

Has a contemporary reappropriation of the Internet advanced the medium of art?

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Introduction*

With this paper I will discuss the concept that the contemporary genre of Internet Art is a reappropriation of the medium of the Internet. Despite Julian Stallabrass stating that “the Internet is not a medium” (Stallabrass, 2009: 169), I suggest Internet art’s reappropriation of the Internet has birthed it as a contemporary medium upon which art now lives. My use of the terminology ‘reappropriation’ relates directly to the way that the art world is now utilising the Internet as a medium which was previously disparaging of it, thus the Internet has acquired new purpose and authority within 21st Century art.

In focussing on the Internet as a reappropriated space for art, it is important to address and analyse “what is happening to digital technology as a tool, as a context [and] as a culture at large” (Goriunova, 2012: 2). In this way, I intend to conduct a research project on the hybridisation of technology and creativity (or the Internet and art respectively); in unearthing the affect this is having on arts world-wide consumption, authorship, ownership and conception within the new context of technological reappropriation (Livingstone, 2002: 17).

Define: ‘Net Art’*

As defined by Anne Laforet, Internet Art “refers to works created by, with (and) for the Internet” (Laforet, 2009: 16). Despite Tilman Baumgärtel suggesting that Internet Art is “utterly anything having to do with the Internet” (Stallabrass, 2009: 169), I note that when referring to this elusive online genre, I am not referring to simply “any work of art present in one form or another” on the Internet (Laforet, 2009: 16) but more to the ‘new aesthetic’ style as evident online today (see images 1 and 2 for examples of Net Art’s ‘new aesthetic’) and the evolution of the Net Art movement as a whole.



Image 1: 'New Aesthetic' graphic design by Foundland Collective
Available at: www.foundland.info/IMAGES-OF-AFFECT

Internet Art, though broad, revolves around a reorganisation of the conventions, aesthetic, styles and purpose of the Internet. The Net Art movement of the 1990s sparked this reorganisation of an

understanding of the Internet which aimed to “investigate and subvert conventions of the Internet” (net-art.org, n.d.), by eschewing all conventions of what the Internet is and how it is used.

Internet Art as a movement can also be termed Net Art and net.art with “net.art...often used in documents of the mid-nineties (and as) referring to a particular period of online art” (Laforet, 2009: 17). The term net.art began to circulate between 1996 and 1997 and was allegedly “spawned by a software glitch” (Quaranta, 2013: 111) although it was the beginning of the year 2000 that offered the newer terminology of ‘Internet Art’ (Laforet, 2009).

Net Art, arguably conforms to the contemporary concept of ‘Post-Internet’ which upholds the ideals of “ubiquitous authorship, the development of attention as currency, the collapse of physical space in networked culture” and an “infinite reproducibility and mutability of digital materials” (Vierkant, 2010: 3). Similarly, Net Art is also a form of ‘Public Art’ in that it is available in “public space” and is “free of charge” (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 58-59). As evident in attempting to define it, Net Art constitutes a plethora of ideas and ideologies and thus “confusion and debate” remain around it (Cornell & Halter, 2015: xv).



Image 2: 'New Aesthetic' graphic design by Manuel Buerger

Available at: <http://www.digital-folklore.org/>

Culture, the Internet and the home computer: a changing phenomenon*

Giddens suggested that with modernisation, culture experienced a 'disembedding' or "the lifting out of social relationships from local contexts and their recombination across indefinite time/space distances" (Giddens, 1991: 242) despite writing well before its advent, it feels this depiction of culture as spanning 'indefinite time/space distances' is a description of contemporary Internet Art culture. This is evident in light of Net Art as existing upon a series of online platforms constituting a network (Goriunova, 2012: 3) which is ever expanding and evolving.

As Paul DiMaggio suggested in 1997, culture exists as a 'toolkit' referring to it as a "grab bag of odds and ends: a pastiche of mediated representations" (DiMaggio, 1997: 267) which I feel encapsulates today's new era of online culture and particularly the medium of Internet Art. In this way, the Internet offers an extraordinary cyberspace of cultural amalgamation, as "a place in which identity experiments, avantgarde artworks, and innovative business models" (Jensen, 2011: 47) convene.

Whilst originally computers existed purely as "spaces of work" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 2), today's home computer, paired with the arrival of the Internet, has become a space for individual freedom. Since its advent, users of the Internet have relentlessly and "intensively" utilised it as a medium for "communicating, producing, improvising and uploading nonstop" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 3) and as a result, the concept of "digital folklore" was established. Digital folklore is a movement which is unaffiliated with class, "socioeconomics (or) nationality" and instead "represents (the) participatory process" of the Internet (Bronner, 2009: 23). The concept is an understanding of the Internet as attaining "cultural and symbolic" value, concerning itself with "the way people interact with and mediate cyberspace" (Backe, 2014) as opposed to simply an emphasis on network culture and communication between users.

Digital folklore assigned new purpose to the Internet, away from utility and practicality and towards it as a platform for inspiration and creative outlet. Whilst previously the Internet was created by providers for users, digital folklore offered new found user entitlement by empowering them with the concept of user-generated content. User-generated content foregrounded a liberation of the user in offering them the means to "write the code for their own webpages" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 3). Soon, users of the Internet were no longer subjects of passive consumption, but instead began to "build their (own web) pages" and in this way were quite "literally, building the Internet" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 3).

This online movement away from the professional towards an empowerment of the amateur was coined 'Web 2.0' (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Web 2.0 offered freedom and creativity to the Internet user in enabling them to "produce content collaboratively" which inevitably resulted in the "implosion of (online) production and consumption" (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010: 7). Thus the Internet's "cultural history" has been shaped almost entirely "by its users" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 5)

The contemporary prosumer and the Internet as freedom*

Today, it is accepted that users of the Internet are no longer just passive consumers of information but also producers of the content they consume too. This longterm relationship between production and consumption was distinguished by Karl Marx at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in stating "production always involved consumption and vice versa" (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010: 14).

Coined by Alvin Toffler, the 'prosumer' has had a long history, in which we are now entering the "third wave: the rise of the prosumer" (Toffler, 1980: 265). This 'rise' of the prosumer is most prominent online as users are endowed with endless opportunities to produce new and to manipulate existing content. This theme of a "ubiquitous authorship" (Vierkant, 2010: 3) of information and a blurring of the line "between makers and viewers" (Stallabrass, 2006: 123) is aided by the nature of the public domain of the Internet. In this way both audiences and artists are offered total creative freedom by Internet Art, in either adding something to an existing piece of work or in creating and publishing their own. In this way, all Net Art is a "work in progress" which is readily available and accessible to be "continued by any of its viewers" (Vierkant, 2010: 7).

Both the prosumer age in which we now live and the Internet as a medium are a rebellion against capitalism. This is due to the fact that capitalism requires an "exchange of money for goods and services" (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010: 22) for the benefit of profit. In stark contrast online; "little or no money changes hands between the users and the owners of many websites" (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010: 22). This illustrates again the Internet's understandable reappropriation by the art world in offering a rebellion from the rules and regulations of capitalist society. In this way, today's prosumers are both the "subject" of and "engine behind" the Internet and the medium of Net Art (Vierkant, 2010: 5).

Whilst Web 2.0 offered a superior online freedom like never before in allowing users to write their own code, Net Art defined this creative outlet with a purpose. No longer were prosumers creating online content for 'the sake of', the advent of Net Art as an artistic movement enabled users to create with designated reason. In these ways, the Internet both existed as and still today remains "revolutionary and utopian" (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010: 22).

Bridging the cultural divide*

Internet Art presents a conflict to traditional forms of art in dismissing the "craft-based practice, patronage and elitism of the art world" (Quaranta, 2013: 113). Whilst traditional art remains an embodiment of historical prevalence, "a privatisation of the Academy" in upholding a close relationship with "the museum and the commercial gallery world" (Stallabrass, 2009: 172); Net Art debunks all of these "fundamental ideologies" of what art is (Stallabrass, 2009: 172).

Historically speaking, art has always been associated with high culture and elitism. The 'genius' of the bourgeoisie was concerned with "circuits of power and money" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 54) and in possessing both, the bourgeois succeeded in a monopolisation of the flow of culture to the masses. Traditional art would appeal to the bourgeois ideals of "what is liked and what pleases" which was supposedly in contrast to the tastes of the "barbarous" lower classes (Bourdieu, 1984: 8). The cultural divide that art historically created was concerned with creating a very definite social order.

The physicality of the gallery existed for bourgeois society as a location for all "its most sacred possessions" (Bourdieu, 1984: 25). Whilst traditionally the gallery embodied cultural divide by "strengthen(ing) the feeling of belonging in some and the feeling of exclusion in others" (Bourdieu, 1984: 25), Net Art's lack of physicality does the opposite of this. It is evident that "although paintings began to be publicly exhibited in galleries...there was no way for the masses to organize and control themselves in their

reception" (Benjamin, 1936: 14) thus the public space of the Internet upon which Net Art exists, is not a solitary location of affluence and shared-taste but much the opposite.

Similarly, a lack of (or potential for) replication was also an ideal upheld by traditional art forms. As noted by Walter Benjamin, the sacred nature of a piece of original art is its "presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (Benjamin, 1936: 3). For traditional high art culture, this space was the gallery. This presents a "fundamental divide in the ethos of (the) worlds" (Stallabrass, 2009: 172) of high art and Net Art. As Stallabrass rightly states, online digital art work has the potential to "appear in many places at once", to exist entirely "out of the control of artists and curators" and which "no one copy (is) better than any other" (Stallabrass, 2009: 172). These themes directly contradict traditional artistic principles of rarity, uniqueness and exclusivity. As a new "aesthetic experience" to the art world, Net Art is neither "supported (nor) controlled...by knowledge of the style" (Bourdieu, 1984: 5) and this theme resonates throughout; in this way Net Art is not just unconcerned with these ideals but in fact advocates rebellion in avoidance of them. Net Art's "connections with technology" offer a world of art lacking mystery and awe, replaced with themes of 'immediacy and transparency' (Stallabrass, 2009).

From initial liberation at conception, to creation, to appreciation and comprehension, Net Art represents true liberation from traditional forms of art in conforming to a "code" of practise "which is neither adequate nor specific" (Bourdieu, 1984: 6). Due to its inherent nature as "categorically ambiguous" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 55), Net Art offers an "extraordinary opportunity" of an "independent art world" (Quaranta, 2013: 118) to that which preexists.

In true rebellion, Net Art exists as a definitive "refrain from steady development" and is "formed by disjunctures [and] awkward mappings between technical, aesthetic, and social forces" (Goriunova, 2012: 2). In these ways, Internet Art offers a rule-less "pastiche of mediated representations" and ideas to the world of art (DiMaggio, 1997: 267).

Reappropriating the Internet: Art*

Avant-garde in its "demand (to) break with all the codes" (Bourdieu, 1984: 14) and in conflicting with traditions of art as sacred and unique, Net Art "releases work directly into a system that depends on reproduction and distribution" within a medium which promotes "contamination, borrowing, stealing, and horizontal blur" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 54). In this way, Net Art intends to "uproot...art competence" (Bourdieu, 1984: 13) in revisiting the postmodernist movement of the 1970s, the concept challenges "the category of high art itself" (Stallabrass, 2004: 7). Net Art is thus "disconnected from the mainstream art world (which) has contributed to its broad appeal and international following" (Ippolito, 2002: 486). It is the 'architecture' of the Internet which lends itself to art so aptly in offering broader "cultural reach, greater opportunities for distribution and collaboration, and advanced corporate and political complexities" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: xv). Thus the Internet fits art or rather art fits the Internet as the perfect link towards contemporary cultural communication.

Section Conclusion*

The Internet has become an outlet for freedom; it marks an abolishment of a previous understanding of what art is and can be, in favour of a new platform of liberation. This medium of world wide connectivity offers new opportunity for artists on a global scale, gifting creative freedom, unbounded connectivity, economic exemption and inspiration at their finger tips. It is with this breakdown of the history of the Internet and art worlds that I illustrate how Net Art presents not just a reappropriation of the Internet, but in fact a shared reappropriation of both the medium of the Internet as well as of the medium of art itself. In a world of mass communication and information, Net Art breaches the cultural divide between online culture and art culture and offers an “ultimate truth of the style of a period” (Bourdieu, 1984: 16).

Having scrutinised my hypothesis of the Internet's new found purpose within the world of art and in assessing the effect that this has had on a historical artistic cultural divide, it is important to interview professionals within the field in order to fully understand the effect Internet Art bears upon the art world.

Methodology: Qualitative research sampling strategy and procedures

In order to gain a broader understanding of Internet Art's affect, I hand-picked six professionals existing within both the on and offline art worlds, from around the globe and conducted interviews with them. These individuals included:

- ✦ Benjamin Andreas (Danish) - Professional traditional artist specialising in sculpture,
- ✦ Caitlin Denny (American) - Net Artist, archivist and co-founder of Jstchillin (www.jstchillin.org): A collaboratively curated online Internet Art platform,
- ✦ Domenico Quaranta (Italian) - Contemporary art critic and curator, facilitator and mediator between radical art practices and the art world, its audiences and institutional structures, and co-founder of Link Art Center (www.linkartcenter.eu),
- ✦ Lauren Alexander (South African, based in Amsterdam) - Co-founder of Foundland Collective (www.foundland.info): A platform for the “critically minded production of politically engaged, de-colonial storytelling from a position as non-Western artists working between Europe and the Middle East” (Foundland Collective, 2017),
- ✦ Martine Neddham (French) - Internet Artist dealing with pseudonym “Mouchette” (www.neddham.info/), traditional artist, teacher of Visual Arts Education (1975-1979) and lecturer of Linguistics and Literature (1983-1984) and Stage Design (1988),
- ✦ Masha McConaghy (Latvian, based in Berlin) - PhD, curator and co-founder of ascribe (www.ascribe.io): A secure platform enabling sharing and selling of digital works online via blockchain technology.

(Despite conducting this final interview, McConaghy's responses were more tailored toward the blockchain technology behind ascribe rather than a focus on Internet Art. Although interesting, for the purpose of this study I have omitted her comments and transcript from the paper).

As this sample of interviewees was informed by my research question, I implemented a generic purposive sampling strategy (Bryman, 2016: 412). My sampling strategy was formed a priori as I established a criteria concerning the kinds of cases needed to address my research question, identified appropriate cases and sampled from these (Bryman, 2016: 413). As Bryman notes, generic purposive sampling “incorporates several other samples strategies” (Bryman, 2016: 413). In this way my take on the strategy included aspects of critical case sampling in selecting a small sample of relevant cases that I anticipate enable my theory to be tested, and stratified purposive sampling as these cases exemplify scope from the ‘subgroups’ of interest; the on and offline art worlds (Bryman, 2016: 409).

Due to time restraints of the research project and in light of producing qualitative data from my

questionnaires, this sample size is evidently not representative of the whole art community. Despite this, my selected sample is both multinational and embodies a broad spectrum of different perspectives from both sides of the Internet and traditional art worlds, thus my results remain valid if not generalisable and still a valid “measure of a concept” (Bryman, 2016: 156). The research also upholds external validity as the results can be generalised beyond the research context (Bryman, 2016: 42) in evolving a further understanding of the online art world.

I conducted qualitative research of face to face, semi-structured interviews via online chat platforms such as Skype and FaceTime which lasted approximately thirty minutes each. I utilised a semi-structured interview format; adhering to a set of primary questions which I intended to ask each respondent, although the order in which I asked these questions varied depending on the interviewees responses enabling them to lead the conversation and talk freely on the topic. See Appendix A for the semi-structured interview guide (order as subject to change).

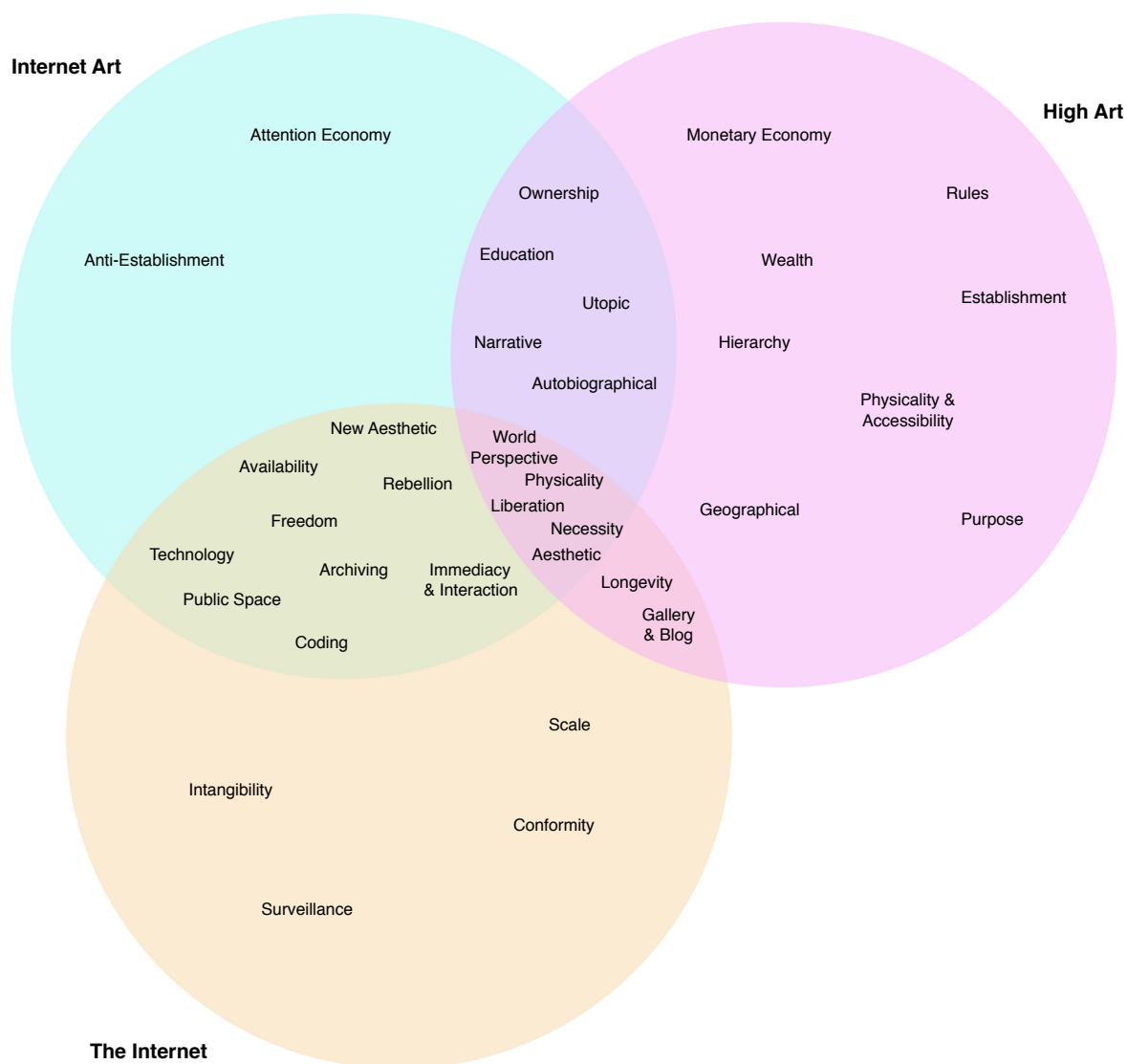


Figure 1: Illustrated similarities, differences and overlap between Internet Art, High Art and The Internet
Data accumulated and coded from interviewee responses

I recorded all of my interviews whilst conducting them with the iPhone app Voice Memos (Apple, 2017), before transcribing them in their entirety once complete. Within each transcription I included a facesheet (Bryman, 2016: 471) to avoid confusion during the coding process as to who said what. I utilised the process of thematic analysis and a coding system by breaking my data down “into component parts” (Bryman, 2016: 573) as soon as possible after each interview, allowing any initial interpretations to “shape emergent codes” (Charmaz, 2000: 515). I used the software NVivo (QSR International, 2017) to aid this coding process in documenting an abundance of codes and sub-codes before reducing these down into themes and fine-tuning during my analysis procedure.

It became apparent during this process that my qualitative research project was producing very different coding results compared to my peers qualitative research; whom were accumulating code brackets more akin to emotions, thoughts and feelings on a topic as opposed to a comparison of two ‘opposing’ sides of an industry. Thus it became evident that in-order to illustrate my results succinctly, I should utilise diagrams to easily map this information of the differences between the on and offline art worlds. See figure 1 for the key similarities, differences and overlap between the Internet Art, High Art and Online worlds. It also became evident when conducting my interviews and on reviewing my interviewee responses that the audience bodies for these different art worlds varied considerably and thus this information need be similarly mapped concisely and effectively. For the differing audience bodies of the art worlds respectively, see figure 2 below.

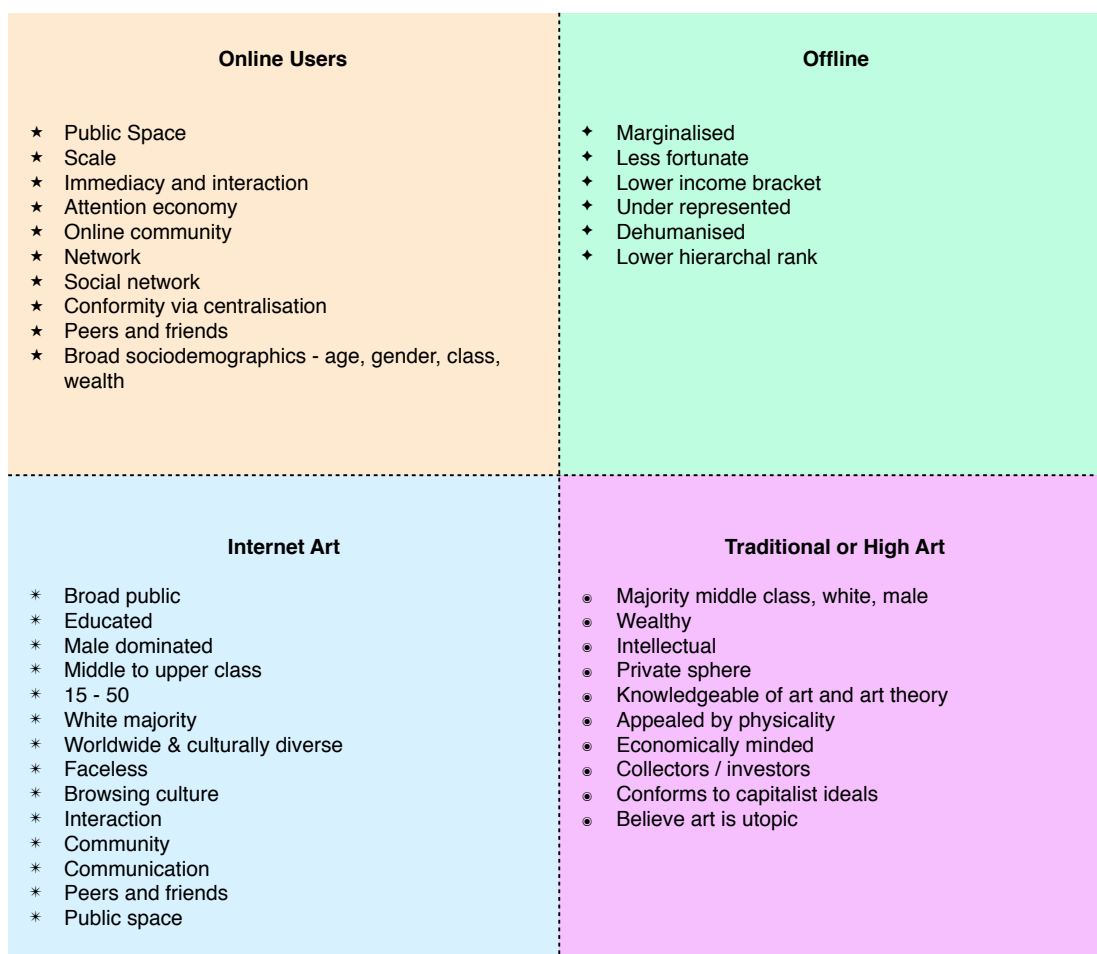


Figure 2: Comparable audience demographic features and socioeconomic variables
Data accumulated and coded from interviewee responses

Findings and discussion

On analysing my interviews it became apparent that there is a plethora of comparisons between the Internet Art and traditional art worlds. In light of the scale of this topic I have chosen to focus on a discussion of some of the main points and themes which occurred repeatedly within the majority of my interviews.

The Internet = creative freedom

It became evident throughout the course of my interviews that the Internet as a space for art is adept. In existing as part of an environment which is free of prescribed rules, Internet Art as an artistic practise offers its producer total creative control, liberation and freedom. This theme was made apparent by almost all of my interviewees as indicated by Martine Neddam; “to express...in an uncharted space in a space of freedom...what’s important in Net Art is it keeps a certain space of freedom, an unruly space...it breaks the rules and it allows me to address a very large audience because...it is about fun, immediate fun and also, new things that people wouldn’t allow me to do (before) because I had to go through lots of committees and approval...even from the art that you’re producing to the thing that you’re selling at the end (Net Art) has got a whole new set of rules”. Caitlin Denny similarly noted that in terms of content for JstChillin (JstChillin, 2017), she “was really interested in non-intentional Internet based art works or people who were making art for the Internet who weren’t trying to send their work out in any kind of art context but were making creative things on the Internet” whilst Domenico Quaranta mentioned the importance of Net Art as “ceasing to be just the default object of attention of a sectarian cult, it becomes part of a commons of ideas that float, hybridize, combine, generate new ideas in different fields.”

My interviewees here depict the lack of rule and structure surrounding Net Art, noting that making art for the Internet offers the artist total, unadulterated creative control to experiment with the medium as they so wish, calling on their own cultural pastiche (DiMaggio, 1997) as unaffected by the hierarchy of the traditional art world. In these ways and as Olga Goriunova notes, utilising the platform of the Internet a space for art enables “marginal, unprofessional, self-governed currents” to create “new cultural figures and work out vectors of change, whether aesthetic, social, or subjective” (Goriunova, 2012: 10) within the segregated ‘safe haven’ of the Internet.

Reappropriation: The Internet as a changing landscape

A through-theme that became similarly apparent within all of my interviews is the changing use and role of the Internet both historically and within its evolution as a medium. It is apparent that the Internets’ purpose at its advent is vastly different from that which the Internet is used for today and even further removed from its use as a platform for creativity.

This technological shift is aptly put by Domenico Quaranta; “since its very beginning, the Internet changed on a regular basis both in terms of technical infrastructure and software, and in terms of community...from the digital utopia of the early 90s to the current dystopia of the Internet as a pervasive panopticon...in such an unstable, fluid platform, everything changes accordingly, especially art...the Internet is part of a technological shift that is changing art...forever...but of course, it may change it beyond recognition”. This theme is reiterated by curator Ceci Moss who notes that “within the first ten years of the 2000s, the media landscape underwent a tremendous shift. The Internet, in particular, drifted far beyond the screen and the

stationary computer work station, finding its way into every aspect of our lives" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 147). In light of this mass connectivity and availability of information, the Internet's purpose altered in favour of a shift toward "a new phase for contemporary art, one that witnessed artistic practices becoming more fluid, elastic, dispersed, and expanded" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 147) as opposed to a text-based medium of communication for the office space alone as it once was.

Immediacy and power

The concepts of immediacy and a reorganisation of power online were similarly highlighted by my interviewees as a benefit to utilising the Internet as a space for art as depicted by Benjamin Andreas commenting on the "instancy, the immediacy and the click through process" online. Here it is evident that the lack of hierarchy online empowers the user, as the embodied assertion of what is consumed and when. Reiterating ideals of the digital folklore movement; reinstating the power of art reception back to the audience member opposes the top-down hierarchical model of curated artwork consumption from one to the masses of the traditional art world. In this way, Martine Neddam comments on the availability of online content, suggesting one of the benefits of utilising the Internet as a home for art is that "you would put something online and the next day someone would want to see it, you had this immediacy that didn't depend on institution (or) networks...it was all in your hands, emancipation, autonomy and distributed power: no one has the power".

In favour of creating a powerless utilitarian space, the Internet debunks traditional arts "concept of a divine power" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 357), replaced by a public space which liberates both the online user, audience member and Net Artist themselves. This idea of a total dissemination of power online is reiterated by Martine Neddam; the "distribution of power within the network gave a lot of sense of freedom autonomy and emancipation, for people who did it...in Net Art you still have a certain level of autonomy of how you choose to show your work and how you choose to let people access it". Much like the Internet's own cultural history as shaped by its users (Cornell & Halter, 2015), the Internet seemingly offers the art world and online user unbounded freedom to broaden the scope of the art world. This echoes the enlightening realignment of power offered to online users during the Web 2.0 movement.

Availability, audience scale and audience location

Due to its nature as existing in public space, scale and vastitude of audience body and a broad geographical scope of this audience group online were also recurring beneficial themes of the reappropriation of the Internet as a space for art. As Domenico Quaranta rightly states, "what's great, what's always been great about the Internet is that it is, in principle, a universally accessible public space, where, if you want, something can exist as art without waving an art label on it...but it also means that it can be potentially subject to any kind of audience, from any place in the world, from any cultural background."

Regardless of interviewee background, a general consensus that was apparent in utilising the medium of the Internet as a space for art was that it offered a broader "cultural reach" and "greater opportunities for distribution and collaboration" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: xv), which was perceived solely as a positive in the eyes of my interviewees. It became evident that despite differences in cultural and creative backgrounds, all of my interviewees showed mutual agreement on the importance of arts presence within the world as

Benjamin Andreas states: “the more art that's in the world, the better”, and that any medium upon which it can exist, flourish and gain following can only be favourable to the practise itself.

There was similarly a plethora of recurring concurrent themes from my interviews that highlighted the benefit of utilising such a powerful medium to distribute art including: interaction, network, intangibility, physicality, technology, longevity, vitality and art as utopic. These nodes were coded as features of the Internet, illustrated in image 3 below:

Name	Sources	Referen...	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
▼ Internet	3	8	7 Apr 2017, 11:18	CF	7 Apr 2017, 14:32	CF
▼ Features	2	3	7 Apr 2017, 11:29	CF	Today, 16:26	CF
Aesthetic	4	18	7 Apr 2017, 11:24	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:23	CF
Availability	5	14	7 Apr 2017, 14:49	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:45	CF
Conformity	4	12	7 Apr 2017, 11:58	CF	26 Apr 2017, 18:12	CF
Immediacy & Interraction	5	22	7 Apr 2017, 14:00	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:42	CF
Intangibility	4	11	7 Apr 2017, 13:44	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:45	CF
▼ Liberation	5	21	7 Apr 2017, 13:52	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:40	CF
Freedom	3	15	25 Apr 2017, 19:53	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:45	CF
Rebellion	4	29	7 Apr 2017, 11:26	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:31	CF
Physicality	3	5	7 Apr 2017, 14:27	CF	26 Apr 2017, 19:19	CF
Scale	5	25	7 Apr 2017, 14:05	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:45	CF
Surveillance	2	5	26 Apr 2017, 18:13	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:44	CF
▼ Technology	4	14	7 Apr 2017, 14:27	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:21	CF
Coding & Archiving	5	27	7 Apr 2017, 11:19	CF	26 Apr 2017, 18:27	CF
Longevity	2	4	26 Apr 2017, 18:27	CF	26 Apr 2017, 20:44	CF
Vital	1	1	26 Apr 2017, 18:20	CF	26 Apr 2017, 18:20	CF

Image 3: Nvivo coding screenshot - Internet Themes

Internet Art verses traditional art: Not so different after all

Over the course of this study, it has become apparent that Internet Art is a reappropriation of both the Internet and of the practise of art itself. In utilising the medium of the Internet as a platform upon which to produce and share art; the Internet offers a seemingly unusual placeholder. This is due to the Internet existing previously as a regimented formatting hierarchy of rules, coding, archiving, aesthetic and the like. Internet Art is a manipulation of the normality and mundane conventions of the Internet in favour of a liberated public space for creative freedom; revoking from the Internet its conventions and (original) purpose to be replaced with unbounded individual power and freedom in creative expression. In these ways, art online offers exactly these opportunities to the artist who would have been previously restricted by higher powers such as curators, investors and the like.

Lauren Alexander's comments on the work of Olia Lialina (one of the founding members of the Internet Art movement) illustrate this idea of the malleability of the Internet; “her work is really engaged with the Internet as a platform...because she's thinking about how websites are made she's thinking about frames...she's a very interesting example of someone who is really working with the mechanics of the internet as a tool to make and to play with...she's dealing with the platform of the Internet.”

In this way, Internet Art is not so distant from the traditional practise of art itself as a form of purity in creative expression. Yet instead of existing on gallery walls for only the elite to see, Net Art opens its door of creativity to anyone with Internet access and something to say, existing within a mass of uncharted water (or public space).

In light of these ideals and as Martine Neddam rightly states, the 'purpose' for art remains the same regardless of its medium and platform; art has "no reason, it's there, but you couldn't do without. You don't really need it, but as soon as you have it, you think, I can't do without it...so that is its biggest value: That it doesn't have any".

Thus it has become evident over the course of this research project that Internet Art and traditional art are far more similar than previously understood. I suggest this in relation to the inherent ideals of the two 'opposing' bodies which both promote freedom in creative liberation as the main ideal and the true purpose for art itself, regardless of medium.

The future of Internet Art

As technology becomes more and more ingrained into our cultural experiences, be it social, for entertainment, education or otherwise: What is the forecast for the future of Internet Art? Will it gain respect within the artist community or remain an out-lar still to some? Aided by this research, I forecast that eventually the art we know today as 'traditional art' will become more, 'historical'; to be replaced with digitally produced art works which will sit instead of the hand sculpted marvels on their podiums within the gallery walls (this is already happening to some extent today as illustrated by Lauren Alexander; "there are galleries that are really actively working to support Internet art...this is the kind of new aesthetic of the future").



Image 4: Winter Timber - David Hockney (2009), created with an iPad

Similarly, technologically-produced art is already beginning to grace the spaces of the elite art world from David Hockney's iPad paintings (see image 4) to 3D printed sculptures and the like. What's to say that there won't be a rise in physical renditions of Internet Art, much like the work of Harm Van Den Dorpel (see image 5), as the next obvious advancement or shift within the high art realm, in a world of mass technological innovation and affordability of new electronic equipment.



Image 5: Harm Van Den Dorpel, Art Post-Internet show March 2014

Physicality is evidently a very important aspect of art for a broad art audience who enjoy the activity of going to visit a gallery and seeing something physical in real life, as noted by Martine Neddán stating that collectors specifically “need the reality of an object that has cost a certain amount of money [and that] they would accept to hang on their walls”.

Damningly, Walter Benjamin noted a reproduction of art “can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself” (Benjamin, 1936: 4), though I suggest this doesn’t necessarily attain negative connotations within a contemporary art landscape. Though disparaging for traditional art, reproducing Net Art physically within the gallery walls casts away mechanical reproductions depreciation of art in favour of its compliment. I suggest this as although Benjamin proposes that an ‘aura’ of a piece of work “withers in the age of mechanical reproduction” (Benjamin, 1936: 4), in physically producing a piece of art that was made in a two-dimensional space, with and for the conventions of the Internet; the opposite is true by manually fabricating an aura for a piece of work that really shouldn’t exist in physical space at all. Thus, in producing a physical reproduction of Internet Art, authenticity and ‘aura’ are in fact fostered in the eyes of the art collector. This idea is illustrated by Neddán’s point noting the lack of appeal in “not knowing what you own” as a collector when it comes to purchasing websites and the like.

Conclusion

Internet Art remains today ahead of its time, existing on the outskirts of a medium which promotes traditional, elitist ideals. Innovative still despite the longevity of the Internet itself, Internet Art sits itself wide-legged on a medium which sustains itself on nothing but attention economy (Vierkant, 2010; Davenport & Beck, 2001) and liberation; which are seemingly the goal posts for the youth generation of today. As Georges Duhamel depicted the conflicting relationship between art and mass reproduction, the Internet presents a somewhat oxymoronic platform for art by existing as an opportunity for distraction, conflicting arts “demand (for) concentration from the spectator” (Benjamin, 1936: 18). In this way it is apparent that

Walter Benjamin's comment from 1936, "reception in a state of distraction...is increasing noticeably in all fields of art", is more prominent today than ever before (Benjamin, 1936: 19).

As noted by Caitlyn Denny, in the next few years the world's population won't know existence without the Internet as "at a certain point very soon all age brackets will be accustomed to living with the Internet as far as if they are in an economic class to do so" whom will be wholly oblivious to the struggle of becoming an artist offline. Despite this new wave of Net Artists lacking historic contextual appreciation of the production and promotion of traditional art, I as aided by my interviews, forecast that this style of art online will begin to inform and evolve the new art gallery, as it has begun to do so today. Online institutions like Rhizome who exist both in real life and online which "commissions, exhibits, preserves, and creates critical discussion around art engaged with digital culture" (Rhizome, 2017), offer a firm grounding towards the future of art in the 21st century. Much like the technological shift from the Atlas to Google Maps, a blurring of the lines between the offline and online gallery spaces is readily established today and forecast to grow both in following and demand for the future.

Internet Art, due to its economic exemption within a public space, availability, ease of sharing and existence upon an appealing medium to the generation of today, is likely to become the future of art consumption as opposed to the physical gallery which will remain the prestigious cultural hangout of the elite art world and an older generations' preferred destination as a home for cultural consumption.

In light of this and as stated, it is apparent that the physical gallery space is and will continue to involve the world of Net Art within its walls. Perhaps it is Internet Art's physicality homed in galleries that is the facelift the traditional art world needs to inject itself with in order to appeal to today's generation who exist online and seek the familiar aesthetic of digitisation, popular culture and a 'new aesthetic' from art.

Despite these ideals of Internet Art as the future of art, Net Art still remains youthful and naive in understanding its own importance and the impact it is forecast to have upon the art world and creative industries alike.

With this research project, my intention was to determine the effect that the Internet is having upon the world of art. In analysing the contemporary alliance of these two previously conflicting bodies, this paper brings to light some of the deeper implications of one culturally significant world, enveloping and evolving another. The findings reveal that my hypothesis of a reappropriation of the Internet, has advanced the medium of art in appealing to a broader, more culturally diverse audience body, within a public space of immediacy and liberation. Those professionals I have interviewed within these worlds have offered insight into the ever merging landscapes of art and Internet culture, offering a positive forecast as to how the two worlds will co-exist moving forward, within an environment of unbounded creativity, liberation and rapid technological advancement.

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- Image 3: Nvivo Screenshot, 2017. *Nvivo coding screenshot - Internet*. [screenshot] Created: 01/05/2017
- Image 4: David Hockney, 2009. *Winter Timber*. [iPad image, oil on 15 canvases, 36x48" each] David Hockney RA: Bigger Picture: Royal Academy of Arts, London
- Image 5: Harm Van Den Dorpel, 2014. *Art Post-Internet* [gallery exhibition] The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing

Figures

- Figure 1: *Illustrated similarities, differences and overlap between Internet Art, High Art and The Internet*. Data accumulated and coded from interviewee responses
- Figure 2: *Comparable audience demographic features and socioeconomic variables*. Data accumulated and coded from interviewee responses

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Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Guide Questions (order subject to change)

Has a contemporary reappropriation of the Internet advanced the medium of art?

- What would you term your professional creative role?
- What type of work do you produce, and in what medium?
- And how long have you been in the industry for?
- What role did the Internet play for you when you first started working professionally?
- And how would you compare that to the Internet's role today within your field?
Is the internet being utilised differently?
- Do you perceive the Internet as being used creatively today, and how do you see this as affecting the art world; positively or negatively?
- How would you say your professional role is affected by the Internet? Positively or negatively?
- Would you agree with Cornell & Halter's comment that Net Art exists upon a medium which promotes "contamination, borrowing (and) stealing" (Cornell & Halter, 2015: 54)
- Do you believe the Internet today attains "cultural and symbolic" value? (Backe, 2014) or would you agree with Julian Stallabrass's statement that the Internet is "vulgar and standard"? (Stallabrass, 2009: 173).
And in light of this, what's your perspective on the Internet as a platform for art?
- Do you believe that there is a home for art online?
- Would you separate this online art world from the realms of high or traditional art or do you believe they interlink?
How?
- What is your personal perspective on Net Art in relation to traditional forms of art: Do you see one as superior to the other?
- Is Net Art a threat to the art world in terms of devaluing the traditional artist practise?
- What are your thoughts on the audience that the Internet offers Net Art?
- Who do you perceive is the audience for Net Art and do you think this is vaster than previous traditional forms of art?
- Do you perceive the medium of the Internet as devaluing or revaluing art today?

- Do you see economy and monetary value as important attributes to art?
- In your opinion, how is Net Art affecting arts economy?

Caitlin Denny

Has a contemporary reappropriation of the Internet advanced the medium of art?
How has the facilitator of the Internet aided in the reconciliation between low and high cultural divides? Self expression and cultural communication in Internet Art

Date	27-02-2017
Interview No#	2
Interviewee Name	Caitlin Denny
Interview Length	36 mins
Age	25
Location	Los Angeles
Professionalism	jstchillin.org
Title	Net Artist / Jstchillin Founder / Archivist

CF: Interviewer

CD: Interviewee

Speaker	Transcription
CD	I wana ask first like, how did you find jstchillin and erm,
CF	Yeah, that was through, I was just doing a lot of research on Net Art, I'd been working on the paper for a bit and was so just on the Google hunt and sort of stumbled upon it, erm, I can't remember specifically where it was from it was just sort of, link through a link type thing, but I really like what you're doing there and I think what you're doing, jstchillin is kind of similar to what I thought Net Art, is really, so I was quite interested at sort of getting at you and picking your brains about, how that came about, erm
CD	Are you gonna talk to Parker, at all?
CF	Erm, yeah I mean I can do, I haven't contacted him I just contacted you but I mean if he's around that'd be amazing, I'd love to, of course
CD	Yeah I don't really, I don't really know what he's up to right now but I'm sure that he'd be happy to if you emailed him
CF	Perfect! But yeah so um, what is the deal, where did jstchillin come from, how did it start for you guys?
CD	Erm, so, Parker and I went to, um, undergrad together, California College of the Arts,
CF	Nice
CD	Um, and we both graduated in 2009 and he, he was in the painting department and I was in the media arts department
CF	Ok cool,

Speaker	Transcription
CD	Yeah, both of us like, I was making, narrative films and doing photography, beginning, while I was there, um and I transitioned more into video art and, then, into Internet based art from there and he had had a similar transition from like making these huge painterly paintings into like wanting to have more of a like interdisciplinary practise, and so (pause) us and just our group of friends just kind of got more into, were very interested in Internet Art and decided we wanted to, like, how do we enter this community? Lets just make this website, an, befriend people who we love the work of, or who we think, could make Internet Art, so some artists that we worked with actually, weren't making online work at all and we proposed ideas to them and then they started making er work for the Internet, so, yeah
CF	Ok nice
CD	Um so yeh it was just me and Parker kind of curating and coding and kind of writing websites, and working with artists and their works of art and so it was like every month, a different artist would take over the website, um
CF	Ok
CD	It was kind of, it was more of a live experience which we haven't, its funny because I'm going to school right now for archiving, um, media art archiving and preservation for variable media artworks, so, which is funny because I didn't archive jstchillin properly, at all
CF	(laughs)
CD	Um (laughs) that's like a bigger project for later but it was meant to be this kind of live, lived experience where an artist would take over the website and obviously they couldn't see an archive, um, before hand or what was coming up, um, so yeah
CF	So it wasn't really, it was never really planned in terms of what you were studying you just sort of fell into it because you found it interesting is that, kind of the deal
CD	Yeah, kind of I mean, yeah I was, I was looking at, I mean I know the work of Jodi, and um Kevin Bewersdorf, um peer Kev (?), like, and Paper Rad and kind of and I kind of got into it because I was kind of interested in experimental music and noise musics and that community had this hybrid with net art at the time, um, and I just kind of fell into it from there I had an early interest in noise music then I was in high school and living in san francisco there was a huge noise music community and yeah there was this hybrid community, um
CF	With the noise music stuff was that, based online as well? There's an audience for it where you're based but is there a community of that online as well, how does it work for that?
CD	Yeh, it was very much online, um when I was interested in it um, there was, I mean a lot of the bands that I really liked, had really weird websites that looked like Net Art, but they might have been, but the musicians were like hybrid Net Artists in a way, so I accessed their music through their websites
CF	Ah ok I see
CD	Yeah and so like that aesthetic just translated into, just pure Net Artists who weren't making noise music, or maybe sometimes did, you know, so there was this kind of natural flow for me um where I realised, like I went to school and I was like I'm gonna be more of like a photographer and do this sort of thing and then I fell back into what my initial interests and like, and visual culture and what music and art was
CF	Ok
CD	Which was kind of like, you know, er, I thought it was kind of like, yeah like Punk aesthetic I guess, um

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Kind of like a rebellion type thing?
CD	Yeh. Um, and so thats how I got into it and I don't remember what Parker, or like how Parker became aware of it but for me it was definitely through this kind of like, music, um, experimental and noise music kind of world, um there was this band called, Metal Locks, um all female, noise punk band that had really amazing Net Art type persona online so yeah, just a bunch of, there was a load of bands on this record label called Load Records um, they were kind of like Net Art and noise musicians so, yeh
CF	So how would you, talking about this punk rebellion type thing, especially in terms of Net Art, how would you personally like define it, do you think there is a definition, do you think its more of a free for all, a free reign type of thing, how would you class it?
CD	Um Net Art as a whole? Well I think you kind of touch on it in your review where there are thee different areas and like it's spelt differently like theres this lower case net dot art and theres like capitalised Net Art and theres Internet Aware Art, post internet art you know theres, and I just think it's like, there's different like sets of artists who make work in this vein, um, I don't think theres like one definition that everybody would agree on, and the different eras have different priorities for everyone, and diffeernt modes of thinking and behaving and making art for certain things, I think in the early two thousands it definitely had like a, kind of, punk um aesthetic, whereas like dirt style, have you ever heard of that?
CF	No I've never heard of that, what's that?
CD	Um it's kind of like Rad Rad and Jodi
CF	The like coding type stuff?
CD	Yeah it's a type of like, aesthetic that comes from your coding, its very intentional but it's meant to look, unpleasant to a trained internet eye, you know, and I think, its very intentional so, yeah I think like early 2000's, mid, um 2010 era was about that kind of punk dirt style internet art, whereas in the nineties net.art to me, and I wasn't aware, like, super aware of that, form of art, in 1995, but, it's pretty much when I got a computer but I think that was more like they were typing to make art, for like, they new they were making art outside of like, the blue chip gallery museum world and I think they wanted to be a part of that to, they were trying to prove like hey this is a legitimate form of artwork
CF	Yeh
CD	And then that kind of dissipated and came back and like a kind of fuck you, like, kind of thing? You know, I don't know, thats how I understand it but somebody else you kno whos been mading Internet Art from the beginning might understand it totally differently but you know somebody, coming from it in the middle, that's how I view it
CF	OK cool, so going back-
CD	And also like as far as whats happening now in Net Art, I don't really know very much because I don't frequent Rhizome, you know like a lot of the like surf clubs that are, you know that you access that kind of art from
CF	Yeh
CD	Don't function any more and I guess I'm too old, I don't know, since I was in grad school, you know I don't really know that much right now, I know Rhizome is doing this whole like Net Art preservation initiative which is really cool and interesting but

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Sure, so yeh, talking about that like future wise, it's kind of an uncertain I mean it kind of always has been in terms of Net Art but even as an artist yourself, you're not sure about er, the progression of, would you say?
CD	Yeah I mean I think the form, the way that we were making it, I mean you could talk about it like how, who were making art I think you could kind of liken it to Punk Rock music, well people who were making Punk Rock music in the late 70s, mid to late 70s will say like punk rock musics dead, which it is, that era of making that music, no longer exists but there are still bands making punk music, you know, erm, I just think there's gonna be new formations of the way I understand Net Art was for me, I don't think can happen any more, especially with the structure- (sound cuts)
CF	Sorry I knew that would happen! Inevitable internet
CD	Thats fine you warned me before
CF	So yeah sorry you were saying talking punk back in the 70s that era is dead but um there's still punk around so there's gonna be, would you say its kind of like and evolution of Net Art where its constantly growing and changing that type of thing?
CD	Yeah totally I think it'll always like, they'll always be people that continuously make music in that vien, but as far as what net art was for me, that was an era that won't come back because of the way the internet, the structure of the internet and how people access the internet and how people access information on the internet has changed so, so much even in the past like, five years,
CF	Yeh definitely
CD	five ten years has just dramatically changed, um
CF	So talking about that, what was it that you started on your jstchillin project in the net art world, when was that?
CD	Um, so 2008-2011 I think
CF	And that's when you started dabbling with Net Art or had you been dabbling before that or was that your first debut in that field?
CD	I mean I had been making websites since I first got my computer, which was kind of interesting to get on the way back machine on the internet and look at your old websites um you're like, woah that was like first style net art what was going on there?
CF	(laughs)
CD	But yeah jstchillin was like my first intentional internet based project
CF	Venture
CD	Yeah I had been like you know, looking at a lot of interest throughout my time in undergraduate
CF	Ok and how would you say in your professional opinion, how would you say that, how the internets role has changed in terms of the art world, do you see it as like a, er beneficial progressive thing, is maybe the internet potentially devaluing the art world, how do you see the internet in light of art today?

Speaker	Transcription
CD	(pauses to think) Um, yeh I think the Internet, (pause) well I think that, the internet was, a really good think for art and net artists, when we started jstchillin a lot of the artist that we worked with didn't have gallery representation or weren't making money off their art work at all, they probably didn't think that they could and a lot of them started to get gallery representation and doing solo shows and like doing pretty well actually
CF	Ok brilliant so it's kind of the reverse of what I was thinking in terms of the traditional art world being cut down but the internet in fact it kind of worked the other way at the beginning, would you say with people kind of gaining momentum from it?
CD	Yeah I mean it helped them out at far as, you know being able to, support themselves and like, give them some sort of validity as in the fine art world is measured by how much you sell your work which I personally don't um have any part in that sort of structure of what the art world is, um
CF	Ok nice - so that's kind of a rebellion for you again? The medium is the perfect medium upon which you can present your work because its totally exempt from economy in a way?
CD	But I've kind of been changing, I mean at the time that's what I thought, and then this happened with a lot of the artists where they started gaining money and being represented which I mean, awesome for them because they can actually like get paid to make art
CF	(laughs)
CD	But when I started thinking like that, the area that, that transition from them like the internet didn't matter, it was just like this conduit for them to be able to be like part of the fine art blue chip part of the art world and I don't know that's just like my anarchy kind of mind going there, but I kind of remember thinking what we thought we were doing as this kind of rebellion against the art world you know like oh everybody can access this its on the internet right so everybody has access to it, I just don't think that's like our anymore I think that the internet is a part of a huge digital economy that capitalism cannot exist on without anymore, cipistaslism, at least in America is completely um dependent on digital economy and people doing free labour online thats despised as leisure or art or fun or you know personal branding thing, i see that a lot too, especially with artists, its like instagram so many different platforms and that I view as a form of labour for larger companies to them mimic or offer those people you monetary funds to continue doing to that benefit just the capitalist structure that those campaigns are existing on so-
CF	Yeah
CD	You know and I think I read and interview with Alexia Shogun who's an internet artist, recently and he's kind of saying these things where, um, what did he say, I think it was on Rhizome he said that like a lot of the coding and like structure of websites that net artists did in the early like, late 90s early 2000's, have been rebranded and reused by larger companies and the whole economy institutions so its kind of like 'we thought we were making art and we're saying fuck you to the art world' and they took it all and um
CF	Started making money
CD	Most artists started going along with it because they can actually get paid to live and I don't blame them for being part of that system because we live, especially in america, we live in a country that does not value or support the arts in any way art all, so its kind of, you have to take what you can get, um
CF	So thats quite interesting from your perspective as a net artist you're both like pro and cynical of the mediam on which you work, which I guess is quite an unusual perspective to have
CD	Yeah I think that's why I don't have a lot of contact with a lot of the artists

Speaker	Transcription
CF	(laughs) they've blocked you!
CD	You use the Artie Vierkant in your paper a lot and when that first came out I was I remember being really critical of it and everybody was really like "Uhh how dare you!" sort of thing and looking now like the blue chip culture like we can't criticise each other and talk about this kind of thing? It really turned me off that people were like 'uh how dare you think that the internet isn't this utopian place for us all to exist' and it was like, I just think its really, i mean when you have this idea of a utopia it doesn't exist
CF	Yeah
CD	You know its just a fantasy its cool to think about I think we should definitely like, yeah everything should be going towards this utopian vision but if you're not critical of it you'll never actually achieve that you'll just become this like cog in the machine
CF	OK sweet and yeah talking about so with your, not being friends with the rest of the net artists thing (giggles)
CD	I'm not friends with them! I just, I just kind of like, I'll say this, after like we had like a physical exhibition in New York I think it was the end of 2011, and that was like my last involvement in doing that art stuff, I mean I'm still friends with everybody but after that I just did a lot of reflection and thinking about what the project actually did and to the careers of some of the artists involved I was really happy for them but also, you know I was just being critical of this situation
CF	Well also you know from your perspective it kind of devalued the point of what you were doing in the first place right?
CD	Yeh I mean we had these museam curators come talk to us and support the show
CF	Mmmhm
CD	and I'm like 'that's not what this was about!' you know that was my whole like, and maybe I wasn't doing myself a favour by having that mindset but that's just how I approach making art
CF	No but your entitled to it i mean it makes total sense to me in terms of what, you thought the whole system was, I'm honestly quite surprised to hear that it was, I mean as you said it's fantastic that people are getting careers out of it but it seems like just from my nothing perspective that that medium is for the rebels against the establishment you know, so its quite surprising to hear that it, takes off
CD	Yeah and not everybody went in that like visual come-capitalist route a lot of the artists that we worked with like Ben Vickers he's amazing and hes definitely kind of like anti-capitalism and he's doing a lot of curating now I think, I haven't talked to him in a while but there are definitely people involved in jstchillin that erm have also thought the same way as I did and want to do their own trajectory I mean I haven't been too involved in net art since then but
CF	Mmhm - and so talking about the community not only from your perspective as an artist but also from an audiences perspective, who would you, like, from your days of being an audience member through to becoming an artist in the field, how, who do you think the audience is for net art, is it here there and everywhere, is it sort of a generational thing? Obviously it's different now from when you walked in to the field but I mean whats your thoughts on the audience, who's looking at this stuff?
CD	Well the people who are looking at jstchillin were, there was no age bracket mostly it was I would say like 15 to 50 year olds
CF	Ok, big big bracket

Speaker	Transcription
CD	Um, yeah, u, but they were definitely majority, middle class, white, people. they really wore, it wasn't a huge, and male, mostly male and that was one of my biggest issues too is that it was very male dominated like just like every other art scene you know, um
CF	(laughs) and would you say that these were the people who would sort of generally normally consume art because they'd actively gone to seek, I mean from my perspective I just sort of stumbled upon jstchillin, obviously I was looking for net art in the first place, but I'm sure you guys have been linked on various sites and stuff, is it art-interested-individuals or is it, the youth, the internet youth of today?
CD	I think its a little bit of both I think we were really trying to reach out to those communities, I was really interested in non-intentional internet based art works or like people who were making art for the internet who weren't trying to send their work out in any kind of art context but were making creative things on the internet so I guess you could deem them as the outsider artist or something , so it was like vernacular culture of creating things on the internet which were from much more diverse community of people than people who were just skewed toward making art for an art audience
CF	Yeah
CD	We did pander toward Rhizome and the new museum and often had you know um our projects featured on their blog and stuff like that so we're definitely like tailoring stuff towards an art audience but we were also reaching out to you know YouTube users who'd never heard of Rhizome or what net art was or anything like that and we were interested in involving them and um, kind of making them think about the things that they were creating in a way where they had an audience because I think a lot of the times people have this like faceless audience or they get like comments, but to have somebody reach out to you and say like 'hey lets make this new thing' you know, it was really exciting for a lot of those people
CF	Mmhmm
CD	Um a lot of interesting things came out of that
CF	So a prosumer audience, the poeple that were concerned with both producing and consuming stuff? Nice
CD	Yeh, so Parker and I were both really interested in meeting those poeple and kind of honouring that, that was part of our internet experience you know, I think we both got computers and internet around 1995 and I grew in that kind of community where people were making things but we were so young it wasn't geared towards art context at all but it was very creative
CF	So it was a liberation with a new medium that no-one really knew what to do on so you guys were just going at it type thing?
CD	Yeah. But I think the idea of like having that internet art and what we were doing ' oh it's online, its available for like everybody to see' this non-hierarchical way to kind of like view art, out of the gallery so it has a bigger audience I just think like, re-thinking about it, it really that mindset it really dehumanises people who aren't online and who don't have access to the internet, I completely feel like it erases a whole sloth of people who don't exist online , you know and by saying that like 'open to everybody' because its online? They have a problem with it and I don't know how to resolve that issue in my mind, but I've been thinking about that alot lately and how we can like access information and access to art and that just because somethings online and its freely at a URL that anybody can visit, who has internet access, it means anybody can see it, you know so there's a built in economy already there, a built in hierarchy thats already complacent in all internet art so you know

Speaker	Transcription
CF	But so how, yeh talking about that in terms of the people that don't have the internet access, generally they're gonna be an older generation just talking, logically, so is that, because obviously my paper's about high and low culture, its about the elite art world and what you guys are doing so would you say that kind of does draw a line between the sort of more traditional forms of art and that traditional older generation that might go watch something in a gallery over watch what you guys make? Would you say, that theres a certain divide there in terms of generation because you said that your audience members were up to like 50 or so for jstchillin, and more and more people are getting internet access you know like kids are getting their grandparents online and stuff um, do you think that thats going to change, obviously as the future progresses, the bridge will probably, the divide will probably bridge a gap in not so long a time, no?
CD	Yeh I mean I think as far as generational, you're 100% right like a certain point very soon all age brackets will be accustomed to living with the internet as far as if they are in an economic class to do so my issue is with the disenfranchised and marginalise communities that don't have access to the internet or, have very little access to the internet
CF	Yeah sure
CD	and so as far as a lot of internet art that's been created its been made by middle class or, and sometimes higher class individuals who have a plethora of time and access to the internet whenever they want, you know and that was my thing, with our audience there was, you know you'd get people from 4chan being really into in it and other link non-art net communities but there was a whole swam of marginalised communities who couldn't be a part of it and couldn't have their voice expressed through it and, um, I dont know, yeah that's kind of my issue, I think the generational thing will appease itself at a certain point but
CF	But its the classs divide which is an issue,
CD	Yeah and I think thats why, like, yeah, you're talking about the low brow and like high culture like the internet art and the blue chip art world, and I think there's still like that divide, still even though the internet gave rise to people to a lot of these blue chip artisits, gallery artists, high brow artists, I think theres still people making, probably, I would imagine theres a lot of people still making art online that nobody cares about (laughs)
CF	(laughs)
CD	But you know I just think it's really hard for somebody who had limited access to go to the library to use the internet
CF	Yeah you're right and generally as per how I found jstchillin its kind of like a browsing culture where you sort of just sit on the internet whilst doing something else, scrolling through webpage after webpage and suddenly you'll just stumble upon something you know, that is obviously not going to happen if you're sat in the library
CD	Yeh if you're like oh I have to go use the internet to go find a job, in the library and look at like government job listings, you're not going to stumble upon jstchillin art, you know? And that's just, that's something, thats why I have an issue with calling internet art public art because I still think it is geared towards a certain type of person who has that luxury and is able to do browsing and surfing the internet is a luxurious activity
CF	Ok that's super interesting I'd not even thought about it from that perspective thats wicked. Thank You! That's amazing! Oh I might just, can I just get you to do a summary of your professional creative role, I mean there's loads about you online but from your perspective what would you class yourself? (laughs)

Speaker	Transcription
CD	In relation to jstchillin?
CF	Yeah or as a professional within the art world
CD	Um I wouldn't classify myself as a professional within the art world but see I have a problem with calling myself a professional anything (laughs) but you know I was the co-curator and co-founder of jstchillin, erm, and after that I worked as a video or as a performing, live visualistic in san fran for about 5-6 years, doing live analog and single based video work for nightclubs and stuff and now I'm going to UCLA on the graduate programme for information studies so I'm learning to become an archivist for film an video and moving image based um art works, so I'm kind of like, my perspective has definitely shifted from being actively in the art scene to now being interested in preserving artworks
CF	
CD	
CF	
CD	

Martine Neddham

Has a contemporary reappropriation of the Internet advanced the medium of art?
How has the facilitator of the Internet aided in the reconciliation between low and high cultural divides? Self expression and cultural communication in Internet Art

Date	16-03-2017
Interview No#	3
Interviewee Name	Martine Neddham
Interview Length	37 mins
Age	64
Location	Amsterdam
Professionalism	Internet Artist, Teacher of Visual Arts Education: 1975 to 1979, Linguistics and Literature at the University of London 1983-1984 stage design at the Architecture School, Lyon and the Institut des Hautes Études 1988 Arts Plastiques in Paris
Title	Net Artist / Traditional Artist / Teacher at Gerrit Rietveld Academy (Art and Design university, Amsterdam)

CF: Interviewer

MN: Interviewee

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Yeah so I was just really interested in your work really, um, its a very, different style of Net Art which I think you tap into, kind of an obvious way of using art online, with your use of pseudonym, I think its a really interesting idea that you have, how did that come about for you, because I know before you started with that kind of stuff it was more traditional wasn't it? And then you sort of branched into the internet stuff?
MN	Yeah, um (pause) ok, I was as an artist I worked in um, public art, and language, I use language a lot
CF	Ok, yeah yeah I was reading up on you
MN	I use language in the public space, so yeah, and also I make lots of public commissions, er so really its a situation, public commission where you don't only work for your peers you also work for people who do not care about art
CF	Ok

Speaker	Transcription
MN	So the situation of working for a broad public, and trying to communicate on different levels because the same work, can speak in different ways to different publics, lets say, so uh I was already aware of that in a way because I had experience working in a public space and experience in texts also, I studied linguistics among other things
CF	Ok
MN	And um, and stage design
CF	Oh right cool, very nice
MN	Yep so these things, for me it was very natural for me to use the internet, it was a bit like my dream come true because in terms of linguistics, the mode of address, I don't know if you noticed but what was really specific to my early Net Art piece is the interaction, er, narrative, sort of dialogues where the user has a part of the story and is called back by email to do a number of things so that sort of er, verbal exchange within the sort of narrative which becomes a sort of shared narrative
CF	Mmhm
MN	Even the existence of Mouchette as a child, becomes a shared narrative because its very clear that she cannot be a child very early on, so, it becomes a sort of shared narrative so it's maintained, so it might look very untechnical, but in reality, the technicality of it is that the base, the exchange is there
CF	OK so that, your interested in the language, was it also kind of about availability for a very broad audience for you, was that something you were also quite interested in tapping into?
MN	Yes, yes, a very broad audience, yes, like in public art. Like you speak to a lot of people but actually it has to have something for everyone, like er, people educated in art will not, I mean, there are different levels of understanding, ok, for me for example Mouchette could have had the theoretical level but it could also be taken first hand
CF	Yeah sure
MN	So there's the same content that can be accessed with different er...
CF	Sort of intellects?
MN	Approach and understanding
CF	So before when you were doing your traditional art this was something that you were quite interested in anyway, and as you said going online was kind of a dream come true for you, but who would you say is, the audience for your work? Do you know that you have a certain demographic or is it sort of, is it younger, how do you know that?
MN	Er, as I told you, when I went into public art so I would say very differently, when I did my work with language, in the galleries in the space, it was very theoretical, it was very refined are I was probably addressing really the most advanced people in art and theory which I hoped would understand all the layers and
CF	Yeah
MN	But I was also very attracted to public art as soon as I had access to you know, applying for these commissions, they are big budget you know, so they don't give it to uh, absolute beginners you have to prove that, you can handle these things, so um as soon as I could win competitions and, I really had er great great interest to address er, like every public

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Mmhm
MN	Because also the nature of a mode of address is also something I studied in language you use the same words, you know but they might read different things, according to who you speak to
CF	To your audience yeah, so do you have like an idea of who your audience is, is there any way of you checking, or is it just kind of you putting work out that and kind of hoping sort of anyone receives it?
MN	I have lots of idea, of course it comes into the interaction narratives but I have lots of way to understand who they are of course and of course it changed a lot in the course of things like I don't know if you saw the work called 'Suicide Kid'?
CF	I didn't see that one actually, I'll have a look back through it
MN	Ok, if you look at that one I could give you a link well that is one of the first interactive work I did
CF	OK
MN	Where there was a sort of like a longer text people usually wouldn't read, and it ended with a question, "how can you commit suicide when you're under 13?"
CF	Ok (laughs)
MN	Basically the narrative went oh I'm trying to design a toy by which you can commit suicide and er-
CF	(laughs) Thats so dark!
MN	Well it was story you could imagine a kid doing that you know, you know murder is not so taboo but suicide is, you know
CF	And what's your interest with like, ages, because obviously you've got David who's older but then you've also got Mouchette-
MN	Well take it like a writer, like a written for their characters, you know? They might find it easier to be in the skin of someone they think they can understand from inside?
CF	Mmhmm, ok
MN	So it's not a choice, its an inside choice not an outside choice and in the case of David its more like, well particularly I wanted to explore someone I was not,
CF	Yeah, sure
MN	And I did not identify, with his er, personal profile, like he was a sort of main stream person, I more identify with a sort of margin person, as an artist you always are, and so it was a, but in the case of David the design was much more um deliberate I decided to choose, to do him because I had designed his this function, that people would best, for him
CF	Mm
MN	So I chose the most neutral person possible
CF	OK

Speaker	Transcription
MN	You know, no minority details, very mainstream
CF	Quite plain psychically
MN	At that time people on the internet were older like in 2001 you didn't have so many kids, like 15, that wasn't very natural so er there were more like IT professionals so um
CF	So they could relate to David as a character?
MN	Yah
CF	Um and how do you think that's changed then, obviously its more generations online , both in an older demographic and in a younger one, do you think that they're all, would you say, would you assume that they're all kind of consuming Net Art or do you think that there's more specific age bracket that is concerned with the genre of Net Art? What's your thought on that?
MN	Actually now we might talk of two different things when we talk about net art, you could say that it's branched, the big problem with net art is that you can't sell it right?
CF	Yeh
MN	You make it, you show it, you can't sell it, although you can but so exceptionally, I won't go into that subject, so now you could say that now there's gallery net art, and online net art
CF	So, for you there are two different, branches?
MN	Totally, because they address different public, they are, well the gallery net art he things that relate to net art but are still shown in galleries
CF	Yep
MN	And try to sell objects, which people won't buy websites as such, um, so er its a very different idea so it uses, um, net as a context but still the form and the public address is pretty much the same as it always has been
CF	OK
MN	Even more because now there's, well, well it's the museum and gallery public because they're really trying to address, the collectors and people who think, who think they have bought something, so they need the reality of an object that has cost a certain amount of money or something, or thing they would accept to hang on their walls or this kind of thing
CF	Yeh so the physicality of it and would you say that there needs to be a sort of physicality element for net art to appeal to the traditional art audience?
MN	Absolutely
CF	Ok and so-
MN	Well in the same show they might show a number of websites and you know but then they know the collectors wont buy this because its too risky, you know not exactly knowing what you own?

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Yep.
MN	The main contradiction with a website is that, if, well when a collector buys and item its not for showing to the public its for showing in their house or, you know?
CF	OK so its a very different like, er traditional forms of art are very much more a private sphere whilst internet art is totally public?
MN	Yep
CF	Ok, so that's really interesting because I've spoken to a couple of people about that and noones said that they see sort of two different worlds of net art, most people have said there's net art on the internet which appeals to, as you were saying, would you say its like a younger demographic or like a new art audience? How would you describe them?
MN	Yeh. (pause) both, really yeah
CF	Um but then that's really interesting that theres still like the blue chip side of net art from your perspective
MN	Yes.
CF	That's really interesting because obviously my paper's about um, what I thought that net art is kind of a branching of the divide between the high art world, and the low culture of the internet but from your perspective they're actually different worlds altogether?
MN	Yeh. Well actually you could say in, things in the art world are also changing
CF	Mm
MN	Because the way they were 30 years ago and the way they are now is very different like er, the idea of avant grade and the idea of talking to a broader public, has changed a bit, you could say
CF	Mm
MN	So also the more main stream, got also, less risky, less er, controversial? Um..
CF	Mmhm
MN	So this had changed also and all the aspects, the controversial aspect the sort of marginal aspect, are er, not really welcome any more, not really welcome within the gallery and museum um
CF	OK so that in itself does sort of create a divide to the genre of net art as I would see it from my perspective of what I'd find online, that's kind of like created a divide?
MN	Do you like, it makes, if you like net art just because its a new technology and you know, you have reasons to adopt a new technology? That's very different than you like net art because it breaks the rules
CF	Yep and what's, as a professional how, why do you use net art? Which one of those do you conform to?

Speaker	Transcription
MN	For me because it breaks the rules and it allows me to address a very large audience because it started er, I already (had been in) galleries, I was already an established artist you could say I did public art and I would earn money so I didn't do it to put myself on the map, in art, on the contrary, it was about fun, immediate fun er and also, new things that people wouldn't allow me to do because it had to go through lots of committees and approval, this and that and you know? So er, yeah of course
CF	So in that respect it is kind of its not necessarily breaching a cultural divide, its more like rebelling against the cultural divide that already exists would you say?
MN	Yeah, in the space of freedom
CF	OK. And yeah so talking about the medium of the Internet, as you've spoken about for you its a very liberating place, um, theres a couple of contradictory theorists who've said different things so um, so some people suggest that the internet attains sort of a cultural and symbolic value in contemporary society , its a very important part of our world, erm, and then others believes that it's quite vulgar and quite a standard medium , erm how do those ideas compare to what you think?
MN	Er, (pause) I don't think for me it doesn't make so much sense to sort of measure it, of course it makes sense in certain perspectives but it doesn't make so much sense to sort of measure it up to certain values, rather to express it, because maybe thats because I was a pioneer in the field, to express it into an uncharted space in a space of freedom. <i>So that was its biggest value, is that it didn't have any</i>
CF	There's no rules, around it?
MN	Yeh, it didn't have rules and it didn't have value attached unless some topic values in sort of a medium for all and by all which of course not what a medium is, you know? There's a pyramid. So you know, this made a lot of sense, actually now it has appeared a lot in all the styles, you know, the distribution of power within the network gave a lot of sense of freedom autonomy and emancipation, for people who did it, you know? Like you would put something online and the next day someone would want to see it you know you had this immediacy that didn't depend on institution, erm, networks, to um, <i>it was all in your hands, emancipation, autonomy, and distributed power</i> noone has the power, people had no money but the websites they made were not as good as ours because they didn't have so many ideas as we did
CF	Yeh. Ok.
MN	So but of course that had changed a lot in the last ten years
CF	And how would you say it's changed, for the better, or?
MN	In some way I still believe in these values but I'm aware that young people do not um recognise them anymore
CF	So do you think that the medium has sort of, in essence, it became a very liberating space which you utilised, as did people when you were starting out, but contemporary internet space has become a different area? It's more, it's less culturally significant would you say?
MN	Totally, it's changed. Most of the network activity goes through big players like FaceBook and Google and so if you're banned by FB, if your art has er, nipples, FB won't let you see it, there's so many rules, er, you er, they hold it, you know, they hold your content, it became even more centralised than

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Than before, and its not even, they're not even rules in relation to art they're almost tistricting rules in relation to content, entirely,
MN	Yes.
CF	OK, that's really interesting and so as an internet art yourself, and the fact that you've played with pseudonym and online identity a lot, how do you perceive the online artist? Because obviously the internet, is based on contamination, it's about borrowing and sharing, there's no real copyright there's no ownership on that. So as an internet artist, do you think the significance of the artist is er, lessified by the fact that you're putting work online verses if you were to go into a gallery and see the name at the beginning and see all of their work in chronological order, how do you see the internet artist from your perspective, and your colleagues?
MN	Of course you can't judge that equally, this or that, you know the same work that would attract a lot of er, as I see it, it can't be both
CF	Yeh
MN	If it goes into a gallery it needs to have, you need to have been approved by a number of partners, erm and so, its not that you have a choice of this or that; you are inclined and you build up your work and you address your public in a certain way. I say, in net art you still have a certain level of autonomy of how you choose to show your work and how you choose to let people access it
CF	What was the benefit for you for having that anonymity and that pseudonym, what it just to sort of play with the audience or did you really want you identity on lock down and you wanted to have an organic, have the audience have a sort of organic relationship?
MN	Well the directness, the directness of it, you know?
CF	Mm, mmhmm
MN	That you don't have to elaborate things like day if you compare it to music, like improvising, you know? When the difference between making an album and getting distributed by the main companies and, suddenly like you you improvise in the street and thousands and millions of people would hear you, so its these things, the freedom that you have when you're improvising is not there any more when you build songs it can be something different, but you know so that sort of very spontaneous, erm, and very more natural, more simple, more er, and the personal excess, you know? People think you have some people around, sometimes you react to whatever happens around you, so the direct reality with the public
CF	Yeh. So its kind of like the cultural communication that is appealing to you? To have direct access to a world wide audience body?
MN	Yeh, and a direct reaction
CF	Exactly that's true actually and that's especially poignant with David Still because they were in essence converseng with themselves as audience members to this hypothetic character, which is crazy! (laughs)
MN	Yes but also communicating with a work of art. Imagine when you read a book that you like you start underlining lots of things that you like and imagine the book talks back! You know! That would be that, you know this sort of direct interaction
CF	Yeh, really nice.

Speaker	Transcription
MN	With a sort of uh, once you know, it didn't exist before except in live art where you can improvise with the public, and then you can interact directly with them
CF	Yeh and even then it's still a very specific audience that you're interacting with because they're bothered to go to the show and physically be there, whilst the internet is literally at your finger tips
MN	Yeh. You go out into the street you take your musical instrument and there you are,
CF	(laughs) it's a good analogy!
MN	Yeh!
CF	Um, and how would you, what do you see as sort of the future of internet art, not the blue chip side of it, sort of the stuff that is accessible to you and me on the internet now, what do you see as, where do you see it going? Because it's quite sporadic and random as it is anyway
MN	It'd a bit difficult it's like it used to be a jungle and everybody would make their way and now it's like the jungle is squeezed within the cracks of the pavement in a big city!
CF	Yeh, it's a broad brand place definitely
MN	Yeh, so it's a big city and there are spaces of freedom still, but they're very very tiny
CF	Mm
MN	And it's very difficult to get people to erm find where these places are, so of course restrictive networks are, um, are in place again, although they're still very open
CF	Mm, yeah you're right there sort of does become, inevitably a hierarchy because of the mass of information there has to be someone that's promoting it, well just like Rhizome or any of those type
MN	Well Rhizome is a 20 year institution they are also an important institution as it stands
CF	Yeh
MN	They're a big player in the game, like your work from over a week, your work could become important and still not have to be approved by a player, by different, although you you'd still make a tumblr blog and then after a few weeks you could still, you will get people interested on that you posted so um it's still possible but you have to work for it a lot and you know you will manage into the crack of a very very constructed world
CF	Yep. And so, um, what would you term your professional creative role now, because would you say that you're an internet artist, or would you say you're still more a traditional combo-type, how would you-
MN	Of course I would say one of the roles I have, is because I was pioneering, I was one of the first, one of the things I'm very busy with is preserving the work, um the length or duration on internet that's why it's so difficult to sell it, the obsolescence makes it very er, it doesn't last
CF	So are you working on archiving it? Your work?
MN	Archiving is not really exactly the word, I'm sort of preserving it

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Ok! How are you doing that? (laughs)
MN	Lots of things, you know, How long have you been on the net?
CF	What in my lifetime?
MN	Yeh
CF	Well I guss since I was probably pretty young, five I would say
MN	Five? You've already seen things being broken or not compatible anymore, things you liked and then you can't see them anymore they're disappeared
CF	Yep
MN	There's millions of reasons why items disappear or not work anymore or not just even that, make things accessible that have been created 20 years ago, is very difficult
CF	So you're making them available across all different platforms?
MN	Yes
CF	Oh nice! Cool
MN	To make it still work! It's like an old car, a vintage car!
CF	(laughs) to keep it running
MN	Yes you want to keep it up and running, because on the side of the public people still have a lot of interest
CF	Yeh defintiley
MN	Similar interest, in interacting with the narrative and getting the feelings across and but, technically it's a hell of a job
CF	Yeh
MN	You have to spare, you know it's like vintage car or something very very old you don't find you know you dont find the tools anymore to repara it, you have to invent how to do you
CF	(laughs) you go make it up as you go along! And are you thinking of doing any shows of your internet based stuff, in galleries, is that something that you'd be interested in doing or do you just want to keep it online?
MN	Erm, I want to keep it online anyway because I think my heart belongs online because of this interactive narrative. If these narratives are not interactive anymore, then they're worthless
CF	Ok. So it's about the comunication and language side that you're-
MN	Really created for interaction. No interaction, it won't work
CF	Ok that's really nice

Speaker	Transcription
MN	So er, still believe but of course it's not everything that I've made there are parts that I've been selling, but it's still a sense of being interactive and getting a reaction is really important, I think it's also what made net art so specific, direct access and direct interaction, of sorts
CF	Ok, really nice
MN	So it's like, live, you know, like live music I was comparing it to when you know going out onto the street and playing an instrument its a bit like that, its er, I think this has to be preserved and this cannot be preserved-
CF	In the gallery space
MN	In the gallery space, the gallery space wants other things, more er, the sort of technology, even some works have been bought by museums an when they try to keep the interaction, which they sometimes do, well they have to pay someone to keep the interaction alive and, the, so it poses very new problems and it can still take a lot of time to give answer to the problem
CF	Yeh
MN	Like for example, performance, is an important part of art, performance in the visual art
CF	Mm, yep
MN	But it took, it still takes, well its beginning now that you can sell a performance to a museam
CF	Oh really? I didn't know that that was an option! Do you have to go in and perform every day like being in the theatre?
MN	Well you define it, so some people they give a script, some people they sell, all kinds of things are possible but no of course this starts being a practise, when you couldn't do it er, thirty years ago when er , it started being a form of art, now by and by it still exists I could tell you number of examples, I'm a teacher in visual art so I know
CF	Oh cool! Nice, what in Amsterdam?
MN	Yeh, in the arts school
CF	Aah nice, oh brilliant, really nice!
MN	So I also work with lots of art which is not net art, also for my students I keep got to keep up with a lot of things just to say that for example sending net art which is still interactive, could resemble well how you would sell a performance for example, it would have to be reperformed, maintained, reinterpreted, what do you sell, the script? Or do you sell the act of performance or?
CF	Mm, so its kind of the organic-ness and the physicality, of well, the internet which lacks it but the 'physicality' in inverted commas is the, the importance of it really, the immediacy
MN	Yep. Because when you're selling a website you're not just selling a bunch of data, first you're selling a bunch of data that will outdate very fast, after 5 years you're practically sure the normal machines will not be able to read of it (laughs)
CF	Yep

Speaker	Transcription
MN	But you're not just selling that if you're selling something interactive, you're selling a whole construction
CF	Yeh
MN	That keeps alive , like renewing the domain name, you know? Is there a machine that does it automatically for you to renew the domain name or to buy the domain name?
CF	Yeah, sure
MN	That's just one detail but there's millions of details that says a website to access a viewer, not even the whole internet, just say a viewer that hangs something on their wall, or the screen or whatever, there's a lot dependent on a lot of construction, er which involve human being like reregistering, hosting
CF	Yep
MN	Letting people access it, but you're not selling the same thing as when you're selling a painting, as an object, and it's not an object, so a website, isn't just an object
CF	So even from the art that you're producing to the thing that you're selling at the end (net art) has got a whole new set of rules
MN	Yeh! If you're selling a performance you could say there might be a script or you know a text like in a play but still you're selling a lot more than this piece of paper with the text on
CF	Yeh
MN	Or the people so er there are new questions to a new form of art and thats why the art market at the moment tries to avoid the questions so that the artists produce things that avoid the questions
CF	Very nice,
MN	Also I would say (the genre of net art) is not necessarily only a benefit, its a necessity
CF	Yeh
MN	Because it has different parameters, you can't compare net art with painting, so you have to re-think the whole system. The system of accessibility to a viewer, the system of existing at all, you know?
CF	Yep
MN	So I think for the time being what's important in net art, it keeps a certain space of freedom, an unruly space, the jungle like the jungle is very small, like by saying the jungle, the jungle is the possible new things, the possible inventions
CF	There's no sort of direct answer as to where its going to go it'll just sort of, evolve.
MN	Otherwise you invent because you have an aid to that, you know there's a benefit there's a reason for it, and art it's always like, there is no reason, like it's there, but you couldn't do without. You don't really need it, but as soon as you have it, you think, I can't do without it. It's merely there because it impresses me, because of my mention so this thing of inventing without necessity in a way
CF	

Speaker	Transcription
MN	Well I appreciate that within your context you appreciate it, and I think that more people should be
CF	Tell the world!
MN	Exactly, we need it
CF	Exactly people need it, it's a necessity
MN	Yeh, they don't know yet but when they have it, they need it
CF	Definitely! Very true

Lauren Alexander

Has a contemporary reappropriation of the Internet advanced the medium of art?
How has the facilitator of the Internet aided in the reconciliation between low and high cultural divides? Self expression and cultural communication in Internet Art

Date	07-03-2017
Interview No#	4
Interviewee Name	Lauren Alexander (South African)
Interview Length	38 mins
Age	34
Location	Amsterdam
Professionalism	Foundland enables shifted roles from being artists, designers, editors, film directors and project organizers to educational facilitators and lecturers. Throughout our development we have critically reflected upon what it means to produce politically engaged, de-colonial storytelling from our position as non-Western artists working between Europe and the Middle East.
Title	Foundland Collective Founder (with Syrian Ghalia Elsrakbi)

CF: Interviewer

LA: Interviewee

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Your based in Amsterdam right now right?
LA	Yeah, I'm based in Amsterdam but as Foundland I mean, Ghalia is based pretty much in, um, in Cairo.
CF	Ok cool!
LA	So I go there quite often, I haven't been there for a while but now um yeah we're sort of working back and forth from there
CF	That's nice and how come Cairo?
LA	Well her parents live there and she decided to move there two years ago um er she's originally from Syria, and then so her parents moved there and she decided to give it a go and see if it would um work out after 15 years being in the Netherlands, um and she's managed to, I mean she's teaching there now and um yeah I mean she's actually quite happy living there so we used to work here in a studio together
CF	Yeh
LA	And she moved and also like the nature of the work that we are um busy with doesn't really mena that we sort of need more of a studio based practise, um

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Yeh exactly, its all online isnt it?
LA	Er yeah it's online but also um it's not as if, I mean in the past we were working on um design related projects um that were you know making a book together which is something which is a bit of more of a design office project and now the work is a little bit more free, in a sense, and I think we take longer to do projects and to develop work and research and so on so um, yeh I think it sort of worked out in a we don't have to really be in the same place but it was still quite an adjustment I guess to get used to it
CF	Yeh working directly with someone and then being half way around the world from each other (laughs)
LA	Yeah it does definitely have that long distance relationship feel
CF	Um and so tell me about Foundling Collective, so how, what was the thought process behind it, where did it sort of spark from and what does it mean for you guys today?
LA	Um, ok, um, yeah the two of us we studied together actually between 2006 and 2009
CF	OK
LA	Um and we were doing a master programme together here in Amsterdam and so that was pretty much the first time that we met, and um, and well during our study I think it was clear that both of us wanted to, I mean you know when you're doing your Masters studies finding out what exactly your interest is,
CF	Yeh
LA	And I think it was clear that we both pretty much were interested in how political identity is represented, and
CF	Mmhm
LA	How, erm, this also, is happening through media and then through what later became social media of course in 2006 social media was sort of like, you know and interesting playground but not really as established as it is now
CF	Sure, sure
LA	Um, and erm, yeh so we had a sort of common interest in how politics and design connect um both of us had worked in advertising and in branding and exhibition design companies before so um yeh we tried to after we finished, set up something that like, sort of like a platform that we could use to work on projects that we wanted to work on
CF	Sure,
LA	Which were more personal in nature and then well for years we kept that up um in at the same time like small times need doing, other work which would earn money and be a little bit more of a steady background
CF	Sure, sure

Speaker	Transcription
LA	So I think that's how we started erm, yeah um as I said earlier it grew from working on projects that were a little bit more applied as in like designing an underground newspaper which we did for two years with a group of artists which was very much being the designer in the and sort of editor in the team to projects which we are, were we were more heavily influenced in creating the information um and um thinking about how to present that and thinking about how to present that in an artistic context as well?
CF	Yeh, sure, and so going back to what you were saying about the internet and how it's changed, um would you say it was a facilitator for the medium which you guys were sort of thinking about whilst you met on the masters, was it there as well, was it a useful sort of er, platform for you guys at that point?
LA	Um, I remember at that point um that both of us, actually I've never really thought about this before but I know that both of us kind of connected with friends who were around the world, being here, I mean now this is so, well it's become so second nature to everybody really, but I remember everybody was joining FaceBook around 2007
CF	Mmhm
LA	And um connecting with an idea of like a home that you've sort of left behind um and I guess it was not until like 2011 when things in Syria started to change dramatically did we start to really pay attention to that in the work itself
CF	Ok
LA	Um so I think that that was quite a turning point and the revolution started in, well what was there a peaceful revolution in Syria and what we initially started to do, and you can see this in some of our work from 2011, like Simba, the last prince of Ba'ath country
CF	Mmhm
LA	I don't know if you looked through all the projects?
CF	Oh yeah I was having a click through and I saw that one actually yeah
LA	Yeah so this was it's a publication and it's all the work we did between 2011 and two thousand I think, was it 13 was the latest edition?
CF	Ok
LA	It was really to um document, to write about all of the kind of actions that were taking place in er Syria in public space but also using the Internet as a public space
CF	Yes ok
LA	And if you want to, I think it could be useful for you in relation to the Internet, to, if you Google the title of the publication on, well if you look on Issuu, issuu, the erm, this like online platform for publications?
CF	Yep yeah yeah, yeah, oh has it got it up there? Brilliant
LA	Yeah so you'll actually find the whole publication there um we also published it in Arabic the intention behind it was to spread the collection of things that we had found which were related to um yeah as I said it was related to more creative dissidence which was spread, so for example people writing messages on ping pong balls and spreading them down the hills of the mountain um, and then this was again this was an action which took place really and there were messages of freedom, hope, whatever

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Sure,
LA	Um and people used ping pong balls because they weren't allowed to use other materials, people couldn't get hold of other materials, so they sort of started to get really creative with the kind of materials that they used,
CF	Mmhm
LA	But also interesting to note is the relation between that and the Internet because for example these actions that took place were um recorded on video and they found a pla-like a home on YouTube
CF	Ok! Nice. Brilliant
LA	Yeah, some other examples of that are like living room protests which happened also in 2011, 2012 so that was people protesting in their living rooms but then specifically for a video camera and then the video camera would allow this to travel onto um YouTube the YT would actually form a problem,
CF	Mmhm
LA	For these actions to exist, because they couldn't exist in the public space there
CF	Ok that's really nice, and so talking from your perspective, um and Ghalia's as non-Western artists, um are you sort of like concerned with the lack of artistic representations from your birth places within the high-art world sort of, particularly online? 'cause I was speaking to um Caitlyn Denny and she was saying the, Net Art world, even though it's on the internet is somewhat kind of an elite platform for people that, you know have internet access and have the tools to make the stuff to put online
LA	Mmhm
CF	Um so would you say that there's a misrepresentation from your perspective, looking at things back home and stuff like that or would you say that thanks to the internet its actually becoming better, or its in fact actually totally fine and as you were saying about the ping pong, people have access to the world wide web and its aiding this?
LA	Yeah I think that what we've noticed being in these parallel worlds for quite some years now,
CF	Yep
LA	Is that, um, is that of course all of these things that are going on in Syria, where also you see it in Egypt as well where um the internet is a vital tool just to be able to connect so an example of that would be, besides these examples which are related very much to the war,
CF	And politics and stuff
LA	Yeah, you also have um, things like people, or at least to protest, you also have people using Facebook to be able to conduct for example er, medical operations, online
CF	Oh! Wow
LA	These people are gathering the expertise of people like on FaceBook for example that are really using the medium of the internet to be able to
CF	Do good?

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Yeh
LA	But also maybe in a more critical sense like maybe its a very different frame of mind to thinking that um, like, er Edward Snowden and how information is leaked, and
CF	Yeah
LA	Um and how that effects us all an the NSA is watching us and privacy online and, etc, so it sort of really interns of like a Western/non-Western, I think theres a, theres quite a strong, you know theres two faces to it, either like we use the internet anyway even if its a dangerous place?
CF	Yep, ok
LA	I think there is very much a paranoia around the Internet and how, um, theres an inescapable, arm you know, you're inescapably trapped inside, inside some kind of civilian state
CF	Yep, sure. And so would you say that the internets purpose and role from, back in the day when it started how has changed considerably? 'cause obviously my erm, paper's about sort of reappropriation in terms of culture, but your even expanding it, I mean obviously your work is very politically minded anyway, but even in a 'doing-good' type thing the role of the internet has just taken on something that noone really foresaw back when they started it out as just a, transmission of information?
LA	Um, yeah. Err (pause) no definitely, I mean there are consequences that are just far-reaching and just um, I can probably talk about this for hours tho
CF	(laughs)
LA	Yeh it's not like a, I was recently as a conference in um, in Berlin called transmediale and its a media arts festival and a lot of those talks are online as well and this is a conference which is very much embedded in the thinking of how do we deal with being in a surveillance society? Um and how do we, how can art and culture be a tool to be able to, er, observe but also act and also hack within that context
CF	Ok, ok that-
LA	and it has been since, ten, more than ten years ago, so matched like um, I wouldn't say directly activist but it definitely has that kind of tone...Anyway what they were talking a lot about is the concept of evil media, um, so evil media is um, a way of thinking of how, basically if tools online, I mean, it has also to do with um data, etcetera, I mean I a lot of that is, formulated online, also some of it, is not, credit card details or whatever, um but, if information is, or this kind of data is put in the wrong hands, sort of thinking about
CF	The repercussions of?
LA	Yeh, its the repercussions of, and also um, you know who has control over everything, and depending on who has control and what their agendas are, are what the consequences could be, for that, and um, as things become like sort of more and more left to the algorithm and the non-human aspect of whats being analysed and how things are being, how information is being correlated and then um, analysed and fed back to us,
CF	Yeh

Speaker	Transcription
LA	Um, and how this sort of, um yeah should never be kind of, you know FaceBook should never be thought of as your window to the world, it remains a company which creates that platform that we all subscribe to which is just super weird actually, that everyone prescribes to one, one thing
CF	Yep
LA	And people, change of course but, but so its talking about the concept of evil mediation, depending that who controls what and what they do with it
CF	Ok brilliant thank you I will definitely have a, check that one out...So talking about that type of stuff in relation to, um, art online, do you perceive the medium of the internet as either devaluing or revaluing art, because it can go one of two ways really, I mean especially as you were saying it having sort of an evil undertone, erm, do you see art on the internet as a revaluation, or sort of a, disenfranchise essentially because of the internet being a, a form which promotes you know, sharing, and community, and er, a lack of ownership, what's your perspective on that, because obviously your work spans you know, from talks to, something you've put on the internet, to communication, so you've sort of seen all sides of it
LA	Well I think I mean when we've been asked before if we see the internet as a vital platform to be able to produce work, I think that we have had to really be er, sort of think about that and think, is that, really the case, because in most projects, at least so far, and this may change, but being more of an analysis of material which is generally found online
CF	Yeah,
LA	Or otherwise, or not online through first hand interviews or something, but erm, that that material has been processed into um, a medium which is actually not that much embedded on an online, it's not made just for the internet specifically, but then it's taken on the form of like an exhibition or a publication which then would be absolutely online, as well as with the issuu example, but um but its not necessarily only make for that, it's definitely taken erm, the context of the internet into, account
CF	Consideration, yeah
LA	I mean especially in the world called "Baby Come Home"?
CF	Yeah I saw that one as well
LA	Yeah so it's probably like, I mean in that example, we take um a lot of different stories which are scraped from online material and then we produce that in a kind of dialogue which we, which takes place in a video, which I mean is not an interactive medium necessarily, or, I mean its sort of like an A to B kind of narrative, but that um, what was kind of nice about that project is that it was commenting on an older existing internet art work, um
CF	Yeah that was, um one of the original net artists wasn't it? Olia or however you pronounce it?
LA	Er, Olia Lialina yeah um I mean she's known as one of the founding artists, of net art, I mean you know, way before everyone else, she's, so, and she also what she did in the original work, um My Boyfriend Came Back From The War
CF	Yep,

Speaker	Transcription
LA	Um, is that she was really I think her work is really engaged with the internet as a platform as such because she's thinking about how websites are made she's thinking about frames, or whatever the kind of technology was that internets were made, um websites were made of at that time, and she's thinking about the idea of story telling online, and how she basically, er, play with it, um you know use it but also sort of abuse it as well
CF	Mmhm
LA	So I think she's a very interesting example of something who is really working with the mechanics of the internet, as a tool to make, and to play with then, but I think that our work is not so much fussed about that, but I'm very happy that is can, that for example that this video can be fed back into Olia's database, because there's a whole data base of works that have come from her original work
CF	Mmmhmmm
LA	I think it's quite interesting actually to look at, so if you look at that page on our website, you see the video, and then there's also a link to My Boyfriend Came Back From the War kind of home page and on that home page you have all the other artists who have created work, based on her work
CF	Oh, brilliant so it's kind of an, archive of all the, it all interlinks, ok brilliant nice I'll have a look at that
LA	Yeah so that's like, um, it also spans over a lot of time actually, I think over 20 years people have been taking her original one and then, you know, screwing with it or making a completely new version or just, you know, trying to, and that is something very exciting about internet art, is that it doesn't assume a kind of, um, it's not very, kind of steady, it can also be dynamic that, artists could be open to, people, playing with that
CF	yeh! Exactly it's via the nature of the medium is guess that its about a sort of contamination, like a borrowing and stealing medium, that supports it I guess. And so what are your thoughts on the audience that the internet offers net art, do you see it as sort of world spanning, vast, wide, everyone here there and everywhere or do you see it as sort of a class divide, elitism anywhere within that, would you suggest?
LA	Umm I definitely would say that, um just because art, exists and is made for the internet, um I wouldn't say that one would assume that is automatically has a larger audience. Um, I don't know this is just, I don't have numbers on this or something it's just an assumption that I have, or it's a feeling that I have that, um, that a lot of the stuff that you see, I mean I guess er, sort of classic reference for you would be this show that took place at the Whitechapel Gallery um, I think, it's now, no it was last year, the beginning of last year
CF	Ok
LA	Errm it's called super, erm (breaths) er, shit, super...highway...
CF	Electronic Superhighway?
LA	Electronic Superhighway
CF	Nice ok,
LA	And this was an exhibition of all things deemed to be Internet Art.

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Oh ok nice, brilliant
LA	So, um I think that, yeah over the last couple of year this is sort of, at least it considered itself, the, reference in terms of what is internet art, so they include Olia Lialina, they include Nam June Paik, they include all the older work
CF	Ok
LA	Um and then right up to now and they include all that they consider to be relevant internet art, lets say, or, part of a kind of discourse
CF	Yeh
LA	Um, I guess that that kind of pool is what you would, um, consider, to be art, but I definitely or like, what is Internet Art or what is generally considered but I still think its quite a niche field in terms of art, um the art market, so that's also another thing, the art market is a different beast maybe, the art market is concerned with selling work , and that means in art fairs it means, ummm
CF	It's an economy run business isn't it whilst internet art is debunked of that
LA	Well, no, its not, um this is the thing, er there are galleries that are really actively working to support internet art, so there are, there's one in berlin but I don't know the name I'll have to look up, um, what that is, I mean look its seen as like the trendy thing that young people should be into and should um, and this is like the kind of new aesthetic of the future, that also has kind of a very specific aesthetic
CF	Mm, yeah exactly
LA	Er, that also has a name, have you come across that?
CF	I haven't, but I was looking, one of the pieces on your site, erm Images of Affect, I thought was very net-art-eqsue, in aesthetic
LA	Yeah, um, er, there are things written about this, I think people call it, um, er, new aesthetics or something like that
CF	Ok
LA	Um (typing) yeah ' new aesthetic ' er, the, refers to the increasing appearance of visual language of digital technology on the internet and in the physical world
CF	Ok.
LA	And this is, I think this is also key to your, to what you're trying to think about, um there are works which are dealing directly with the internet that would be like Olia Lialina's internets, er My Boyfriend Came Back from the War, she's dealing with the platform of the internet, then there is work which is dealing with the aesthetic of the internet, which is something, it's related but it's something else
CF	Yeh
LA	So, yeh, aesthetic of the internet is something that you become more accustomed to? Something that is kind of like, I think a trend, so there are a couple, there are definitely galleries that are working towards promoting this kind of new aesthetic and um that those are feeding also into mainstream so I think its good to be aware that it's a thing which is, its a thing, its definitely a market in itself

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Ok, brilliant
LA	Um, and-
CF	So if the new aesthetic side of net art isn't in a gallery space, there's, just from my research, there's no real way of monetising it, surely? Because, due to the nature of the medium it's there an available and you can go on a link and find it, no? Would you agree with that?
LA	Um, no there are ways, of monetising um internet art, um, I am not an expert in this but I know that you can look up the works of harm van den dorpel , I can write it for you in your chat, erm,
CF	Thank You
LA	(Types) Erm so I think if I'm not mistaken he creates, he specifically creates internet works I mean if you go on his website what you see is um, yeah I think a kind of typical example of someone who works in a kind of aesthetic which is related to the internet, and um, but then it's also kind of like printed into a visual form
CF	Mm
LA	Oh also not printed but is made, manufactured into something that is physical
CF	Yeh, sure
LA	And I think, if you look up, erm, a bit more maybe read some interviews with him ectera, I'm pretty sure that he has worked with trying to, errr, work with copywriting things that are online that you can produce unique um,
CF	Oh versions of? Brilliant
LA	Yeh
CF	Ok cool I will definitely look him up I've got his webpage up here now I'll look through it
LA	Yeah, there, um, I have heard for example people using bitcoin technology , which is, um, I don't know how much you know about bitcoins and how they work, but um, anyway that there are certain, what is her name again, I can look it up, um, I know a woman who deals specifically with using bitcoin technology
CF	Mm
LA	To create a way to copywriter and monetise their work
CF	Oh thats amazing, ok, cool this is all news to me so this is super useful, thank you
LA	Mmhm, ummm, I have to look up (pause) um, woah, ok I've gone totally blank on what she's called
CF	That's no problem that's no worries I will do some research re: the bitcoin thing and I'm sure her name will come up somewhere
LA	Yeah I've got it, its called, (pause) ascribe
CF	Ascribe?

Speaker	Transcription
LA	Yeah, ascribe dot, um, i, o. Yep
CF	Brilliant that is fantastic ok cool that's amazing thank you so much
LA	So this is an example of, this is quite new I think like the technology that they use for this is based on the bitcoin technology so that means that you have like a way of uniquely identifying things and also that the method of doing it can never be hacked
CF	So its secure as well, brilliant that is fantastic. Amazing that is the list of questions! Thank You so much for your time
LA	But yeah I would say the woman who runs ascribe, Masha, she's very much um sympathetic towards artists, so she's not just out to make money but more like um,
CF	On the team
LA	Yeah she's interested in protecting also the rights of artists and so on um, but yeah I would be hesitant to make claims like that there's something very kind of like underground going on particularly on the internet and that that you distinguish that from the physical because um I think that the market sort of continues to operate in the same mechanisms but I think that um and maybe the, yeah the online platform is still tricky interns of um, its doesn't really replace art fairs or anything like that but, um I think that, there's a certain stream of people who are considered internet artists who still feed into the art market as it is now, I wouldn't say that the two are separate
CF	OK brilliant I'll be sure to note that
LA	And um, I mean erm, well what it does bring up is a kind of a different set of concerns that the artist will have, for example this harm van den dorpel example, I know that these painting are produced also by algorithms, so this is the type that he's working with and then, it does create a kind of rift, because its not longer about painting itself and what painting means, or you know, like?
CF	Yeah it kind of removes the creative licence that artists were established with before, rather than just typing in lines of codes, but then, that still counts? You know there's kind of this, its kind of an illusive genre which I'm interested in and I think that a lot of people don't haven't heard of it and don't know about it and even if they were to come across it, wouldn't know, you know what to do with it essentially so I think it's kind of a quite unique form of creativity that needs to be explored
LA	Yeah then there becomes a rift between what was arm traditionally conceived as the art space and what should happen there, what is produced and then what is happening now, so, I think, um, I mean, um, yeah I definitely wouldn't say that the two are, are separate but it's kind of like just a different frame of mind of people who are, who have been raised only with the internet and what their concerns are and what those before, it sort of creates part of a rift. Anyway! Yeah good luck with your thesis and your studies

Domenico Quaranta

Has a contemporary reappropriation of the Internet advanced the medium of art?
How has the facilitator of the Internet aided in the reconciliation between low and high cultural divides? Self expression and cultural communication in Internet Art

Date	20-03-2017
Interview No#	5
Interviewee Name	Domenico Quaranta
Interview Length	-
Age	39
Location	Italy
Professionalism	Facilitator and a mediator, between radical art practices and the art world with its audiences, its institutional and conceptual structures.
Title	Co-Founder Link Art Center / Contemporary Art Critic and Curator

Email Correspondence

Question	What would you term your professional creative role?
Answer	I was trained as an art historian, and I first approached digital and net based art from this point of view, studying the history of ada'web, a website commissioning web projects to artists between 1994 and 1998, and then archived by the Walker Art Center. In Italian art magazines in the early 2000s, there was little or no information about the artists I was following online, so I started playing the role of the art critic, writing reviews and more elaborate essays, interviewing artists, etc. Curating and teaching came about for the very same reasons. In 2011 I co-founded the Link Art Center, with the idea of supporting art that engages the topics and media of the information age through publishing, exhibitions, online initiatives. I still think of me as a facilitator and a mediator, between radical art practices and the art world with its audiences, its institutional and conceptual structures.
Question	What type of work do you produce, and in what medium? And how long have you been in the industry for?
Answer	I started working around 2003. I write, organize exhibitions, edit books, have classes about net art and digital culture at large.

Question	Is the internet being utilised differently today in your field than at its advent?
Answer	Of course it does! Since its very beginning, the internet changed on a regular basis both in terms of technical infrastructure and software, and in terms of community. If we limit our look to the World Wide Web age (the internet itself dates back to the 70s), we went from dial-up connections to broadband; from static home pages to social networks; from home computers and modems to mobile devices and an always on way of life; from 32 million of people online in 1995, to the current 3 billion and more; from the digital utopia of the early 90s to the current distopia of the internet as a pervasive panopticon; etc etc. In such an unstable, fluid platform, everything changes accordingly, especially art.
Question	Do you think Net Arts lack of physicality affects it as an established artistic movement? How?
Answer	I do not think Net Art lacks of physicality. The internet is a physical infrastructure. When it is strictly digital and net based, we experience it through physical devices. It took some time for video to be accepted as an established art medium, but it happened; and net art is more “physical” than video. If you look at the career of some established net artist, like JODI, Olia Lialina, Cory Arcangel or Eva and Franco Mattes, you can see as many objects as net based digital files. What affected or delayed net art’s recognition as an established artistic movement, is the realization that the digital and the internet have been irreversibly changing the field of art - a realization that’s not yet evenly distributed.
Question	Do you perceive the medium of the Internet as devaluing or revaluing art today?
Answer	Not sure I got the question, but I try an answer anyway. The internet is part of a technological shift that is changing art - as well as society, politics, economics and our life on Spaceship Earth - forever (or, at least, up to the next technological shift, be it onwards or backwards). It’s neither devaluing nor revaluing it - but of course, it may change it beyond recognition. After all, what’s art? Our current notion is rooted in the Ninetieth Century, and may well deserve an update.
Question	Do you believe the Internet today attains “cultural and symbolic” value? (Backe, 2014) or would you agree with Julian Stallabrass’s statement that the Internet is “vulgar and standard”? (Stallabrass, 2009: 173).
Answer	I’m used to agree with Stallabrass, and I would like to read the full quote. Maybe the two positions are not so different as they seem. The current internet may not meet its utopian promises, but it would be hard to understand the world we live in, in all its vulgarity and standardization - or shall we say hypernormalization? - without it.
Question	And in light of this, what’s your perspective on the Internet as a platform for art? Do you believe that there is a home for art online?
Answer	There is a home for art everywhere, especially online. And by the way, “where” is offline nowadays? Over the oceans, maybe. In some African villages, I guess. Antarctica, but not sure. The outer space. Wherever you may find art today, it’s online.

Question	What are your thoughts on the audience that the Internet offers Net Art?
Answer	<p>What's great - what's always been great - about the internet is that it is, in principle, a universally accessible public space, where, if you want, something can exist as art without waving an art label on it. Of course, this can mean that something can go completely unnoticed, like that thousands of YouTube videos with zero views, or be perceived just as one bit in the never-ending flow of information; but it also means that it can be potentially subject to any kind of audience, from any place in the world, from any cultural background. This, to me, still has an amazing potential, and can have extraordinary, largely unpredictable potential. Along the Twentieth century, contemporary art became the subject of interest of a small, very small cultural niche. If you weren't visiting galleries, art fairs and museums, reading specific books and magazines, you were unlikely to be exposed to art as you were to music, literature, cinema, advertising. Public art and street art tried, of course, to escape this situation. The internet changed this situation radically. Of course, institutions, galleries, curators and gatekeepers came along, and the niche audience (to which I belong by the way) can just jump from a museum website to Rhizome to an online art gallery and be happy with it. But you may not be looking for art and still meet it on a dedicated url, in the form of an Instagram post, a Tumblr image, a 4chan thread, a file on the Darknet, a book on Lulu, an auction on eBay. What's great for me is not that art, by intercepting this "accidental audience" (Brad Troemel), can get more attention and likes; but that, ceasing to be just the default object of attention of a sectarian cult, it becomes part of a commons of ideas that float, hybridize, combine, generate new ideas in different fields.</p>
Question	In your eyes, is there any definition between the amateur and the professional online artist?
Answer	<p>As Andy Warhol said in 1977: "Every professional performer always does the same thing at exactly the same moment in every show they do. What I like are things that are different every time. That's why I like amateurs. You can never tell what they'll do next." A professional usually follows a pattern, tries to work within a given, accepted idea of art and to operate within the rules of an art world. He gives more importance to the opinions of a few professionals than to the general audience. He tries to get the attention of a given set of institutions, galleries, curators and collectors, and to develop a career. There is nothing bad in being a professional, if you keep trying surprising yourself with what to do. If you do your best to learn from amateurs.</p>
Question	Do you see economy and monetary value as important attributes to art?
Answer	<p>I wouldn't say I see them as "attributes" to art. Any activity, including art, should be sustainable, and the art market came about in the art world to make this possible. The basic rule is simple: monetary value should be proportional to cultural value. The more something is culturally valuable, the more you spend to own it. When this doesn't work, or worst - it works the other way around (something starts to be considered culturally valuable because somebody spent a lot of bucks on it) - something is going wrong.</p>

Benjamin Andreas

Has a contemporary reappropriation of the Internet advanced the medium of art?
How has the facilitator of the Internet aided in the reconciliation between low and high cultural divides? Self expression and cultural communication in Internet Art

Date	16-03-2017
Interview No#	6
Interviewee Name	Benjamin Andreas
Interview Length	1hr...
Age	31
Location	Copenhagen, Demark
Professionalism	Artist / Sculture
Title	

CF: Interviewer

MN: Interviewee

Speaker	Transcription
CF	So you're an artist but I actually don't know anything about your history, where you came from etcetra, I actually saw on your FaceBook today that you went to the University of Hague?
BA	Not the Hague University, I went to the Royal Academy of Arts of Holland, which is in the Hague, er, The Hague used to be the old capital, it's still the political capital, er so yeah, studied there for the last four years, just moved back this summer
CF	Oh I see I didn't know it was so recent, and what were your studying when you were over there?
BA	Fine Arts.
CF	OK
BA	Yeah,
CF	And through that, from looking on your website you like Segway-d into sculpture? Is that right?
BA	Er yeah, no that's completely right, I used to do like these digital collages and stuff and then I ended up doing sculpture
CF	Is, would you define sculpture as your work because, my, like a traditional view of sculpture is literally more like actually physically making like, a head but yours isn't really like, does that count as sculpture is it-
BA	Well that's what I always say, I always say that er, I define it as sculpture but I understand if people define it as installation art.
CF	Ok

Speaker	Transcription
BA	Er and that being said its also very much conceptual art
CF	Yes
BA	I think that's like a holy trinity of something and I think all those parameters are sliding bars you know um, everything's subjective in a sesne
CF	Very true
BA	I mean I have something and I hope that I can, I have an idea behind everything and I hope that I convey erm enough of that,
CF	Of a message
BA	I don't wana say message but my intent to, er, you know, to lead people towards some questions, or some conclusions that its about specific sphere of you know um, that I have a specific sphere of interest but most important about every piece of art is to raise questions and to not give the answers because if we give an answer then you're finished
CF	Yep
BA	But if you raise a question then you five the audience something
CF	And an idea to like keep bubbling away
BA	Exactly.
CF	With your work when you're presenting do you ever have any dialogue or a little bit of information about yourself or the work itself or do you kind of just leave it totally subjective?
BA	I always have, I always write something, um, especially as I've progressed after the last couple of years, er, its kind of become clear to me, that a lot of my aesthetics and a lot of the stuff that I talk about er stems from er, some of my autobiographical er you know like my autobiography, where I come from, you know, how I grew up. I've grown up in Christiania it's quite a melting pot of different ideas
CF	Yep
BA	And er, I use crystals in my work and you know I talk about spirituality in my work and that's something which is very er very present there and also something we, I mean we always have crystals on top of the tv and I think that's such a clear indication of the work that I er-
CF	That you're producing
BA	Yeh exactly
CF	What erm, I noticed that some of the names were like a lot of the names actually was "Constructed Reality", what was the reason behind that?
BA	That was, yeah that was a concept that I was working on at the time, so but, what I was trying to justify was that the construction of reality was kind of a, the, the, filter through which we view the world , and one of my samples was you know the idea of a seashell?
CF	Yep

Speaker	Transcription
BA	That um, you know, whenever I see a seashell I pick it up and I put it to my ear and I know that's the sound of the sea? But obviously it's not the sound of the sea that you're listening to, but er but we all agree that that's how we see the world
CF	Yeh, ok
BA	There's a bit of romanticism in that or something but that constructed reality, that's something we collectively agreed upon that that's the sound of the sea
CF	Uhuh
BA	Um it's something I kind of left behind but I still think it's really interesting and that being said I mean er, I still work er with out we look at the world
CF	Yep
BA	And er, not objectively but pseudo-objectively (laughs)
CF	(laughs) and does quite a lot of your work involve like sound effect and stuff to present a reality-esque-scape or?
BA	Um, yeah it turned out like that (laughs) er I don't know, I never considered myself to be a sound artist um, but I think before I even started studying art, when I was just kind of, because I new I wanted to kind of study art before I did the studies but I really think that you don't become an artist until you've actually given yourself that time to - I think artist should be a protected title like architect
CF	Ok
BA	Er, which I think is very interesting in relation to the internet we'll come back to that erm, but er, but of course that doesn't apply to everyone but I think there's something to say for that, anyway! Er, I was already interested, to get back to your question, I was already interested in um, more, uh, like to art that spoke to more senses than just the visual
CF	Ok, nice
BA	And um, and I wanted to do something with smell and something with er, tactility and stuff and I was never really quite, tactility did come into my graduation work, but er, but I think sound is just a very
CF	It's an interesting medium, it's totally untangible
BA	Yeah and also its uh, its a medium that I find pretty troubling because I am of the belief that music is not art
CF	Ok, whys that?
BA	Well I think it's more entertainment
CF	Ok! Well depends on the music though surely?
BA	Er, yes but in the broader sense of what music is considered to be I don't consider a musician to be an artist, er and that goes for Bob Dylan, even though he won a literary
CF	(laughs) that goes for my whole itunes library

Speaker	Transcription
BA	(laughs)
CF	Ok so talking about the elements that you introduce with your work, the physicality of your work which is the whole sense experience, its not just about aesthetic but it's also about aurally it's also about physicality, if you wanted to produce your work online, as you do because you have a website, how do you work around that, how does the internet work, in your favour or against your favour, as an artist from a traditional helm of the art world?
BA	I think in my case, it works against me
CF	Ok
BA	Er, but I think that had something to do with the fact that I'm maybe not as super happy with my er, well first of all it works against me because I'm not completely fluent in programming and how to make a website, I mean I know enough that I can make a website from a templete site
CF	A portfolio that you can have
BA	That'll look ok and stuff er and of course it's a great way to let people see your work without being there but I think my work needs to be experienced and I think there's one work on my website that's a video and in that case-
CF	That's in an installation in itself right? That like, was an installation on a wall that -
BA	Exactly, yeah exactly well obviously the video is the work but er i of course I make a lot of sculpture-
CF	Yeah, and you considered how it would be presented if it was in a gallery space
BA	Exaclty. Erm, so there it works very well as the intended, to be view on a screen with headphones or with audio so there it works very well but I think um, even in great photos, er you have to have I think you have to have a website that er that reflects your work and I don't think mine does, mine is just an online portfolio
CF	Yeh. And it's quite and as you said its very difficult to emulate an entire environment on a 2D screen-
BA	Absolutely
CF	Where, even if you were to have some sort of Google view where you could look around the space its a totally different environment you don't get the sounds, you wouldn't even get close at the smell
BA	No and I mean I have incense in my last installation and
CF	Ok yeah, so that's totally missed as a part of the work
BA	And even though there's a video that I had this like um, these massage machines like these
CF	(laughs)
BA	Not vibrators, I can see your face (laughs) ok well essentially it's a mechanic its a machine where you can vibrate

Speaker	Transcription
CF	What that people can do to each other?
BA	No they were on the floor they were moving around, but obviously they create a vibration in the space, you can hear them in the sound
CF	On the floor, yeh, yep
BA	Um but they were also there er, self healing devices, I mean that's what it was, and they omitted like an ultra-violet
CF	A ray, ok yeah sure sure
BA	So they were meant for people to massage themselves and then you can project this ultra violet light on you
CF	Ok so talking about the audience for your work, verses an audience that you might get online, how do you think they differ, how do you think they compare, what's the conflict with having work primarily on the internet verses having physicality, space, because from my experience of talking to various different people on the topic, the internet offers a huge audience, massive audience from there there and everywhere, all different ages and demographics, economic backgrounds, whereas where have you been presented, have you had various different shows in Denmark, when you were still at school, whats the
BA	No I haven't done anything since I came back, er, I have something planned at a gallery space in Kødbyen,
CF	oh nice, which one? At V1 or
BA	No in that big project space, SPACE10
CF	SPACE10! Yes man that's fucking cool, whens that, I wanna come!
BA	It's er, well I'll let you know, I still need to make the work (laughs) um wait, what was the question again,
CF	Its that audience body that would generally choose to access your work verses the availability of it online
BA	Yeah yeh yeah, well I think my, I always aw my work more in insitutiions because I think it being not just, oh this is going to sound terribly pretentious, it being not just a visual work but also about something I always er, I always wanted it to be accessible to like the everyone, which I mean of course you can do online, but there, you won't experience the work
CF	You loose a dimension
BA	So I always saw it as like an open collection, I always saw it being in the museum and then or something um I mean those are ambitions I hope I get it that's always how I've seen it and I think um my work needs a bit more um, like, it needs more time, you need to spend more time with it than I think the average user,
CF	The instancy, the immediacy of the internet, the click through process is very quite yeh yeh
BA	Exactly, exactly, erm, I mean, that's one of the good things about the internet that you can get everything out there, you can get your work seen but it also devalues everything

Speaker	Transcription
CF	That was yeah another question was my, theres been so many different view points on this about how the internet does essentially devalue the art world, like, quite literally because you cannot make economy online, because it's based on a medium which is concerned with sharing and immediacy
BA	Which is great! And I think there are some artists which do great work online, erm, there's um a Dutch artist called Rafaël Rozendaal
CF	Ok
BA	Um and he makes websites and what you do when you buy the work is you essentially buy, you make, sign a contract that you have to keep the website up, you buy the domain name, you have to, you can't change anything on it and you have to keep it up um but you own it
CF	But so then it also, even in that respect that kind of changes the role of the buyer totally, as an art-
BA	I mean it still becomes a commodity that somebody is making money off of but its,
CF	But you almost gain responsibility, generally as an art collector generally you'll just have it in your house
BA	You're responsible to the art work all of a sudden
CF	The up-keep of it, yeah which is a different
BA	I mean, you can store something, you're not only responsible for the art work but also responsible to keeping it er, available for everyone
CF	Yeh
BA	Er, which I think is great, uh
CF	But also I spoke to a Net Artist today, yeah its very easy to just buy a domain name and keep buying a domain name every time it runs out but its not only that it's also making it accessible through time because like even in my life time the difference in systems, the difference in programming platforms, the way things are presented they've changed so much and like being, having to make something accessible on all different platforms over a long period of time is almost like er dependency variable that a 'normal' in inverted commas art buyer wouldn't really want, they want a private sphere where they can show off the things they own, to their fiends and family and immediates I mean it's not really a-
BA	I mean Macintosh in the 80's gave Andy Warhol a whatever Mac something um and er that machine only recently was restored to its working condition with his work on it you know, that doesn't last for ever, er, plastic, metals, I mean they, electronics degrade a lot faster and become obsolete uh and dated much faster than a screen print does
CF	Yeh
BA	So of course that has changed the entire er way of how you preserve art works which is interesting and yeah like you said you know, a lot of older websites um when you look at them now they don't look good on the browser because they were programmed for a
CF	A different sized screen! I think also even though its kind of a downfall for producing work for the intnertt it also gives it some sort of um, authenticity when you see it in 10 years time which is made for a browser which aesthetically looks like a totally different world, it's from like the 80's

Speaker	Transcription
BA	No, you have to set up a machine from 1985, you know
CF	Yeah its an entirely different way of absorbing a piece of creative work
BA	Absolutely, and I mean you know, people are still hacking the NES, the original Nintendo entertainment system and making art on them, so you know, it'll definitely still be a thing
CF	How do you see it as, because obviously going from the medium of the internet being like a very tangible, inconsistent, free for all, no rules or regulations, thing, how do you see art online as progressing in the future because there are no rules right now and obviously there are still some you have to conform to if you want to be able to put stuff on a server say Google, if you wana have it there you're gona have to jump through holes, even if you wana get recognition from Rhizome or something they're gonna wana have to see some of your works, so there's still a little bit of a hierarchy online, but how do you see it progressing, like so you think it will still be this limitless boundary of do whatever you want and class it as art type medium or?
BA	Erm, I think, er, I think there's a big misconception that you inadvertently bought up because the internet is not a big free for all, its privately owned, all of it, because the internet does not exist without the infrastructure, so somebody owns the cables that runs the internet under the pacific ocean for instance. So everything's privately owned, still um
CF	Oh, ok!
BA	Er so without the corportations...
CF	Wait but does that actually exist there's cables under the ocean?
BA	Oh yeah, it's not all wireless it's all based on the infrastructure
CF	There's physical cables?
BA	Its true!
CF	Are you serious? Ok shit I didn't even
BA	But I mean that's, I dont think it'll even get privatised, er if they ever try to I think they'll be a
CF	A revolt
BA	Yeah a revolt
CF	A rebellion
BA	Er, I mean there are different archival um like there's a project trying to archive the entire internet and you can download it
CF	(laughs) that must be like ridiculously big
BA	It's like millions of terrabytes
CF	But event hen that can't be the whole of the internet because I mean ever day there's new sites being created

Speaker	Transcription
BA	Oh yeah yeh
CF	And it's an old archive as soon as you've downloaded it?
BA	you know movements that are trying to at least keep it
CF	Make it tangible?
BA	Yeah yeah keep it free , also there was a project called freedom towers
CF	Ok
BA	That sprouted up under occupy wall street and what they did was they made um these towers er they're really easy to make and cheap to produce and what they made was they made er local areas networks for all the pretends and each tower um you know would provide a wifi so you could get online but they were also connected to each other so that's a smaller system that was outside
CF	Wait what was the purpose of it? They were doing what?
BA	They were providing occupy wall street with a way to move files in between, the protesters and so providing wifi internet connection for the entire protest
CF	Ahhh
BA	Um so
CF	Why was it in their interest to do that? Was it because they were pro-occupy wall street or because they had alterer motives?
BA	No no that was part of the, well it was not specifically part of occupy wall street but it was by some activists who believed in a free internet so I think there are counter measures um, I mean in relation to the art world, the art world is still super controlled by capitalism, I mean there are a lot of artist run spaces and stuff but I mean what really essentially its still a lot of rich white men doing investments
CF	Yeah, and that's a thing that internet art as a genre is a sort of contradiction to a world in which it lives in its own right because it is a platform for people to rebel against the system, freely, make their work available to a huge plethora of ages, genders, everything everything and outside of the realms of economy which is pretty much tick boxes for, what the blue chip art world is?
BA	Yeh
CF	<i>So, and then I think it's quite interesting how it's still yet part of that world because it's literally a totally rebellion against it, it's kind of a middle finger to it, so that's why I'm kind of like intrigued by it</i>
BA	Yeah well at one point that's true but all these people who are producing work it's a fraction of them who are doing it er, without at least the aspiration of making it big time
CF	Yeah
BA	And money

Speaker	Transcription
CF	But I think that's especially something that's come up a lot which some of the people I've spoken to, the original net artists weren't about conforming and making money, it was literally a rebellion thing and I think you're right, its changed dramatically, especially in like the last 20 years
BA	I mean all this maker culture now I mean that's like the thing
CF	Prosumer world
BA	Yeah you know and but they're all trying to make it big erm but there are a lot of people as well who are still doing it for er,
CF	The kicks (laughs)
BA	For the right reasons
CF	But also that point is actually quite interesting, do you see, like in your eyes as a professional artist offline, do you see art as like successful, does it attain value even if its not economically viable?
BA	Oh yeah definitely,
CF	100%? But in your eyes from you talking about your future you wana be part of that world where you have you stuff in a gallery
BA	Of course
CF	But, why if you don't think it gains any value by doing that? Because you want to make a living (laughs)
BA	Well essentially I mean I'd say the value in getting paid to make art is the opportunity to make art full time, and the more art that's in the world, the better,
CF	True story! Preach!
BA	Um, so you know I'm not necessarily for making artists the richest people in the world, um making a living is perfectly fine, um I mean that's all anyone can really dream of, I don't need to be a millionaire but if I can have a nice place to live and if I have a family I can support and I can still make art
CF	Yah
BA	Which both makes me happy but more importantly I mean erm, it changes the world for the better, or raises a question but
CF	Puts ideas out there
BA	But it leads someone to, question something and that you know will raise the question well you know who changes the world for the better?
CF	Yep yep eyp
BA	That's um, that would be great

Speaker	Transcription
CF	There was also actually quite an interesting quote from er one of the artists I was speaking today who said that art is the opposite of necessity, there's literally no purpose or reason for art, but as soon as you have it, you can't loose it , it's like so important as an entity, like a crystal in your work, like it's such a, a nothing object that came from like a chemical substance, really means nothing but as soon as you have it, its like of upmost importance and I think even art regardless of its medium or wherever its sat in the world I think it's always important to have that like cultural outlet I think as you said that people will pick up on, and use something from and talk about with other people like its a, its an institution that A doesn't have very many boundaries there's creative freedom there as you said people can do what they want and make their own messages but also the tangibility of it is the fact that it doesn't really need to be there but its still very important, it's kind of like the conflict with the art world generally but also having it online because it's totally untouchable like it's nothing but also everything,
BA	I think it's a really interesting quote, I'm not sure I agree with it
CF	Why, why?
BA	Well I think art for me is essentially utopic, its a topic practice er which means it's trying to progress us into utopia and we're definitely not there yet I dont think, I think the only time when art will be unnecessary is when we reach utopia, so, because I think art is the vehicle for
CF	New found land
BA	Yeah you know, creating conversations and I've said conversation several times, you know, I mean and you can see it I mean every, even the natsi's made art, and they did it for what they believed it
CF	The 'right purposes' / 'right reasons'
BA	Yeah exactly what they thought was the betterment of mankind, um, I mean all propaganda is not made for nefarious reasons, its, Hitler didn't wake up and say "I'm gonna kill a lot of people", I mean, I hope not
CF	(laughs) didn't know him personally
BA	I mean its because he thought it was the right way al mean obviously it wasn't but I mean um yeh, so I think art's very necessary
CF	OK nice
BA	I kind of get where your other interviewee was getting at, but I just don't agree, I think it's the opposite
CF	OK cool that's really nice, um also would you see online any definition between the amateur and the professional, from your perspective as a professional outside of the online world?
BA	Yeah well I think um oh I think that's a very difficult questions because there ate really really good amateurs out there um
CF	But what constitutes an amateur on an online field, where there's no economy?
BA	Yeah that's true. Um but I think there are really good amateurs that make it big anyway, I think
CF	Become the professional, eventually

Speaker	Transcription
BA	Yeah exactly, eventually. There are I mean a lot of people who started who made really great art on the internet who never got anywhere and never got any recognition and there are people who are um who make great work and there are people who make really great work and who got a lot of recognition and you could, its very clear who's a professional and who's not
CF	It's also quite difficult upon the medium which they're creating, because its so vast and so broad and there's a tiny bit of hierarchy but generally theres no altermatium, there's no
BA	I think a lot of it has to do with recognition. I mean if you wana say ok well lets take a step back and not think about the financial aspect that's outside of the network, I think it has something to do with recognition
CF	So it's literally like the broker who like makes a great thing I wana share it with my friends and then it goes around the network
BA	Yeah but thats the thing you know recognition is just another economy is the attention economy
CF	Boom! Nice. Ok that was really good
BA	Um, so and all the people you know lets say they have these uploads, I don't go to reddit but I'm aware of what it is and they have these uploads and the best thing that could happen to you is if you do something that goes to the front page of reddit, and if you do that with every work you make, somebody will pick up on it, if ten million people go and click and think "I like this", on a video you make and you make a new video on YouTube every week, I mean, yeah ok so er
CF	But there's also the fine divide like as you said that's a form of like, self promotion which is outside of the online world, like people do that in day to day life its obviously not as immediate but it's still
BA	It's not necessarily self promotion, I mean tha't sjust putting something out there and somebody picks it up
CF	And somebody moving it around the network
BA	Exactly, yeah. Uh so, and I think you know look at YouTube, my favourite website
CF	(laughs)
BA	No exactly, not its my favourite website I use so many hours a day on YouTube
CF	What is it about YouTube that's so appealing?
BA	Oh its, it's just the better Google, right because you get a visual for everything
CF	As an artist, that's very important
BA	Well like I used it today to look up how you make a silicon mould
CF	As you do! On a Thursday
BA	And that was just great you know you see everything and I'm a little bit closer to being like ok I need to order this silicon but then you can become a product on YouTube and you er, you get a bit of money every advertisement

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Theres a certain amount of, there's no ownership of the art world online but there's still ownership of being a part of a community, in which you're like worth something right?
BA	No but also like I mean on YouTube you can become a partner, if you produce er, lets say you produce a video everyday that get s a couple million views, that's a lot, er and em
CF	I think YouTube kind of different because it's a channel, something that people actively go online and people think "Ok I'm going to go on YouTube" but internet art is so outside
BA	Oh this is just the example I mean a lot of artists to have vlogs or vloggers, you know there is, I mean they still have advertisers and do sponsored content and stuff, that's what I was trying to get at with Youtube is you become this partner and then you know the little er, you don't have an ad blocker, they'll pop as many advertisements to you, every time that pops up and somebody on your video, Google makes money, because google owns YouTube. And if you're a partner of YouTube you get a percentage of that money, so people who make these videos can live off of making YouTube videos and you know a lot of it is people playing fucking computer games and talking over it, which is essentially selling someone elses product and some people do what's called sponsored content
CF	To be paid as a full time job type thing like a vlogger
BA	Yeh well like a blogger, I'm wearing this Addisas shirt today, it's really cool
CF	But do you think that this type of hybrid-business model that's available now will exist for the art world online art in the future?
BA	I'm such a skeptic that I'm sure that that happens
CF	You recon theres going to become an economy?
BA	Yeah, well I think there's already an economy and I don't know I mean I dont do it and I'm not well versed enough in internet artists but I'm sure theres maybe some subliminal messages like there's this other artist called Klumsten Doort (?) and he's really great and does a lot of stuff with the internet and er some of his stuff and I'm sure he doesn't do this but he makes videos of him, you know was it the loading, I cant remember exactly what it was, so no he took the old DVD loading pause screen? that like bounced around?
CF	Yeah yeah yeah
BA	So he made a video of him like trying to recreate that movement of just, you know
CF	What physically?
BA	And of course this is just him in his room and like I said I dont think he did this, and I think his work is really great, he also works with um a lot of like the economies of the internet so he also buys bots and gives that, or buys followers like thousands of followers for other people that he thinks are really like um
CF	OK so there is a community not only within the artist and the art receiver but its also the artists have their own community as well online?
BA	No no let me finish he thought with the DVD, so he's moving around the logo thing right and like I said I dont think he had any alterer motive here but if he was wearing a Nike t shirt,
CF	Well even in essence its an advert for DVD
BA	Well of course but that's an obsolete oh whatever, but and argument could be made that that was sponsored but this was before sponsored content was a thing

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Ok, when was this?
BA	I mean it's not that old but I think sponsored content is a relatively new thing that came kind of with YouTube
CF	(Skeptical) I don't know....
BA	Well obviously it's not because they still like showed Coke machines like in movies and
CF	Yeah and brands were very much on that like way back
BA	Of course but of course it wasn't that much of a thing in the art world but you don't know maybe he was paid to do that so that's one thing but anyway like I said he plays with the economy of the internet because when you look at an Instagram photo file of a some curator, oh he has like 1.5 million followers, and you see another and he has 10 million followers on his Instagram what you automatically think is the one that has 10 million
CF	Is more successful
BA	Exactly, and so this guy would buy followers for other people who were talking bullshit about the economy of the internet so he's kind of making
CF	So it's kind of like a
BA	So it's kind of like a protest against it and a joke, but you know that's still a thing and that's a thing you can do and in essence that's still playing into this er, economy of buying following because he's still paying people to,
CF	Be a part of the team, and they're still joining because they're mindless
BA	No this is all fake profiles he's just contacted some bots in Russia to just go in and all of a sudden this guy has a million more followers so even though his motives were good and it's a really funny piece of work I mean he's still actively engaged in the economy of buying followers
CF	But that's kind of a, I can't think of the word but it's like a
BA	I mean that wasn't his intention but it's just a I think that's what he's commenting on, in essence if you buy a Coke to make a point on a video about how bad Coke is you still give Coke money right?
CF	You're still buying into the system. Um and how do you think the traditional art world and online art relate, do you think that there's a compliment or a conflict between them?
BA	I think it's a compliment um...I do think they compliment each other quite a lot in the traditional sense because I think that a lot of galleries use it as a platform to promote their um,
CF	Yeah ok let me refine it more so yeah I agree with the whole Instagram and the whole social side of the gallery space but if you're talking that Net Art world versus the traditional blue chip gallery space, do you think that they're at loggerheads with each other trying to do different things? Do you think one contradicts the other in not having any economy, do you think the other believes it has a hierarchy because it's worth something?
BA	No I think it's the same thing, you know getting back to that attention economy, that's a great term for what the Internet is and er, and people are figuring out how to monetise that attention and if it's sponsored content and if it's something else I mean

Speaker	Transcription
CF	But the thing is
BA	It's more difficult to see that in art and like I said you know back to what I was saying before is, I think there are definitely um, some people who are doing it because of their convictions, political convictions or
CF	Anti-establishment?
BA	Anti-establishment or just yeah you know they want art to be free or-
CF	But that's the thing because
BA	But but I think there's a lot of people who are doing it to become successful and using it you like get their work out there and who are also eventually I think there are also people doing it for the fuck of it and cause they enjoy it and who eventually say 'oh I can make a living doing what I love'-
CF	So I may as well stick with this'
BA	I can make a living doing what I really like if I do this
CF	Conform to these ideals. And so that's from the Internet world, how do you think it is like coming from the traditional world, like are they, is that their thinking 'fuck there's all these artists online and they can suck one because they're not doing what we think is important' or, how do you think like the gallery space and the curators of the real world think about the Internet world of art?
BA	Well I don't know, I mean, erm, there are new people getting hired at the bigger galleries everyday and there are young people who open their own galleries everyday who have an eye for what's going on so yeah the guy who um and there are also some people who just get it you know I'm sure there are a lot of people who don't get it, I mean, studying at the art academy I mean there were a lot of people who still made work that looked like it was produced in the 50's or but there are also a lot of people who were making rap videos you know, really deep, that really fit into like, oh what am I getting at here?
CF	(laughs) so the chick I was speaking to today was saying that like she sees the net art world as very divided like there's the internet art world which is obsolete from traditional art, it's a rebellion against, it has freedom, its own space, its a liberated side of art which has no rules, or hierarchy, and there's the traditional art world which is in itself it's own traditional 'the proper form' fine art world but also there's a net art or an internet that conforms to that which they buy into and in her perspective as a professional internet artist there was no immediacy and there was no communication, so it devalued the net art that they were playing in those shows, but there's still room for it because galleries still present it and they still have video installations of net artists work but, I think it just depends on the artists themselves whether they want to present their work in a certain way?
BA	Well sure, but that, I think that depends on how you define the art world because do you define the art world as um,
CF	Well traditional art, the gallery space, the museum
BA	No, no I know that but I think like talking about all those there things I mean you can be the most successful artist on an obscure website that nobody knows about and it requires a log-in to get in and it requires an invite to get a log in you know you could be the best internet artist there, is that success? Or, I mean how do you define success in any of these spaces?

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Well yeah, true, its more about, the questions more about is there a divide between these worlds
BA	No but that's what I'm trying to get at, so how do you define success in any of these spaces? Um if we're talking traditional art world, also just what's considered the art world in as far, with respect from the artist and curators and audience? Err there is just one, there is just one. You know deviant art is not the art world, even though great work gets produced on deviant art and so an internet art forum is not the art world, there is just one art world and there's a lot of really great internet art out there that's really interesting but that's not part of the art world and it might be art, but it's not part of the art world
CF	What, so how do you as a professional define the art world?
BA	Um well I think the art world is based in, I think the art world
CF	Is part of the establishment?
BA	I don't think there's necessarily an establishment as such, cause artist run spaces-
CF	But they're still conforming to the traditional idea of what art is, cause if they're physical-
BA	Is there?
CF	Well the physicality of it
BA	Well I don't know, erm, but that's a way that like, to get a lot of people who are interested in art there, non profit artist run spaces who apply for funds and get funds and run shows and show shows for free and you can go and enjoy it and they'll serve cheap beer, but thats a way for people to enjoy art to gather and I think its um, the art world is an amalgamation of yeah, professionals, both creators, and resellers
CF	Consumer-
BA	Consumers, uh, the audience I mean is very important and then yeah so the professionals, the amateur and the audience all come together
CF	But the thing is, that's the difference though so you're defining the art world as a physicality of all those things amalgamating, but there's still an audience for art online, bigger than that that'll come to the hphysical gallery
BA	But I think that's a part of it I don't think, I think there's internet art of that, I'm saying but I think that's the sphere of the art world, you know there's also a lot of really good publications online, um and the people who go there they interact with the art world, there are some sites, and I think it really all comes down to this attention economy and the credibility that come with constantly showing good stuff or talking about good stuff and um I think that, all gravitates towards each other, and I think all this stuff that's around there, this counter culture, yea they can make great art but unless your recognised by your peers and you produce something or value for other people I mean that's what I was talking about a this closed forum, you can produce the most beautiful thing but if it doesn't serve anyone else but you, you know, what's the point?
CF	But thats what I think the artist I was speaking to before was getting at, this lack of sensibility towards it, it's a production of work for the sake of- thats-
BA	Yeah, but I don't think that's art

Speaker	Transcription
CF	So, but that is what internet art is
BA	No, I don't think so
CF	But, producing something not necessarily for an audience just have it as a physical thing that you've created and whoever wants to consume it can consume it, that is essentially online art, there's no audience, you're not producing it for any real reason apart from yourself
BA	I don't believe that. No I don't think I believe that
CF	OK
BA	I think you're doing it, I mean you might do it because you enjoy it, but that's what I was saying before if you do it just cause you enjoy it and you're not doing it for anybody but yourself, I don't think I can classify it as art
CF	Ok, but, ok I agree with what you're saying in that by putting the work online that you've made your giving it to an audience, but I think the concern is not with the audience member as a net artist, you're just concerned with making something as a rebellion against the traditional art world and the beautiful of the nature of the internet is that anyone can consume it an you're not really concerned by that, you're giving to a public sphere, its the public that make
BA	No but see then you're doing it for somebody else that's what I'm saying, if you're doing to rebel against the art world and you're doing it because you want to create a statement
CF	Yeah but the people who you're talking about who are on these online sites have to have a log in and bra bla bla they're still doing it for somebody else, they're still doing it for somebody else, there's still people who are trying to get the log in to see your work regardless if its a small closed unit, you're still doing it for other people
BA	But how would they know?
CF	Well exactly, that's the benefit of the internet, it's totally, anonymous
BA	No no but how would they know, they're not doing it, how would you know that it was there, if its a closed
CF	Well
BA	How would they want to get in and see it?
CF	Well obviously if its a closed community, operative word, community, there's still someone who's going and being a part of it
BA	Ok, sure, but, yeah, but I think art has to raise a question for society, it has to have a social relevance
CF	Ok, it has to have an implication?
BA	Yeh

Speaker	Transcription
CF	But in terms of the, ok, totally agree, a 100% agree, with net art, it's not specifically societal, it's more like humanitarian, right, its not creating art for, a culture, it's creating art work for cultures, of which, as you said from the beginning, you want people to walk into your work and gain something from it and not give any answers
BA	But that
CF	So it's kind of doing a similar kind of thing to what you plan to do when you create your art work, but to a way bigger audience, to a huge audience that everyone's gona get their own things from, which must be empowering right? Especially coming from an artists perspective that is empowering
BA	I think (pause) yeah but I think that raises a question of whether you're doing it effectively or not cause I mean when you, can you,
CF	Can you really talk to that many cultures? Yeah, sure. The artist I was speaking to today, she's really really renowned, she made er a piece of work where she attained anonymity, for 10 years, being a 13 year old girl, and it got a hell load of respect, from all different people, and she's not even the person she's creating online, but that was the beauty of her work that she really liked that she could keep this idea of an individual, a, hypothetical pseudonym that everyone got something different from and it was so engaging for a huge different realm of audience members
BA	Yeah, of course I mean it definitely happens and that's great and that's obviously an art work but we're talking about internet art, as, I mean that's one individual and if we're talking about it as a movement, then I think that becomes, can you talk, you can't do that every time, I mean and also er-
CF	But that's the thing, I think thats the beauty of the internet, because you can, I mean , A the people that fall upon it are searching for something relatively similar or else they wouldn't have got the the place in the first place, it's not like you just open Google and it comes up with a piece of internet art, you have to go through some sort of process to get there in the end, and those people that are consuming even if they have totally different mentalities, ones from Africa, ones from China, and they fall upon it and gain their own opinions, as you said that's what you want art to do it to provoke idea and thought and it doesn't necessarily have to be the same train, but people are going to gain different things from it, and I think that's the beauty of online art, is its totally available and subjective to everyone
BA	But I would still say I mean I totally agree with what you're saying but I'm just not sure I agree because maybe I'm not sure, maybe I'm a cynic but I'm not sure that what happened for her, is not just something that can happen for everyone
CF	But I agree, I don't think everyone-
BA	But so my scepticism will still be, what exactly, can you responsibly talk to that many people at once and still have er,
CF	An audience body at the end of it?
BA	No but also have a message erm, that's kind of succinct and sharp and strong, imparts something that maybe, I'm not familiar with her work but that sounds interesting, but er, thats not,
CF	The online art that you've consumed?
BA	No no but can you have that, and not just produce something like "dead is mysterious" or "love is great" and I mean those are not, I mean of course they're

Speaker	Transcription
CF	Valid
BA	Valid statements but I mean that's not art, somebody did that before and there's no reason to reiterate that
CF	So what your concern is, from your perspective is that you areate, you essentially have a lot of levels to your work
BA	Yeh
CF	Which you produce and create physically so that people can come in and pick up on at each individual level, or you get two of them and miss the third
BA	Yeah but I also produce it, aware of who I am and where I come from and I um, and I make work about that specifically
CF	So to an audience body you're concerned with the audience knowing about hte artist behind the piece?
BA	No but I'm aware of who my audience is and where it's presented I mean I think that I would have a harder time arm talking about, so a lot of my work now is about the link between spirituality and technology,
CF	Ok
BA	Um, and that would be a much, I would have to make much different work
CF	If your audience was broader
BA	No if my audience was um, you know, these, people who, in african live in these scrap villages and where they burn electronics to get the metals in it, my work could not be about spirituality and technology in the same way there as it is here
CF	Agreed, but I think that's where the divide is as a traditional interred commas arrest you are very concerned with who your audience is because you have an idea which you want to convey, true?
BA	Yeah exactly
CF	Whereas internet artists are totally unconcerned with their audience they are more concerned with producing and idea for the masses and letting other people pick up on different things as they like
BA	Which is great
CF	I think tha's the difference, which is an interesting difference
BA	(laughs)
CF	How would you define net art, what construes net art for you?
BA	Erm,
CF	I know its a big one (laughs)

Speaker	Transcription
BA	Well essentially I guess it's art on the internet, I think maybe a little more succinct is its art for the internet, I wana go back to Rafael Rosendaal,
CF	Ok right with the copy write thing
BA	Yeah but also he makes websites, and I think thats great and I mean he does exhibit those as in installations in real space, I've seen arm some of those exhibitions
CF	Yeh he's been in co-lab with a few other people right?
BA	Well also just done his own stuff and just like projected his website on the side of buildings in Korea and stuff like that and made like erm, and I saw like a show in Stockholm where he broke a lot of mirrors and put them out on the floor, and he projected the website on the wall like that
CF	Ah ok nice
BA	But I don't think that's as um sharp as his websites, the websites themselves, and I think that kind of takes away from some of it so I think that's a really good um, I think that's a good way to kind of um get a feeling for what is net art and whats not because I think you know his websites are definitely works of art but them once he starts doing, trying to make them works of art, they loose-
CF	Devalues it a bit?
BA	Yeah yeah exactly.
CF	Ok interesting
BA	And I really like his work, he is one of the web artists that I really like but he is very much a part of the system, I mean I think he has, he has a gallery that sells his websites
CF	He's got a following
BA	Uh but yeah I think its a person who makes art not just on the internet but for the internet, er
CF	For the audience of, until you segue into the real-
BA	Important, and uses um the internet as a medium cause yeah It think you can be an internet artists without it only having to be online if you make er, like lets say these freedom towers I mean that was not an art project but I think that could be, if that has been re-worked a little bit, I think that art has to have a specific intention I don't think that anything can be art, just because you think it relates or but I think if that had had an intention, maybe a manifesto or something, I think that could have been an art project, it didn't have to have a manifesto maybe just an intention, I think that that could have been an art project and I think that would kind of constitute internet art in a sense
CF	OK so going back you said that the internet as a medium, do you think as a professional that its a valid medium for art? Or do you,

Speaker	Transcription
BA	Sure but I think it's um, like any other medium, I think waiting i s a great physical, parallel to the internet, because a lot of people paint but not a lot of paintings are art and I think its the same thing I think a lot of people use the internet and make stuff for the internet, 4chan for instance a lot of people make memes and not everything that gets put on an image board or, gets produced, even though its beautiful, is a work of art I think there has to be an intention, I mean essentially I think there has to be a social
CF	Implication
BA	Or intention behind it, like I said I think is a utopic practise and so it kind of has to have er, an intention of trying to progress where er, where a humanity or the planet earth you know, it's a utopic thing it has to have the intention to progress something
CF	Ok
BA	And that progressing of course like I said is not saying 'hey we go from here to here' its more like 'how do we get it from here to here' it's more like raising this, so somebody else can look at it,
CF	Um, in terms of the internet as a medium as you said, it's a valid medium if it has a progression and a purpose, a value essentially, the medium of the internet has been described in various different ways for the art world, some people said it has cultural or symbolic value to the art world, others suggest its more of a vulgar or standard medium which is based on more like a borrowing and stealing, a reappropriation type, how do you think that affects the value of the work which is made for the internet?
BA	Both of those are true
CF	Ok, very valid
BA	But, you know I think people are smart enough to kind of navigate between those two themselves and I think that er, I think that value is fluent
CF	SO in that respect, it almost depends on the audience as a consumer to be concerned with what they're consuming?
BA	Yeah but I don't think consume is the right word for an audience because I think that implies that you
CF	Take something from it and use it for your own benefit or?
BA	Yeah, maybe, well
CF	Because consumer by definition is literally just consumption of something but I agree, consumer in the reality of
BA	Maybe it's just the, social implication of what the consumer, you know because that word has become
CF	Its become a negative, yeah
BA	Sure, so if you take it by the definition then I'd like consumer more but that's why I think audience has a nicer ring to it because I think an audience can still take something from it for something else, to start a discussion or something but yeah consumer's very negative, loaded, it implies some kind of transaction
CF	Yeah, very true

Speaker	Transcription
BA	Er and I don't think that well I mean of course if we're sticking to my concept of the attention economy there is of course still a transaction because you're giving them attention so, but more in a financial sense consumer implies that you're paying something for it, and I don't think that's very true on the internet
CF	Also it's quite an interesting word because consumer, it implies er, an exchange of goods but it's also about an exchange of physicality in a way, to consume something is to physically have that there and with you
BA	Yeah, yep. Well I mean which you kind of do,
CF	When you're surfing the web
BA	For an instant you have it there in your living room, and at the same time you don't, I think that's interesting,
CF	It's a very illusive genre where it's all or nothing
BA	I think that's a good example of the internet being a medium, there's a physicality to it and it's still ephemeral at the same time
CF	Yeh, for sure and finally do you believe that there is a home for art, online
BA	Yeah sure.
CF	100%?
BA	Yeah of course I think there's a home for everything online, even some really bad stuff! I mean there's the deep web right?
CF	Ok very nice! I think that's literally everything, do you separate the online art world from the realms of the traditional art world or do you think that they interlink in a way?
BA	I think that they interlink, yeah yeah, definitely, I think I kind of went into detail about that
CF	Ok we kind of touched on this but again do you perceive the audience for net art as a broader spectrum, and if so do you think it devalues the art, as you were saying before your work is very specific to your audience as you know who you're presenting it for
BA	Yeah, I think um, again that's a very difficult question because er, in some respects perhaps it's er, (laughs) in danger of calling myself er, taking the easy way out, er I think it's easier to talk directly to a smaller audience, um so I think, I don't necessarily think it devalues it in any sense but I think it's easier to talk, be succinct
CF	Know your audience, know what you're trying to portray
BA	Exactly
CF	But in terms of if you were to be able to get the opportunity to put your work in a big gallery, say the Saatchi gallery, like that audience is gonna be pretty fuckin' big
BA	Yeah but what I'm saying when I say a big audience is, like I was saying like with Africa or Asia
CF	Culturally different backgrounds

Speaker	Transcription
BA	Completely different, completely er so lets say, like I said, I'm making work about spirituality and technology and how they interlink out of from how they're interacted in my life
CF	Yep
BA	I grew up with a cellphone I was the first generation that both had, floppy disk, mini disk, CD and how nothing and I grew up with the emergence of the internet as an everyday thing um and I mean, you know so I'm talking out from my experiences and I'm using materials that are known to me an I'm very much a product of my environment
CF	Of your generation
BA	No but also not just of my generation but also of my environment of growing up in Christiania of growing up in a capital city in the western world 'cus the experience I mean of growing up yeah in er Mongolia
CF	Very different world
BA	Not somebody that grew up with the internet in their house
CF	Can I just say yeah granted I agree with that, that you're not appealing to but creating something for a desired audience
BA	Also based on
CF	Based on your pre-understanding of culture an society
BA	Exactly
CF	Uh -
BA	And I try to take a step back and I try to be, like I said, pseudo-objective but I still have, theres a reason I'm making it, theres something I wana put across, so its just like and my practise has always leaned towards not a scientific objective approach but kind of you know and I
CF	Would you say like, going on that, ok so the audience which, even if its the Saatchi gallery, the SMK, somewhere in NY, the audience which the physicality of the gallery offers to the art work is a very different one from online right?
BA	Definitely, definitely
CF	It's a very specific audience that are concerned with actually going to the gallery, paying hte entrance money and seeing the work itself
BA	But I think the contemporary artist as we see it, uh in the art world, that's uh, it's a construction of the Western society
CF	Ok, but there are still art galleries in the realms of wherever in the middle of nowhere which are not necessarily constructs of western society and they're still producing valid art work
BA	Of course
CF	With a very similar perspective as you, they've come from walks of their life, they've dragged in experiences from their own history

Speaker	Transcription
BA	I'm not saying it doesn't exist anywhere else, but the idea of the contemporary artist and the art world everything and I know there are art works I mean there are these beautiful fuckin' masks that they make in Africa or complete body suits,
CF	Tribe culture?
BA	Yeah but also contemporary Africa that contemporary artists are looking at, local contemporary artists but I'm saying that idea of the contemporary artists and that, cause that's a Western construct
CF	But thing is, just going back to back in the day, art wasn't a Western construct
BA	No of course not
CF	Literally like body are was the origins of art
BA	No that's why I'm saying contemporary artists, art is not a Western construct but the art world and the contemporary artists is, I completely believe it is, and there are a lot of people trying to break out of that and are probably doing great jobs but er, but I'm not familiar with them enough to comment on that

