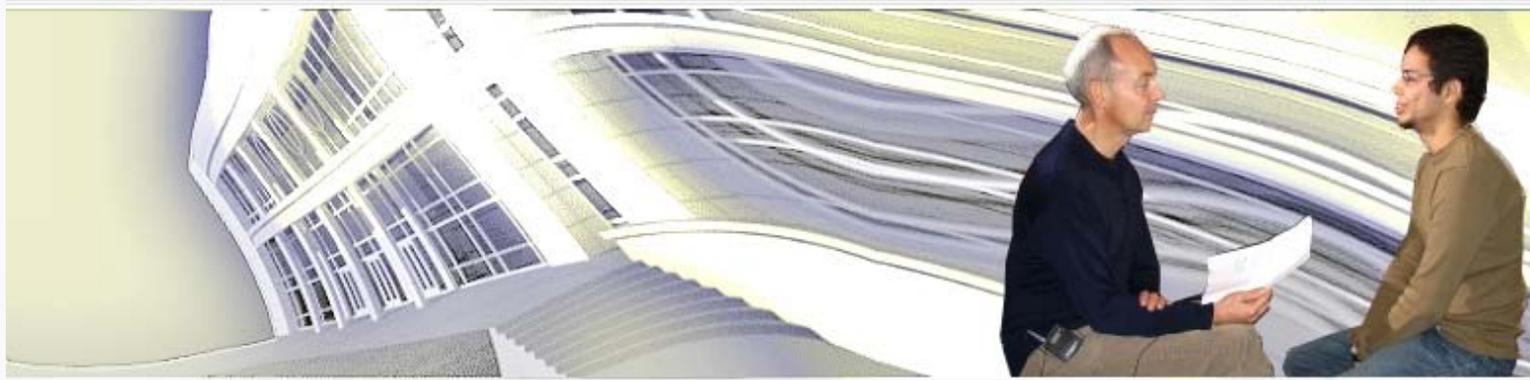


JIP - JavaMuseum Interview Project



JAVAMUSEUM PROJECT ENVIRONMENTS

Interview: Jody Zellen

Agricola de Cologne (AdC) interviews Jody Zellen (JZ)

—>

Jody Zellen is an artist living in Los Angeles, California. She works in many media simultaneously making photographs, installations, net art, public art, as well as artists' books that explore the subject of the urban environment.

More info

[see artist biography](#)

—>

10 questions—>

AdC:

Jody, you belong already since many years to an art scene using new technologies, you are an active and successful representative of a genre dealing with Internet based art, called "netart".

Many artists active in this field, especially when they do it for a longer period already, the education with new technologies was not such advanced, yet, as nowadays, and have rather an interdisciplinary approach to this new art form.

1.

AdC:

Tell me something about your educational background and what is influencing your work?

JZ:

I studied art and photography in college, then got an MFA, also in photography, from the California Institute of the Arts. As an image maker, I started out doing photography, walking around cities making black and white images. Then I began making collages cutting up and recombining my photograic images and adding text. this later led me to using the computer to make collages and then to net art—interactive works with animations that included images and text.

2.

AdC:

The term "netart" is widely used for anything posted on the net, there are dozens of definitions which mostly are even contradictory.

How do you define "netart" or if you like the description "Internet based art" better, do you think your work belongs to this specific genre,

do you think "netart" is art, at all, if yes, what are the criteria?

Are there any aesthetic criteria for an Internet based artwork?

JZ:

I use the terms netart or webart interchangeably. To me netart is any work that is made specifically for the internet. Many net art sites mirror existing websites and change content, they are definitely netart projects. The term to me is pretty lose, it

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is about an attitude. Netart projects want to be art not sites that are about sales.

3.

AdC:

What kind of meaning have the new technologies and the Internet to you, are they just tools for expressing your artistic intentions, or have they rather an ideological character, as it can be found with many “netartists”, or what else do they mean to you?

JZ:

For me one of the reasons I make netart is that its a project that is accessible to anyone with a computer and a modem. Its a kind of public art. New technologies have allowed artists to become a global community and make work that can be seen and shared by a wide audience, an audience that exists outside the gallery and museum systems.

4.

AdC:

As far as I see it, your work is a successful attempt to combine relevant subjects and contents people can identify with, with a specific new and contemporary feeling the new technologies bring.

Which contents are you particularly interested in, what are the subjects you are working on and what is your artistic message(s), if you have any, and what are your personal artistic visions for future artworking (if you have any).

JZ:

My work is about the city in an abstract and oblique way. It used mediated images and texts as well as the newspaper to talk about how the world is changing. I am intrested in how cities change and how news is communicated or often miscommunicated and in my newest works I am trying to make netart projects that investigate where these two worlds– the city and the press intersect.

I am interested in making room sized interactive installations where the movement of the viewer(s) in the space trigger images and sounds to change. I envision a huge collage of overlapping projections that people wander through causing a rapid of succession of image fragments to come in and out of view as people move through a given space.

5.

AdC: “Art on the net” has the advantage and the disadvantage to be located on the virtual space in Internet which defines also its right to exist.

Do you think, that “art based on the Internet”, can be called still like that, even if it is just used offline?

JZ:

As the technologies change what was early net art may disappear so that having copies that exist off line, might be the only way these project scanbe seen. Ofetn net art exhibitions are displayed locally to make things load faster. I have no problems with that as long as there is still an online copy.

6.

AdC:

Dealing with this new, and interactive type of art demands an active viewer or user. and needs the audience much more and in different ways than any other art discipline before. How do you stimulate the user to dive into this new world of art?

What do you think, represents an appropriate environment to present net based art to an audience, is it the context of the lonesome user sitting in front of his personal computer, is it any public context, or is it rather the context of art in general or media art in particular, or anything else.?

If you would be in the position to create an environment for presenting this type of art in physical space, how would you do it?

JZ:

I think viewers of net art are reluctant to sit at a computer in a public space. They would rather write down the url and see the site in their homes alone. If a site is projected in a physical space it becomes a more commanding preseence but its still just a blown up/projected website. I have been tryiing to create interactive environments that function like 3D websites. A form of interactive art that is more

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like an installation.

7.

AdC:

As Internet based art, as well as other art forms using new technologies are (globally seen) still not widely accepted, yet, as serious art forms, what do you think could be an appropriate solution to change this situation?

JZ:

I think they are becoming more and more popular and have included in some major exhibitions. I do wish all museums had net art on their websites and more commissions for new projects were available.

8.

AdC:

The Internet is called a kind of "democratic" environment, but the conventional art practice is anything else than that, but selective by using filters of different kind.

The audience is mostly only able to make up its mind on second hand. Art on the net might potentially be different. Do you think the current practice of dealing with Internet based art is such different or rather the described conventional way through (also curatorial) filtering?

JZ:

Unfortunately I feel netart has fallen into the same traps as conventional art. While one would think there are numerous ways to get ones netart out there it is usually the same people who are supported and promoted.

AdC:

Do you think, that speaking in the terms of Joseph Beuys, anybody who publishes anything on the net would be also an artist?

JZ:

Only if they intend it to be art

9.

AdC:

Do you think, the curators dealing with net based art should have any technological knowledge in order to understand such an art work from its roots?

JZ:

I do think curators should do their homework and reseach the field and understand the technologies and the aesthetic possibilities of the medium.

10.

AdC:

It is planned, to re-launch

JavaMuseum - Forum for Internet Technology in Contemporary Art

www.javamuseum.org in 2007 in a new context, very likely even in physical space.

What would be your personal wishes and expectations connected to this re-launch ?

JZ:

If it is in a physical space I would like to visit it.

AdC:

Thanks for taking your time.

2 Comments so far

[AND - Artists Network Database » Jody Zellen \(USA\)](#) February 4th, 2007 10:08 am

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