



Leonardo Electronic Almanac

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April, 2000

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INTRODUCTION

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Craig Harris, Executive Editor

LEA 8-4 CONTENTS

LEA Volume 8 Number 4 features an article by Joseph Nechvatal entitled "Fontana Articulates Cyber-Space in 1947." In the article Nechvatal discusses the impact of Lucio Fontana as a "proto cyber/immersive artist of the 20th Century." Also this month is a Feature Profile of FORECAST Public Artworks, an organization that promotes the development and dissemination of Public Art. FORECAST recently published an issue of their journal Public Art Review, "Public Hearing," exploring sound and public art, and the possibilities of orienting a visual culture towards what can be heard and often not seen. Philip Blackburn, program director at American Composers Forum is the Guest Editor of the issue, which has a fascinating international roster of artists providing insights into their work.

LEA INSTALLING NEW PASSWORD

With LEA 8-4 we are installing a new password, which in effect reinitializes our subscription system. For several months (and for most of the last 7 years for that matter) Leonardo/ISAST and MIT Press has offered Leonardo Electronic Almanac to subscribers across the globe. The honor system that we had implemented a few years ago, hoping that people who benefited from the valuable content found in our monthly issues and in our ever expanding archive, did not energize the community to formally subscribe. We have the statistics that indicate extensive usage of the site, and we hope that this will continue. All subscribers to the hard copy journal Leonardo will continue to have access as part of their subscription benefits. Subscribers to Leonardo Electronic Almanac will also have access to the LEA Archive, which contains the electronic versions of Leonardo. For a mere \$35 this is an incredible value, so take advantage of this opportunity and subscribe! We will be distributing the new password to paid subscribers along with the distribution of the text version of LEA 8-4.

LEA COMMISSION OPPORTUNITY

LEA is pleased to be participating again this year in the Sonic Circuits festival. The festival launches in November 2000, and is a collaboration between Leonardo Electronic Almanac, the American Composers Forum, and the Walker Art Center. In addition to a constellation of performances in Minneapolis and St. Paul, several works are selected to become part of a travelling set of works to be performed at Sonic Circuits festivals around the globe. For Sonic Circuits VIII we are fortunate to be able to offer a commission for new work, underwritten by the Jerome Foundation. Three commissions are offered this year, and LEA is administering one of them.

LEA is seeking to foster a new collaborative performance work to be created by a musician or music group working with new media, and a visual artist or visually-oriented group working in new media. The work should be a Web-based performative piece, capable of being featured as a live performance work on the Internet, lasting

approximately 15 minutes, with a version that can reside in the permanent LEA Gallery Archive.

The commission fee is \$3,000, to be divided equally among collaborators, inclusive of expenses pertaining to creation of the work. The piece will be presented during the launching festival in November 2000 in the Twin Cities, with the expectation that the performance will be web-cast, and it will be featured in the LEA Gallery in November's issue of the journal. The artists will also need to prepare a profile describing their work, their collaboration, and the resources employed to create and present the work. Artists will retain ownership of their work, offering LEA rights to present the work at the festival, and non-exclusive rights to publish the work in LEA and in the LEA Archive.

Proposals should be sent to <lea@mitpress.mit.edu>, and should include:

- a) biographical statements for all artists,
- b) a clear and detailed description of the proposed work,
- c) a description of how the work is to be performed at the festival,
- d) a description of how the work would function as part of the permanent LEA Gallery Archive,
- e) pointers to samples of work by the artists participating in the collaboration, and
- f) a project budget.

The deadline for consideration is July 31, 2000. Decisions will be made by August 15, 2000. The work needs to be completed and prepared for presentation no later than October 20, 2000, in order to ensure that the work is completed on time, and to allow for festival presenters to properly prepare for performance.

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FEATURE ARTICLES

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< Fontana Articulates Cyber-Space in 1947 >
by Joseph Nechvatal

Joseph Nechvatal
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Review: Lucio Fontana
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URL: <http://speronewestwater.com/>

Introduction

Concerning what Adrian Henri calls the "environmental urge" (Henri, p. 18), Lucio Fontana (1899-1968) explored in analogous manner the problem of representing spatial concepts abstractly. As a result, he is an important proto cyber/immersive artist of the 20th century, best known for exploring the concept of Spatialism.

From February 16th to the 25th of March, the gallery Sperone Westwater has mounted a small, museum quality, exhibition displaying the infinite conceptual space typical of the work of Lucio Fontana (see: <<http://speronewestwater.com/>>). There are twelve paintings in the show, mainly work from the early 1960's which exemplify his "buchi" (holes) series; his "tagli" (cuts) series; and two "paintings" in metal (one in copper; one in brass). Several works were recently included in the artist's full-scale retrospective at the Hayward Gallery in London.

While Fontana's works can be appreciated independently of their theoretical background, they receive an added proto-cyber conceptualist dimension through references to it.

Fontana was born in 1899 at Rosario di Santa Fe, Argentina and died in Varese, Italy on September 7th, 1968, a few months before the first man walked upon the moon. By the late-1950s Fontana was slashing monochromatic canvases with a razor blade as the lacerated canvas indicated for him access into the infinite. In doing so, he transformed a presumably ruinous attitude into an act of creation that challenged classical easel painting and the sanctity of the picture plane. This extravagant slashing gesture made him a nullifier of painting's flat window-like metaphoric space and thereafter he became a harbinger of a conceptual consideration of an immersively engaging, cyber-spatially oriented total art.

Particularly what is cyberly important to us today about Fontana is his, and his group's, theoretical manifestos. The movement known as "Spazialismo" (a neologism deriving from the Italian word "spazio" (space)) was initiated by a group of artists/intellectuals in Milan in 1947. Spazialismo's first manifesto was written by Fontana, the critic Giorgio Kaiserlian, the philosopher/artist Beniamino Joppolo and the writer/artist Milena Milani. The movement's second manifesto (called "Spaziali") was signed in 1948 by Fontana, Beniamino Joppolo, Milena Milani, Giorgio Kaiserlian, Antonio Tullier and Gianni Dova.

Fontana wrote or collaborated on a number of other proto-cyber theoretical tracts, such as his eminent "Manifesto Bianco" (White Manifesto) of 1946 in which it was stated that: "What is necessary is to overcome painting, sculpture, poetry and music. We need a more comprehensive art that meets the requirements of the new spirit."

At the end of his life Fontana said that his art "took a new direction with the "Spatial Manifesto" of 1946". (Trini, p. 34) With it Fontana became more than a painter or a sculptor, as it was space itself that interested him above all else; space in the third and fourth dimensional realm and space in the metaphorical and conceptual sense, i.e. proto-typical cyber-spaces.

Fontana often said that the canvas for him is primarily there not for what it is or for what it represents but to show that we can look and move through it. (Fontana, 1963) It is for this reason that he punctured holes in his canvases as a means of integrating the theoretical space represented on the surface of his paintings with the tangible space that surrounded them.

In 1949 Fontana's spatial theories, which had been developing in his paintings, could no longer only be expressed through a two-dimensional surface and hence he created his first spatial environment, "Ambiente Spaziale a Luc Nera", in the Galleria del Naviglio by placing in the darkened gallery an abstract shape painted with phosphorescent varnish and lit by neon lamp. From then on Fontana titled all of his works "Concetto Spaziale" (Spatial Concept). He shortly thereafter made his first white punctured hole pieces, his first buchi (Italian for hole) works.

Fontana, in his last interview with Tommaso Trini said that, "The evolution of art is something internal, something philosophical and is not a visual phenomenon. Speaking of the buchi in a late interview, Fontana said, "...the discovery of the cosmos is a new dimension, it is the infinite, so I make a hole in this canvas, which was the basis of all the arts, and I have created an infinite dimension (...) that is precisely the idea, it is a new dimension corresponding with the cosmos. The hole was precisely to create that void there at the back." (Beeren & Serota)

Concerning this puncturing of holes, Fontana said in the last interview that "...if any of my discoveries are important the buchi (hole) is. By the buchi I meant going outside the limitations of a picture frame and being free in one's conception of art. (...) I make a hole in the canvas in order to leave behind me the old pictorial formulae, the painting and the traditional view of art and I escape symbolically, but also materially, from the prison of the flat surface." (Trini, p. 34)

Also Fontana said of his buchi that "as a painter, while working on one of my perforated canvases, I do not want to make a painting; I want to open up space, create a new dimension for art, and tie in with the cosmos as it endlessly expands beyond the confining plane of the picture" in which "the images appear to abandon the plane and continue into space". (Manifesto Tecnico)

Moreover, Fontana has said, "The surface cannot be confined within the edges of the canvas, it extends into the surrounding space." (Palazzoli)

To make the point in specifically heightened immersive terms, Fontana created in 1952 a ceiling peppered with his punctured buchis for the Kursaal at Varazza which also incorporated low-angled lighting. He repeated the gesture on the ceiling of a cinema in Breda the following year. (Beeren & Serota)

Besides Yves Klein, Futurism was another historic source of Fontana's inspiration, particularly, Giacomo Balla's studies of spatial ambience. Fontana readily identified with the Futurist's rumination on motion which he developed and expanded and integrated as part of his Spatialist creations. For Fontana however, space no longer functioned, as it did for the Futurists, in the context of the image (the flow of space around sculpture or the implied space of painting), but it became the palpable field in which his proto-cyber spatial method took shape. Hence he literally transgressed abstract painting's support, refusing the illusory for the actual, activating ambient space and the technological allure which envelops post-modern life.

This is what constitutes the cutting-edge of Fontana's deceptively simple (but far reaching) work for Rhizomeers.

... [Content omitted: Ed.] ...

[Ed. note: the complete content of this article is available at the LEA website: <<http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/LEA/>>.]

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PROFILES

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URL: <<http://www.forecastart.org/>>

FORECAST Public Artworks is a Twin Cities-based nonprofit organization which supports the development and appreciation of public art by creating opportunities for artists and communities to explore the public realm. Established in 1978, FORECAST started out as a gallery without walls, facilitating artists working in various communities throughout the region.

Two ongoing programs, established in 1989, are Public Art Affairs, a grant program for emerging Minnesota artists of all disciplines, and Public Art Review, a national journal critically surveying developments in the field. FORECAST has also presented numerous performance events, workshops, and publications.

FORECAST meets the needs of a wide variety of clients and partner organizations. A leading nonprofit presenter of public art in the region, FORECAST facilitates communities seeking to engage artists or integrate public art activities. FORECAST's community partners are diverse, including the Science Museum of Minnesota, the Multicultural Arts Committee of Hennepin County, and Marcy Open School. We offer:

Project and competition management for a wide variety of public art activities; Workshops and strategic planning facilitation for groups interested in developing public art projects or programs; and Public art panels, slide lectures and presentations for symposia or conferences.

... [Content omitted: Ed.] ...

[Ed. note: the complete content of this profile is available at the LEA website: <<http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/LEA/>>.]

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LEONARDO DIGITAL REVIEWS 2000.04

Editor-in Chief: Michael Punt
Executive Editor: Roger Malina
Managing Editor: Kasey Rios Asberry

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During the past six weeks Leonardo Digital Reviews has been able to post eleven new reviews on its website. Perhaps the first thing that needs to be said about this is a word of thanks to the international group of panelists for their work. If there are any common themes to their contributions this month it is first that increasingly the diversity of cultural geographies that we call upon now seems an essential constituent for tracking bibliographic trends and emerging attitudes to art and technology. To this end we are extremely privileged to have the benefit of Andreas Broeckmann's and Eugeny V.Sintzov perspectives on so called "Easter European" cultural and political histories. If there is another tendency to be detected this month it is undoubtedly the interventionist nature of much of the copy. I suspect that this is not so much a collective dyspepsia, but a

response to the burgeoning question about the relationship between text and internet technology. Now the first flush of secessionist enthusiasm has given way to more measured reflection the very nature of the critical discourse appears to have lost a unifying momentum.

When one considers that, compared with the cinema and film, the bibliography relating to television is still without any real sense of critical purpose this may come as no surprise. Certainly on the evidence of this month's reviews there is much serious work to be done if we are to find a qualitative alternative to volume of writing about the internet. To borrow from Richard Kade's closing observation, without a critical filtering of what is being published, writing about the internet will become "like speeding up in a car when you're lost; the result usually just enables you to get lost over a wider area." We hope that, thanks to the heterogeneous constitution and intellectual energy of the panel, Leonardo Digital Reviews can help draw the essential cultural map through its interventions.

Michael Punt
Editor in Chief
Leonardo Digital Reviews
<<http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/Leonardo/ldr.html>>

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Visit Leonardo Digital Reviews online to read these reviews in full together with the latest postings in LDR Raw as they come in.
<<http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/Leonardo/ldr.html>> Your comments are welcome at <kasberry@humanorigins.org>

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| OPPORTUNITIES |
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No new opportunities this month.

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| ANNOUNCEMENTS |
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< "A" Virtual Memorial >

Further information at the Service Centre.
Email: <info@a-virtual-memorial.de>
URL: <<http://www.a-virtual-memorial.de>>

"A" Virtual Memorial

Memorial project against the Forgetting and for Humanity
Author and artist: AGRICOLA de Cologne

Subject:
Remembering (Commemorating) - Repressing - Forgetting

A counter point for the fast running and changing environment of the Internet will be created, intending to provoke starting an (artistic) discussion about essential questions of human existence.

Starting point:

Guilt and flight from responsibility are often enough reason for repressing problems, forgetting means elimination of being (and vice-versa), remembering: the chance for sorting oneself out.

Certainly one of the most insistent examples represents the Holocaust, whether from the view of the victims, the culprits, the fellow travellers or the outsiders or the later born; not comparable in their dimension, but comparable in the consequence of human behaviors, the genocide in Kosovo, civil war in Angola, the meanwhile historical Apartheid in South Africa, the situation of the homeless people here and anywhere; but in the same way in the daily life and the human interrelations the same repeating rituals happen; countless examples in the Past, Present and certainly Future, as well.

In media and public meaning, the latest news are old and worthless while being published, human destiny only relevant if the viewing figures are on the highest level, and only, when connected with material profit.

The heart of a computer is called memory. The mass of continuously upcoming informations and data are beyond the limits of the available capacities. Data have to be deleted.

The dimensions may be small connected to the PC at home.

What's about the coordinating points where the relevant decisions are made in matters of administration, sciences, politics or economy. Who is allowed to decide, what or who worth is to be saved or to be alive, or what or who has to be changed or manipulated, or has to be deleted or exterminated because it is not worth to be saved or to exist. What's about all those people standing outside of that kind of responsibility.

Remembering-Repressing-Forgetting

This call is addressed to visual artists, who are invited to make an artistic statement to the subject by creating an object of art in form of a webpage, or submit already existing projects or webpages related to the subject.

In principle, all submitted homepages will be included in the project by installing a link to (including a reciprocal link from) the respective homepage.

Further more, <<http://www.a-virtual-memorial.de>> will function as a server and will be created for the Memorial project, under certain selecting terms. Sufficient saving capacity is available.

Ask for terms and details.

Authors from the field of art, culture and sciences and persons of public interest invited to make statements to the subject under certain aspects, which will be integrated to the TextObjects section.

Institutions in the fields of art, culture, sciences and public relevance, who are invited to cooperating, networking and supporting.

Visitors of the website who are invited to give live their personal comments to the project and its subject.

The website of the memorial project will be a forum for the exchange of

the variety of collected informations and associations intending to create an image or memorial inside the viewer or visitor.

Further more, it is the author's intension, to realize the project at a as well.

Finally, the project is open for the unexpected, new developments and perceptions.

< Mobile Immobilise >

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Centre Interculturel de Pratiques Recherches et Echanges
Transdisciplinaires
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Fax: 33 (0) 491 11 42 44
Email: <cypres@lafriche.org>
URL: <http://www.cypres.asso.fr>

Announcing a project, a part of Technomade, carried by AVIGNONNumerique. CYPRES has been requested to realise Mobile Immobilise, a project about Disability, Culture and New Technologies. It's a reflection for the disabled people to develop some possibilities to have access to Culture with various technologies' tools.

We aim to make a research statute in the fields of disability: research laboratories, artists using new technologies or disabled artists using also new technologies.

Mobile Immobilise will materialise these issues through several events in Avignon e Marseilles during October and November 2000.

We are in collaboration with an artist who works at the Imperial College, in London. She is a dancer/choreographer and she is interested in question about weightlessness. Maybe you know some projects in the same fields or about artist who works with new technology and disabled artist who work also with new technology?

Helsinki, a city of culture as Avignon, was very interested in our project at the reunion of the cities in Bologna.

< MUTEK - Music, Sound and New Technology >

MUTEK contacts:
Tel: 1 (514) 847-9272
Fax: 1 (514) 847-0732
E-mail: <muttek@ex-centris.com>
URL: <http://www.mutek.ca>

MUTEK - Music, Sound and New Technology
First Edition - June 7 to 11, 2000 - Montreal

Montreal, April 12 2000 - Ex-Centris and F.I.L.M.S. proudly present the first edition of MUTEK, a five-day event combining music and sound creation with new technology. The event, which will take place from June 7 to 11, 2000 is brought to you by the same team which has, for

the last three years, organized the Media Lounge and the "New Media" section of the Montreal International Festival of New Cinema and New Media (FCMM).

In the era of digital tools and new media, MUTEK hopes to establish itself as an annual gathering showcasing emerging forms of electronic music and the latest trends in sound creation. Its mission is to be on the cutting edge of innovation and to provide an environment for discovery. With the international profile of its content, MUTEK promises to become a unique North American event not to be missed.

This first edition programme will centre around five evenings of intense musical and sound experimentation presented by a series of avant-garde artists from Europe, the United States, and Canada. Confirmed artists include: Taylor Dupree, Savvas Ysatis and Panacea (ARCHITETTURA mixed-media event by Caipirinha Productions); Frank Bretschneider, Byetone, CoH and Carsten Nicolai (RASTER-NOTON event), Vladislav Delay, Jake Mandell and Sutekh (MILLE PLATEAUX event); as well as Thomas Brinkmann, Triple R, [The User], Pole and many others.

The first two evenings, June 7 and 8, will be held in the Fellini theatre at Ex-Centris (complex of cinema and new media). The last three, from June 9 to 11, will be held at Cafe Campus. Taking advantage of the fact that Saint-Laurent Boulevard will be alive with the rhythm of the first of its sidewalk sales, MUTEK will offer special outdoor events in complement of its entire programme. Most of these events will be webcasted live on the Internet.

MUTEK is a project conceived by the Foundation Image Light Motion & Sound (F.I.L.M.S.), a non-profit organization whose principal mandate is to develop special projects related to film and digital culture within the context of Ex-Centris. Ex-Centris is a dynamic environment dedicated to independent film and new media. Its objective is the development of cinema as well as of different means of artistic and cultural expression related to digital technology. Media partners include The Wire, Brave New Waves (CBC Radio) and CIBL.

Information regarding MUTEK will be posted and updated regularly on the website at the following address: <<http://www.mutek.ca>> - beginning as of April 26th.

< What's new in Virtual Africa >

Jocelyne Rotily, Curator
Email: <jocelyne.Rotily@wanadoo.fr>
URL: <<http://www.olats.org>>

What's New in Virtual Africa

- The Last Paintings of Luis Meque by Chiedza Musengezi

Chiedza Musengezi reviews an exhibition of works by Luis Meque organized in 1998 to commemorate the life and art work of a painter who actively contributed to Zimbabwean artistic life. His last paintings, characterized by predominantly dark colours and an expressionist style, find their inspiration in urban scenes, in portraits of marginal people. They also reveal Luis Meque's daily struggle with illness and death.

(Text in English)

URL: <http://www.olats.org/africa/galerie/gal_meque.shtml>

- In the "Arts and sciences" Section : Jean Pierre Rossie's

presentation of his recent book: "Toys, Culture and Society. An Anthropological Approach with Reference to North Africa and Sahara":

Jean-Pierre Rossie is a Social-Cultural Anthropologist and Staff Member of Nordic Center for Research on Toys and Educational Media (University of Halmstad, Sweden). For several years, he has been working on the social representation and significance of toys in North Africa.

(Text in French and in English)

URL: <http://www.olats.org/africa/artsSciences/rossie_toys_en.shtml>

- Very Soon in the Virtual Gallery : The interview of Antonio Ole by Barbara Murray

Antonio Ole was born in Angola but his family is half Portuguese half Angolan. His work is very much "an exploration of conditions in Africa and the impact of colonialism". Yet, he refuses to consider art as a mere political weapon. "Art", Ole says, "has the freedom to go further in other directions, searching for horizons and variety. Art is particularly about light". Barbara Murray is the editor of a young and dynamic journal "Delta Gallery", published in Harare, Zimbabwe.

(Text in English)

< The EMF / Leonardo Guide to the World >

URL: <<http://www.emf.org/guidetotheworld/>>

The EMF / Leonardo Guide to the World Important events and people in electronic music, new music, media arts ... May 15, 2000

The World Wide Calendar

We hope that you've been making regular visits to The EMF / Leonardo Guide to the World website because you'll find a lot of calendar information on electronic music, media art, and other exceptional events, including concerts, festivals, conferences ...

Looking for something to do next week? This summer? New York? Marseille? Seattle? Sarajevo? Hong Kong? Go here!

< Space and the Arts Workshop 2001 >

Annick Bureau

Email: <bureau@altern.org>

For further information on the Space Arts Workshops see:
OLATS/Observatoire Leonardo des Arts et des Techno-Sciences:
<<http://www.olats.org>>

25 March 2001

* General Statement

The "Rencontres du 13 avril" are a series of workshop co-organized by Leonardo/OLATS, the OURS Foundation and the International Academy for Astronautics. Every year, since 1997, it gathers leading scientists and artists on a specific theme for a one day workshop in Boulogne-Billancourt in the near suburb of Paris. The "Rencontres du 13 avril" focuses on the exchanges between artists and scientists and on the cultural impact of space activities.

In year 2001 the fifth "Rencontres du 13 avril" will be on the theme "Outer space - Cyber space".

* Outer Space - Cyber space

The Fifth Space Arts Workshop will explore the ways that artists and scientist are using the internet both to extend human presence in outer space, but also to bring access to the results of space exploration to earth.

The first interplanetary internet nodes are being planned, and the international space station will be connected to the internet. Space Agencies are now using the internet to enable broad access to the results of space exploration: future missions are being planned to allow live webcast of images. Simulated extraterrestrial worlds have been created by artists in virtual space, and artists and scientists have used the web to create scenarios of the future of space exploration. This workshop will explore how outer space and cyberspace are becoming inter-connected and how concepts and approaches that have been developed within the outer space activities can be related to concepts and approaches that are now experienced in cyberspace.

< 3rd Annual International Digital Art Competition and Exhibition >

Cynthia Pannucci
Founder/Director of ASCI
(12 yrs.of service to field of art/sci/technology)
New York City
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Email: <asci@asci.org>
URL: <<http://www.asci.org>>

Art & Science Collaborations, Inc. (ASCI) presents...

their 3rd Annual International Digital Art Competition & Exhibition.
Two Categories: Digital Prints and Web Art

This year the exhibition travels to three venues!

Central Fine Arts, 596 Broadway, NYC - June 28 - July 14
Technology Gallery, NY Hall of Science - Sept. 18 - Nov. 26
Silicon Gallery, Philadelphia, PA - December 1 - 30

Please NOTE:

Because of a change in dates at the first venue, our original Juror, Margot Lovejoy who will be travelling to Banff, Canada for a residency at that time, will therefore not be able to judge this year.

New JURORS:

Marilyn Kushner - Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Brooklyn Museum of Art
Jon Ippolito - artist, Assistant Curator of Media Arts/ Guggenheim Museum

DEADLINE: May 31, 2000

Prospectus and Full Details: <<http://www.asci.org/digital2000>>

In conjunction with the Opening of the Exhibition on June 28th at Central Fine Arts in SoHo, there will be a panel, The Digital Print II, from 7-9pm immediately following the reception.

By-the-way... the Brooklyn Museum's prestigious Print Biennial in 2001 will be DIGITAL prints ONLY !!!

ASCI is a 12 year old, non-profit members organization based in NYC. Their monthly e-publication, the ASCI BULLETIN, has become a timely and invaluable listing of news, resources, opportunities, exhibitions, symposia, etc. in the international field of art-sci-technology. If you would like a Complimentary Copy or would like to send a short info blurb for publication, email <asci@asci.org> (Send information by the 10th of the month for publication on 15th.)

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