RHIZOME BETA   ARTBASE   COMMUNITY   PROGRAMS   JOIN

Home / Community / Discuss

'Six Rules Towards A New Internet Art'- Reconsidered

POSTED BY **MARC GARRETT** I MON, AUG 12TH 2002 1 A.M.

f Like   Tweet   0

Eryk's Salvaggio 'Six Rules Towards A New Internet Art'- Reconsidered

"Image is nothing. Thirst is everything. Obey your thirst." - Sprite Soft Drink Advertisement.

'I think Net Art will be more interesting and challenging when artists/creators begin to get used to defying the medium itself. As in not doing what one is supposed to do in accordance to the medium's demands. This of course will take time because a plateau has not yet been reached by any stretch of the imagination. Once the distraction of [medium] wars are left behind; in respect of whether one should use Flash or ASCII, or any other form of computer technology function. Then the sky really is the limit'.

Eryk's Salvaggio rules, I believe are a personal idea and not a manifesto and Eyrk seems to have an agenda behind his 'Six Rules Towards A New Internet Art' that has not yet been coherently declared. His take sits well next to Baudrillard's conception that in late capitalist consumer society there has been a shift in which images and signs have increasingly become commodities. Even though in his text he places a disclaimer contradicting this 'This has nothing to do with corporate/anti-corporate; and should not be mistaken as the most radical rule'. Yet when looking at Salvaggio's work, he does on the whole tend to try to eradicate references to image, his recent works are an accumulation of texts forming a larger image, thus still showing his distrust of images and their possible connotations.

After Sept 11th, one thing we can be sure about is, that we [the world] were submitted repeated images of the terrorist attack and we did not believe it was happening. The broadcasting of the incident served more to desensitize the world from the realness of what actually happened. Of course, the viewing of a mass of people, another culture's pain is nothing new, but in reflection America is not in the habit of being the victim itself. In reflection, it seems that the only resource that America had when displaying its national sense grief was via its own terrestrial media, yet the rest of the world was tired of seeing the images repeated over and over again. It was like watching another American blockbuster, people could not quite believe their own eyes. And who could blame them? Infotainment is America's greatest asset, and its allegiance to corporate domination over its people's lives is paramount. Because we are all used to viewing advertisements repeatedly, propaganda imposed upon our tired eyes non stop above social interest. The inherent isolation that mediation gives, caused confusion and a recognitio=

n of a spiritual vacuum in America, as well as everywhere else in the Weste=
rn dominated zones.

Eryk's piece September 11th, 2001 consisted of motion footage of United Air=
lines Flight 175 striking the South Tower of the World Trade Center. Declar=
ed his distrust of televised images 'When I started seeing images of people=
leaping from the towers in magazines and newspapers, it left me feeling li=
ke we had missed the real essence of what had happened, that these lives ha=
d become images, tape loops, and symbols'.

So the image had finally been fully realized in the ultimate sense, it offe=
red no recourse or definition or communication, when the news channels trie=
d to put across the feeling of death and pain. America was eaten by its own=
myth making, the media had finally ate itself. Part of the issue is that d=
enial seems such an intrinsic part of America's psyche. As a modern nation =
movies and advertisements are part of its own history, even when films are =
made as a historical reference to its own culture and world events that act=
ually happened. Events have been altered, changed so things are much more p=
alatable for the consumer. There are no factual references to real-life sit=
uations that the viewer can rely on and trust anymore. A truly mediated cul=
ture that has been traveling in Hyper - Reality. It seems real but is not q=
uite real. A consumer culture is a mediated culture, defined by culturalize=
d existence - via information via external sources. Infotainment is a produ=
ct and it constantly produces misinformation for commercial gain. Therefore=
realism is not of interest, yet that is where many truth's and hard facts =
do rest, even if it is balancing on a knife edge.

'WWII seems to have been the last "real" war. Hyperreal war began in Vietna=
m, with the involvement of television, and recently reached full obscene re=
velation in the "Gulf War" of 1991. Hyperreal war is no longer "economic", =
no longer "the health of the state". The Ritual Brawl is voluntary and hon-=
hierarchic (war chiefs are always temporary); real war is compulsory and hi=
erarchic; hyperreal war is imagistic and psychologically interiorized ("Pur=
e War"). In the first the body is risked; in the second, the body is sacrif=
iced; in the third, the body has disappeared'. Hakim Bey.

We all know how popular Flash was during the (so called) dot com revolution=
in displaying corporate web sites, terrestrial advertising and of course, =
many films. Flash use has come a long way since the corporate 'show off' da=
ys - when one used to visit business sites and flash noise/visuals explodin=
g before your eyes with a funky beat, imposing a maelstrom of nonsense grap=
hics. Now, artists who use flash themselves are pushing things by using the=
medium for their own terms. What I find interesting, or contradictory to t=
he shortly experienced, net art tradition; a good lesson for all to learn. =
Is that many Flash artists are managing to declare human emotion in their w=
ork successfully. An emotional visceralness communicating to a larger audie=
nce outside the traditional [in house] art-speak.

Eryk Salvaggio's distrust for the generalized image and its potential hyper=
eality and blanketing effect on art are worth acknowledging. But first, one=
must consider the 'word' and its own role historically and its function in=
the 'misinformation age'. Text is seen as the more intellectual form of co=
mmunicatory functions. And ownership of the written word has of course been=

an issue for many years. If one was to immediately accept an idea, without first considering one's own 'embodied' grounded beliefs. Then jumping onto someone else's conceptualized notion would and can only be considered as bandwagoning. Text has been the more traditional cannon for archiving information, issuing news and of course, rules. Text tells lies just as much as images. altering subconscience, perceptions and socially constructed craniums. Images traditionally have been more to do with symbols and metaphors, signifiers.

'didacticism often plays fast and loose with the truth'. N.Chomsky.

If an institution claims an idea, then removes the author who originated its idea, then that institution can claim leverage by using that idea; thus gain control and pushing its originator aside. M.Garrett.

The selection process of what is seen and read, declares who is judging what is allowed to be read and seen, a problem that is timeless. Whoever controls language controls us, and language comes in many forms. It can come in the form of a critical text supported by an institution and promoted by the media because it latches onto their own assumptions at that time. Or it can be promoted using terrestrial outlets where people who are not less to read due to de-education, are more reliant on visual information. So text or the use of an image can both be a lie, or messenger of mythologies. What really matters is the source, where the information has come from and why. The itemizing of Flash as inferior to other forms of creative functions, does not take into account the context of an artists' own personal reasons and purpose for using such a medium.

I am sure Eryk himself would love it if someone offered an equivalent example, contrary to his notion. An alternative set of rules. The positive thing that has come about out of this, is that people are asked why are they using the medium? Once the individual concerned has conceptually and intuitively reevaluated the use of a medium of whether it is appropriate in reference to their idea(s). A more truthful outcome can be realized, in why they are using their chosen medium. Let's face it, we are all using a corporate medium - its called a computer.

Making art on the net is a craft, it still involves transmuting a concept. And the last thing we all want (I hope) is to get trapped in isolating artists. If that happens, then we might as well become modernists, and start arguing and putting up fences, using Greenbergian terms (which is a 20th century issue) defining the good from the bad. When you define or create rules you create borders, fences that people feel hesitant to cross because they feel victimized for doing so. This creates a virtual 'art school' comparison that as far as I am concerned should be questioned. Inside, outside, bad, good; is not the best way for artists when they should be given the chance to explore any medium they choose for their own reasons. By adhering to the process of determining what medium one should use, one creates a 'policed' aesthetic which is qualitative. Aesthetic value is ultimately created by taste. The cultivation of taste usually occurs via culturalization, "cultivated" taste. Rules are good to break and I suggest breaking the rules.

Eryk says 'Boundaries are what inspired the "heroic period" of early net.ar

t- boundaries such as bandwidth, browser design limits, etc. Ironically; as=
bandwidth has expanded and browers more flexible, we have also seen a homo=
ginization of net.art. A design aesthetic prevails; as we see slicker and s=
licker "art" sites with no message or point or content'. I would have to di=
sagree here, for now we are witnessing new artists exploring emotion/ideas =
that do declare real content and message such as Jess Loseby. And actually =
does go further than a lot of 'cyber art', implying that if the artist is g=
ood enough the communication and meaning goes beyond the medium itself. So =
perhaps Eryk's excellent and thought provoking manifesto needs to be update=
d.

marc garrett
Reply to this thread

LEWIS LACOOK I MON, AUG 12TH 2002 1 A.M.

> eryk distrusts the image---fine...BUT he doesn't seem to mind ascii art, which, being based on a language removed from language (which is removed even further from things-in-themselves, which we can't seem to experience without mediation) is also as you point out subject to skepticism...

also, in this "hearts" thing, there's the line: "...sell to the highest bidder..." ++++++how does this sort of attitude advance net art socially or artistically...(unless eryk is being sarcastic)

my biggest beef with net art is that it remains firmly in the domain of the figurative====even jess' work (which i do love) is thus, nowhere approaching the avant-gardes of other artforms (we've had non-figuritive work in the plastic arts for a while now, and with the language school and the new york school we approached a non-figiuritive verbal art)~~~THIS IS WHY SO MUCH NET ART BORES ME``````not only does it NOT investigate the relationship between image and text and interactivity (and eryk's work often simply investigates the relationship between image and reduction to text, as opposed to actually going into the image~~~~& i do like some of his work, too), but it often ends up being an art that could just as easily be presented on a televiion screen....which is not what it's about for me....if you're going to work on a computer, explore the computer (CODE!!!)... if net art is to actually ever achieve what it often promises, it's going to have to combine all the avant-gardes in a new way``````which i do not see often at all++++++++figuritive text, figuritive imagery, no REAL exploration of anything, really....just making pretty pictures that move, with sound, which cinema has already covered....and no, hypertext is not an answer, it's still linear and still authorial, the user choosing a path through the work does not constitute interactivity or communion with the user....
++++++of course, i could just be cranky today......
bliss
l
Reply to this comment

LEWIS LACOOK I TUE, AUG 13TH 2002 1 A.M.

>
{I am not necessarily looking at it as a template, but as a text that deserv= es to be taken seriously and considered as a valid net art contribution;}
===i'm in agreement here===eryk's work deserves serious discussion...

{Flash is an advertisement tool developed to deliver
> advertisements and promotional materials over the web.}
``````````BUT WHAT IS THE WEB THESE DAYS''''''''''''''''
the keyword here is tool=====is the video camera an advertisement tool? is html an advertisement tool? all of these things are used to create advertisements....
this is what i don't understand about eryk's argument====if we can look at flash as an "advertisement tool," then we can also

look at ascii as an "interoffice meorandum tool"....the point is what happens when these tools get into our hands====

i'm torn when it comes to net art right now====i come from literature, and in ways see every work i do as a piece of writing (and yes, as eryk pointed out in his excellent interview with chris fahey, we are "hard-wired" to the word)===but i've come to despise 'hypertext', see it as very primitive, i admire software art yet want more out of the media===
Reply to this comment

## YOUR REPLY

You must be logged in to post a comment.  | LOG IN |

### ARTBASE
- member exhibitions
- commissioned essays
- artworks timeline
- browse
- search

### EDITORIAL
- writer's initiative
- archive
- rhizome news
- subscribe

### COMMUNITY
- discuss
- opportunities
- events
- jobs
- sign-up
- mailing lists

### PROGRAMS
- commissions
- events
- exhibtions
- membership
- new media resources

### ABOUT RHIZOME
- mission
- history
- orientation
- press
- staff
- supporters

### YOUR ACCOUNT
- view your profile
- edit your profile
- username/password
- become a member

## RHIZOME AT THE NEW MUSEUM

Advertise.    Contact Us.    Subscribe.    Donate.

Policy | Site Credits | Site Feedback