.

Reviewed by David Topper, <David.Topper@ds1.uwinnipeg.ca>.

I was in grade school when the first "flying saucer" reports came in. My friends and I were fascinated by the topic, had endless and fruitless discussions about UFOs and attended all the bad 1950s movies about alien attacks upon the earth. In the early 1960s, I was an undergraduate majoring physics and mathematics (yet minoring, in my spare time, in the humanities and arts) but no longer a believer in the pseudo-scientific and paranormal. About that time, I read the book "When Prophecy Fails" (1956) by L. Festinger, H.W. Riecken and S. Schachter. Although written as a tedious sociological study, it nevertheless was a captivating read about a cult formed around a woman who contacted aliens and was waiting for them to visit earth. Although the study was about the gullible tendency of people to believe outlandish things, I also saw in it a glimmer of optimism about human behavior; true, numerous people joined the cult over several months, yet as negative evidence mounted (namely, the aliens did not appear on their appointed nights!), one by one, members left the group, so that in the end only a few of the original true believers remained. When there is a lack of confirmation, some people can un-believe things they may want to believe.

"The Lure of the Edge" is Brenda Denzler's attempt at a thorough review of the community of UFO believers. I was interested to see that the first work she mentions in the introduction is "When Prophecy Fails," a book she regards as perpetrating a narrow view of UFO believers. She makes a case that it is not true that this community is composed of socially marginalized people with pseudoscientific beliefs who are prone to cult behavior. As a Ph.D. in religious studies, she is also interested in the relationship of ufology with traditional religious belief. Her focus is limited to the United States, where, according to a pool she quotes, 48% of the population believe that UFOs are real.

Flying saucer reports began in 1947 and thereafter came in several waves. One wave was during 1965-67, which I clearly recall. I was a graduate student in Cleveland, Ohio, and one night two friends returned from a date quite agitated, fearful, and yet awed, proclaiming that a light hovering in the sky followed them for an extended period of time along a dark stretch of country road. Subsequently they reported this UFO to Project Blue Book, a government agency set up in 1952 to study the possible validity of such sightings; it was closed late in 1969, and thereafter ufology was relegated to the UFO community. Scientists dismissed most of the mid-1960s sightings as due to the seepage of methane gas ("swamp gas" in the vernacular), which was probably the official judgment of the "close encounter" of my friends.

Over the more than four decades of UFO activity, reports changed from the earlier sightings of strange lights and flying objects, to claims of their landing and subsequently of aliens coming and going, and finally to stories of physical abductions complete with medical experiments being performed on the abductees. Concomitant with this was the sub-theme that the US government was covering-up evidence about aliens; the most celebrated case is the purported incident of a crashed saucer in 1947 at the Air Base in Roswell, New Mexico, where the Army actually recovered the bodies of aliens. I know that American TV and movies are saturated with such conspiracy themes, but is ufology confined only to the US soil - the way "creation science" seems to be? As reports evolved, the UFO community was forced to respond. Initially they, along with the scientists, believed that only empirical evidence would do. Indeed, many were scientists themselves. When abductions became the norm, some resisted accepting these stories. Then a large segment of the community moved toward a more occult and mystical interpretation of UFOs, particularly as scientific evidence was not forthcoming and as mainstream science was dismissing such reports. The rise of so-called New Age thinking supported this viewpoint. Hypotheses were put forward that aliens have been making contact with earth over the ages; early visitations were read into episodes in the Greek Odyssey, the Epic of Gilgamesh, Vedic texts, the Hebrew Bible (think of Ezekiel's vision of the "wheel within a wheel"), and so forth. Concurrently some members drifted toward a "religiosity" around UFOs, viewing humans and aliens as part of a universal cosmic religion. Not surprisingly, by the 1990s the community was split, but there was (and still is) a strong component dedicated to confirming UFO reports based on solid scientific evidence.

As a student of religious studies, Denzler raises the question whether the UFO community should be considered a religious movement, given that a significant group within it articulates their experiences in religious terms. She says "no," since most members view what they are doing as primarily a scientific activity, although acknowledging that the "science" they profess is not necessarily coming from the mainstream (surprisingly, she does not mention a possible analogue with "Christian Science"). Denzler, nevertheless, has convinced me that the UFO community is not the monolithic fringe group that I originally imagined. The book is an exhaustive treatment of this theme. Particularly illuminating is the appendix on the present-day "picture of the UFO community." But she takes their "evidence" much more seriously than I do. Of course, I say this as a skeptic who has not seen a UFO and who, after reading this book, hopes never to be an abductee.

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FEATURE
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< The Camera as an Interface: Closed-Circuit Video Projects in Peru >

By Jos□-Carlos Mari#tegui,

<jcm@ata.org.pe>.

(see below for biographical information)

## Prologue - Electronic and video art in Peru: yesterday and today

Before getting into the specific theme of this article, it is important to briefly explain the electronic art panorama in Peru. The first Peruvian Video Art Festival was organized in September 1977 by Jorge Glusberg, director of the Center for Art and Communications of Buenos Aires (CAYC) and the Peruvian art critic Alfonso Castrillón in Lima, at the Continental Bank Gallery. Several works of international artistic presence were shown (such as those by Nam June Paik, Valie Export, Wolf Vostell), along with works of the Peruvian artist Rafael Hastings. Other notable works include those of Francesco Mariotti, which were shown together with those of Klaus Geldmacher at the Documenta IV in Kassel. After this initial period, however, electronic art in Peru stopped almost completely for about two decades, although we should consider the active role of visual artists such as the couple known as Arias and Aragon, who have been doing multimedia performances since the early 1990s.

In 1998, this solitary panorama of electronic arts in Peru began to change: in that year, and taking as historical reference the already mentioned event of 1977, the second International Video Art Festival took place in Lima, organized by ATA (Alta Tecnología Andina) and the Visual Arts Gallery of the Ricardo Palma University and once again directed by Alfonso Castrillón. Initially, the festival was intended to feature solely foreign artistic projects but fortunately, local videos were produced and presented in the festival. Since then, the festival has taken place annually, with a massive public response serving to confirm the wide interest in new manifestations of art and technology in Peru. Emerging and young artists such as Eduardo Villanes, Roger Atasi, Rafael Besaccia, Alvaro Zavala, Angie Bonio and Ivan Esquivel have been featured in recent festivals. Recent proposals by artists such as Diego Lama, Renzo Signori and Ricardo Velarde in the creation of digital images; Delia Ackerman, Juanma Calderón, Carlos Letts and Fermín Tangyis in fictional/experimental videos and conceptual proposals like those of Max Hernández Calvo demonstrate that the current state of video and electronic art in Peru is thriving. Electronic art in Peru can be seen as a new creative metaphor identified with the young public, who seek a more authentic form of expression that reflects Peruvian reality.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of "closed circuit" implies, in artistic terms, a signal recorded by a video camera that is transmitted to a monitor, usually in real-time. In closed-circuit works, the artist is not interested in what is communicated, but in how it is communicated, as well as in the public's awareness of this process. In some projects, such as those involving public participation (for example, where a spectator confronts their own image in a monitor), closed-circuit installations are the "interfaces" that involve the audience with the work of art; the camera thus acts as the "medium," or "interface," between the public and the artistic result. Taking this into consideration, one could argue that closed-circuit and remote transmission projects were the first experiments in the use of what we now call interactive installations, or "interactive art" - works developed as a result of spectators' participation, or responsiveness. Although closed-circuit projects began around the 1960s, in Peru there is no record of the appearance of such works until the beginning of the 1980s. On the other hand, pioneering

works appeared in other parts of Latin America (such as the CAYC in Buenos Aires) from the 1970s on.

In some closed-circuit and remote transmission works that have been done in Peru, we see a double function - on one hand, they serve to capture live events and juxtapose them in many ways, on the other hand, they document a work in a determined moment. In this way, the documentation of a project is presented as the final part of its process. A great part of these works also confront art's position in an exhibition context or in a traditional artistic situation.

The following essays describe some of the most prominent and interesting works done in Peru using closed-circuit and real-time technologies, from the 1980s until the present.

#### FRANCESCO MARIOTTI

Francesco Mariotti, a Swiss-born Peruvian (b. Bern, 1943), has been developing art projects since the late 1960s using technological resources. In Mariotti's first productions, his practice of what we now call "media art" or "interactive art" is based on his use of technology, linked to a clear knowledge of scientific proposals and artificial-life concepts, which are now very much associated with artistic methods. From 1981 to 1984, Mariotti did a series of works using closed-circuit techniques. The works used images generated by two video cameras, mixing and cross-fading both on one screen. At times, these showed a person's portrait from different angles, at other times an object with a portrait or two different objects. The result of these works was a series of photographs: Mariotti took a screen picture with the different juxtapositions in video, choosing the ones he considered most expressive. He also documented the experience with serigraphies, pictures and a video. The most "famous" portraits are those such as the one of Vittorio Fagone (the Italian art historian) and Rinaldo Bianda (director of Locarno's video art festival, in which the series was done) combined with a pre-Columbian figure.

#### FERNANDO BRYCE - "HUACO TV," LUIS MIRI QUESADA GARLAND GALLERY, MUESTRA PUNTOS CARDINALES (JULY - AUGUST 2001)

Fernando Bryce studied arts in Lima at the Universidad Católica, and in Paris at the Université Paris VIII - Arts Plastiques et L'École Nationale Supérieure de Beaux-Arts de Paris. Bryce is a young and active Peruvian artist with a successful international perspective. As part of the project "Puntos Cardinales 2001," he presented, at the Luis Miri Quesada Garland Gallery, a pre-Columbian *cuchimilco* (a pre-Columbian clay figure, also called "huaco"), which was recorded with a closed-circuit camera and presented on a small black-and-white screen next to the object. He titled the piece "Huaco TV," in a free but conscious association with "TV Buddha," one of Nam June Paik's most recognized video sculpture works, of which many versions have been shown since 1974. Bryce's inspiration came when he was wondering what object to show in the exhibition space along with his hundreds of drawings. In his words, "I thought of the *cuchimilco*, since I had already represented it before as a drawing; now I placed it in a technological context, making it much more 'contemporary' [and] containing in this way an additional ironical sense." In so doing, he converted the image of the object into a new artistic work. The *cuchimilco* is an

allegoric object that symbolically personifies Peru's history; this is why, in the image, there is a series of books on the history of Peru behind the cuchimilco. In this way, a real historical object becomes associated with the "academic" vision of the history of Peru. In addition, the artist always saw these two objects in his father's library, that is, in a domestic context; he thus portrays the relationship between books and objects from pre-Columbian culture, such as huacos, which are removed from a traditional context. In this way, the camera and screen become extensions of the initial object, or new objects that become part of this allegorical game. Bryce adds that "The idea was to reproduce an object, but also to take into consideration these objects with a historical-cultural sense."

Bryce's installation thus not only summarizes an idea, but can be taken as a modest contribution linking contemporary Peruvian art with a Paikian referent. In regard to his work, Bryce further adds that "I also wanted to do a video art work - Huaco TV is a humble piece with big pretensions."

It is important to notice an aspect of this work in relation to its Paikian descendant: "Huaco TV" does not put the screen in front of the object, like "TV Buddha" does. In this case, the mediatic interests differ in presenting the set of objects as a new image, represented as it is, with no direct relationship between the cuchimilco and the screen. The relationship between the cuchimilco and the camera works like a mediatic trigger to bring a pre-Columbian object to a new medium. In a way, this mediatizes and modernizes the pre-Columbian concept.

DARYA VON BERNER/AGUAITONES - "LUPUS VIATOR," CULTURAL CENTRE OF SPAIN, LIMA (1999)

The "Aguaitones," a group of young Peruvian architecture and visual arts students led by teacher/activist Mar'a Burela and art critic Jorge Villacorta, make use of the process of the collective experience often associated with the use of new media. In 1999, they participated in the project "Lupus Viator," an ephemeral and traveling work of art by Spanish artist Darya von Berner (Pescara 1993, Basilea 1993, Zaragoza 1994, Madrid 1995, Internet 1996, Atlanta 1996, Lima 1999, Asunci-n 2000).

In Lima, their exposition was done in three acts, each in a different room: in Room 1 (Act 1), the faces (especially the eyes) of each of the artists participating in the project were projected, one after the other, onto a wall. Two hundred mirrors were installed on the floor, creating a fragmented reflection of the image. In Room 2 (Act 2), a small window allowed members of the public to look inside the room. This window had the same dimensions as the pages of the book "Lupus Viator," of which there were 100 copies inside the room. Each of these books, with 200 pages, was put on a large book rest, reconstructing an installation that has been travelling around the world since 1993. As the participants gazed through the window at the books, images of their faces were captured by a closed-circuit camera and shown simultaneously to someone in room 3 (Act 3), where a projector showed a white wall and a black square, the window of Act 2.

ALFREDO MQRQUEZ /PERU FÇBRICA - "(DES) INSTALACION PERU ECCE HOMO," II BIENAL NACIONAL DE LIMA (NOVEMBER Ð SEPTEMBER 2000)

Alfredo Mórquez, a designer, architect and cultural activist, was a political prisoner during Fujimori's Government in the 1990s. "PERU Ecce Homo" was a project that he developed for the Second National Art Biennial of Lima, using closed-circuit as well as Internet technology. The space used for this installation was kept in complete darkness, with just two monitors, a computer and a red line with the printed names of all the jails of Peru, creating an asphyxiating visual sensation. A video was shown of a sequence (in closed-circuit) of a room near the installation, which could not be seen, that contained a man inside a space made to resemble a prisoner's cell (the actor was Daniel Brito, who actually spent time in prison with Alfredo). The date printed on the monitor was 28 July, 2000, one of the most critical days in the political history of Peru, being the day in which Fujimori took the government illegally for the third time. The actions of the man in the cell were typical of those in a prisoner's everyday life: pouring a hot drink, doing some exercise, sitting or sleeping in bed. A second monitor showed the audience watching the installation. They thus saw on one side the image of the "prisoner," and on the other side their own image captured by a camera, causing a sensation of simultaneity and confrontation.

A computer off to one side of the space displayed a website showing reports of a special commission for prisoners who were unjustly jailed, including data of those who were jailed and statistics on political violence in Peru. A webcam placed on the computer captured images of the public, again confronting the audience while they reviewed these documents.

Mórquez developed the ideas for this work based on his own experience when, during Fujimori's government, he was imprisoned for terrorism and later released because of a pardon signed by Fujimori. As a political prisoner, the little cell was his home; presenting this as an installation allowed members of the public to contrast their situations with that of a prisoner, as well as to contrast a jail cell with the "artistic space."

#### IVçN ESQUIVEL

Ivñ Esquivel has participated, since 1991, in many collective visual arts exhibitions. Having studied in the School of Plastic Arts in the Universidad Católica del Perú, he went on to study professional photography and graphic design. The nature of his work shifted when, early in 1998, he assumed the name "Plaztikk" and produced the video clip "Number," which was frequently shown on MTV; his newfound prominence made him a symbol of Peruvian electronic art. His recent works have consisted of installations or pieces based in electronic mediums. Esquivel has developed two projects using closed-circuit technology, which have been described as responses to the existing social and artistic "establishment."

The first of these projects was done for the third International Festival of Video Art in 1999, at the Universidad Ricardo Palma. At the opening of the festival, Plaztikk exhibited two screens, side by side: the right screen showed "garbage" videos recorded from television while the left showed images of people watching the installation. These images were presented in real time and simultaneously recorded by a camera located at the back of the space. From the closed-circuit point of view, the project made the public confront what they were seeing (the television images) in an artistic space. After the ephemeral installation (which was only displayed for the opening day of the festival), Plaztikk



presented the video "15 Seconds (Hollywood Pt. 1)," which showed images of the people who came to "admire" the installation. These images were modified and played back at double-speed, with the "Blue Danube" as a musical soundtrack, evoking Charlie Chaplin-style silent films, exaggerating the postures and actions of those watching the installation. Some of the viewers (who might be considered as "actors") included Peruvian art critic Gustavo Buntinx, video artist Roger Atasi and Iván Esquivel himself.

For the project Terreno de Experiencia (Luis Mir- Quesada Garland Gallery, 2000), Plaztikk used two cabins, each containing a camera and video screen. One cabin was installed inside the gallery and the other outside. In this way, the installation worked with the concept of "inside" and "outside," forming an information exchange between the two spaces. Each cabin showed, on its screen, the image of the person inside, while two external screens showed the public what was taking place inside each cabin. The intention was to examine the attitudes of the people as they enter into and leave an artistic space. The installation lasted nearly a week, and the actions of each participant in the project were recorded. At the end, Plaztikk selected the images he liked and produced a five-minute edited video. The use of cabins as a basis for examining the spontaneous participation of people in a public space bears some similarity to "Parabolic People," a work by the French/Brazilian artist Sandra Kogut.

ANGIE BONINO - "NO LOGO," INTERNET <[HTTP://WWW.H8FULWORLD.NET/](http://www.h8fulworld.net/)>,  
21 OCTOBER, 2001.

"H8fulworld or the Unbearable Modernity of Slavery" was a project done at the thirtieth International Festival of New Cinema and New Media in Montreal and produced by CICV Pierre Schaeffer (France) and Platform Next-Movies <<http://www.next-movies.com>>. The festival included eight performances by an international array of artists (from Argentina, Peru, France, England, Slovenia and Spain) using the Internet to demonstrate and denounce common forms of domination and exploitation. Eight images were combined on a screen, taking on the form of a "digital fresco." Every two minutes, the artists would put forward their own points of view and commitment, as defined by a specific framework of 15 keywords. As a representation of Peruvian work, ATA (Alta Tecnología a Andina) presented the work "No Logo" by Angie Bonino.

This project took on additional significance for Peruvian artists, being the first Peruvian electronic art project to make use of the Internet as a means of transmitting images in real time. It was also symbolically important since the space used for this project was the Peruvian Scientific Network <<http://www.rcp.net.pe>>, the organization that initiated development of the Internet in Peru in 1991.

Angie Bonino is a young artist who works mainly with video and video installations. She studied at the National School of Art and has done projects that include developments and investigations related to popular culture. She has maintained consistent interest in this topic, using in her work phosphorescent colors similar to those often identified with advertising for popular holidays and announcements of public transportation routes. These colors reflect a transcultural phenomenon, being characteristic of icons introduced by the migration process to the Peruvian capital. Among her recent video art projects are "No video" (1999) and "Mr. President" (2000).

GUISSEPPE DE BERNARDI AND OSCAR NATERS - "CONSIDERANDO EN FRÊO  
(É) AL HOMBRE" (PERFORMANCE), II BIENAL NACIONAL DE LIMA  
(SEPTEMBER Ð NOVEMBER 2000)

This performance by Guiseppe De Bernardi and Oscar Naters took place in the garage of the R' mac House, one of the spaces used for the Second National Art Biennial of Lima. The intention of the work was to create a "real" situation, in which the action consisted of observing how the participants in the project passed the time in doing everyday things, for a period of four to six hours. They washed things, played with a dog, did nothing in particular - common actions that everybody does. The cameramen filming the action also participated, setting down their cameras and taking part in the situation.

On another floor of the R' mac House one could view 12 screens, which presented a composite of the different views of the cameras recording the action. This enormous collage also transmitted the sounds from the performance space. The images also corresponded to spaces next to the garage where the action was recorded, such as old buildings, public spaces and other urban elements. The intention behind the work concept was that everything anyone does is information, and the authors wanted to mediatize it. According to Guiseppe de Bernardi: "We are the work; a situation without a concrete role. The idea was to make a link between structures and information systems."

#### EPILOGUE - HOMAGE TO PARAFERNALIA GALLERY

Paraferalia was the gallery that recorded all of these works: during each exhibition opening, a closed-circuit system recorded all that was happening, transforming it into a mediatized space. By the year 1993, it was not unusual in Peru to find an art space replete with video screens or video cameras. For Jorge Villacorta, artistic director of Paraferalia Gallery at that time, the screens had different functions: on one hand, they allowed for development of closed-circuit or video works, like "Objetivo" ("Target") by Walter Carbonel, where a person is shown constantly watching the public, creating the impression of a "big brother." On the other hand, these screens allowed one to watch the actions of people in the first and second floors of the gallery, presented in real time. During each opening, the public thus became part of an art project or action. In spite of the fact that the Paraferalia Gallery and its particular mediatic proposals are no longer with us, the gallery can be considered as one of the most active spaces in the field of contemporary Peruvian visual arts, especially works using closed-circuit video.

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#### About the author

Jos□-Carlos Mari#tegui, a scientist and media theorist, is the president of Alta Tecnolog' a Andina (ATA), a non-profit organization dedicated to the development and research of artistic and scientific theories and director of the Memorial

Museum of Mariátegui (his grandfather and a Latin-American Marxist thinker) at the National Institute of Culture. He is resident at the CICV Centre de Recherche Pierre Schaeffer Montbliard Belfort, Hérimoncourt (France), coordinator of the Scientific Thought and Philosophy of Science Program (directed by Dr. Alberto Cordero), Cayetano Heredia University (Lima), coordinator of numerous expositions and symposiums in Peru and general coordinator of the International Festival of Video and Electronic Art in Lima (since 1998, held annually). He teaches a course on "The virtual museum" at Ricardo Palma University in the post-graduate Museology Program and was the co-creator of "Tupac Amauta," a "VideoPoemOpera" by Gianni Toti, in co-production with CICV. Recent conferences have included the Festival de la Vallée des Terres Blanches (France, 1997), the third Latin American Congress of Humanities (Costa Rica, 1997), ISEA Revolution Symposium (Liverpool, 1998), Invenção: thinking the next millennium (Sao Paulo, 1999), Biota 3, Third International Conference on Cyber Biology (California, 1999), Coloquio Internacional de Historia del Arte "Arte y ciencia" (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Guadalajara, 2000), Medi@terra Festival (Athens, 2000) and the ISEA 2000 Symposium (Paris, 2000). He was the curator for the Interferences Festival (Belfort, 2000), is a member of several committees on virtual reality, interaction, visual computing and artificial life and of the Cultural Diversity Committee of the Inter-Society for Electronic Arts (ISEA). He served on the official jury at the 13 Videobrasil (2001), is a corresponding editor of Leonardo Electronic Almanac and Fine Art Forum (2002) and a member of the National Commission of Culture, a High Level office of the President that executes cultural and scientific policies in Peru. His recent publications include: "Techno-revolution: False Evolution?" (Third Text, n. 47, London, 1999; a Spanish version appeared in Mírgenes Encuentro y Debate, Año XIV, No. 17, Lima, 2000); "Video-Arte-Electrónico-en-Peru" (in "De la pantalla al arte transgónico," edited by Jorge La Ferla, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2000); "Visiones/contravisiones del video y arte electrónico en el Perú" (in "Perú: Resistencias", Casa de América, Madrid, 2001); "Art as Evolution" (in "Medi@terra 2000 Neo[techno]logisms" Athens, 2001); and "Gianni 'Tupac' Toti, un homenaje a Gianni Toti" (in "Turbulences vidéo" # 34, France, 2002).

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