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# In and Out of the Museum: New Destinations of the Moving Image

## Table of Contents

<b>Eugénie Zvonkine and Luísa Santos</b> Editorial. In and Out of the Museum: New Destinations of the Moving Image (EN)	v
<b>Christa Blümlinger</b> Framing, Masking, Revealing: Mark Lewis's Regime of Projection (EN)	1
<b>Nicola Kozicharov</b> <i>Baptizo</i> and Immersion: A Panoramic Perspective (EN)	13
<b>Eugénie Zvonkine</b> 'Narrate an Exhibition as a Film' or a Museum of Cine-memories (Items 1-5) (EN)	39
<b>Svala Vagnsdatter Andersen</b> Learning to Look Again—Challenging Spectatorship in Cinematic Art Installations (EN)	46
<b>Margherita Foresti</b> Metamorphoses: The Place of Moving Images (EN)	66
<b>Tatiana Macedo</b> <i>Film Book Film</i> (2021) (EN)	90
<b>Maria Redaelli</b> Net.Art Exhibited: Distributed Museums (EN)	94
<b>Sara Castelo Branco</b> Notes on Unstable Cinematic Horizons: Depth, Frontality, and Circularity in Cinematic Art Installations (EN)	115
<b>Irina Gakhova</b> Rock, Banya, Museum. A Survey of Sergey Borisov's Video Archives from Garage Archive Collection (RU)	134

<b>Eugénie Zvonkine</b>	<b>138</b>
Conserve, Show, Restage, Revivify. The Film as (Trans)portable and Projectable Museum (EN)	
<b>Luísa Santos</b>	<b>155</b>
Moving Image and the Museum: Speculative Spaces in 3 Acts (EN)	
<b>Natasha Nedelkova</b>	<b>174</b>
Book review. Annie Dell'Aria. The Moving Image as Public Art: Sidewalk Spectators and Modes of Enchantment (EN)	
<b>Ekaterina Odé</b>	<b>178</b>
Book review. Sztulman P; Zabunyan D (eds) Politiques de la distraction (RU)	



## **Net.Art Exhibited: Distributed Museums**

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# Net.Art Exhibited: Distributed Museums

Maria Redaelli

Net.art represents an artistic language which, by virtue of its hypertextual essence, can connect people with one another by centering its practice on the interaction with audiences. A crucial component of net.art is direct experience: audiences truly engage with a net.artwork only when they interact directly with it. In a gallery or museum, net.art becomes more of a concrete document, an object of memory, losing its fundamental aspect of unfiltered practice, as well as the elements of surprise and positive

disorientation—this loss results from net.art's transposition into a physical place and transformation into an object to be exhibited. This visual essay dwells on pioneering projects that need to be reconsidered in order to further historical, museological, and curatorial discussion of net.art based on its intrinsic qualities, diffusion, and exhibition. The essay is not intended as an ending to the discussion or its resolution; instead, it aims to bring attention back to net.art's social aggregator function that was lost in the age of digital disillusionment.

**Keywords:** art history, digital art, ephemeral, exhibition studies, interactivity, moving image, museum studies, net.art, networks, TAZ reality

'The Net was a lot like television, another former wonder of the age. The Net was a vast glass mirror. It reflected what was shown. Mostly human banality.'

(Sterling 1994: 20)

This visual essay is dedicated to the modalities of exhibiting net.art, paying special attention to how audience perception and participation change when observing and engaging with a net.artwork in a museum or a gallery, as opposed to at home, autonomously. The essay argues that net.artwork exhibited in a museum/offline becomes something different, as it loses some of its ephemerality and temporal precariousness and becomes less of a puzzle. Indeed, as Annet Dekker (2018) notes, net.art is defined not only as a network, but also as something processual, ambiguous, and unstable. That is why exhibiting a net.artwork in a static and limited context such as a gallery or a museum changes its features. In Brian O'Doherty's (2012) words, in this case 'the context becomes the content' (p. 22)—that is, net.art becomes more of a concrete document, an object of memory, losing the elements of surprise and disorientation that usually characterize it.

These case studies demonstrate the relationships between net.art and museum institutions. This essay also considers the role of technology, namely the different tools that allow audiences to engage with net.art. The type of device and browser employed define user experience as well, which is why the visuals in this essay show the whole context—that is, the navigation bar of the browser, such as Safari. The screenshots presented in the essay were collected by the author on her Mac computer. Some other screenshots were taken from the web archive *Net Art Anthology*,<sup>1</sup> a web service which deals with the preservation of net.art and therefore presents works in their original form. Although the essay does not explicitly deal with issues related to the preservation of digital artworks, it is important to remember that these works are 'fragile,' in the sense that they depend on obsolete languages and software.

Net.art's first projects remain relevant to this day because of their unequivocally subversive character: they were conceived as provocative actions, born of the intention to create fully novel relationships within a parallel reality. They were part of democratic efforts aimed at establishing collectivity in a world where first capitalism and then neoliberalism had already instituted individuality as the highest of virtues. In this sense, moving images (starting with cinema and television) have been incorporated into the logic of the neoliberal market, and the public has become accustomed to passively consuming them. Even the Internet no longer exists as a free space, as it too has become mostly governed by the rules of the neoliberal system. As a result, the public now approaches net.artworks superficially, not being accustomed to recognizing the diversity of the images that bombard them. With the advent of social media, this phenomenon has become even more widespread. Moving images, the distinguishing feature of net.artwork, are routinely found on these platforms, to such an extent that users do not even register them as noteworthy anymore. The viewer is becoming—is being made—more and more passive. Audiences are constantly exposed to hundreds of unchallenging, even undistinguishable, images every day, every hour, every second, and they automatically apply the capitalistic, neoliberal logic of individuality even to images found on the Internet. It is almost impossible for viewers to encounter images that awaken them from this state of desensitized numbness.<sup>2</sup> In fact, despite their name, social networks are tools of narcissistic practice that incorporate the individual in a virtual bubble that shows the user only what she/he wants to see. In this sense, social networks create an illusion of control, when in fact, it is the content and the images that are controlling the user. Net.art projects, by nature, can operate outside of this logic and impact audiences by truly engaging them, rather than subjugating them to their control. For this reason, it is important to reevaluate the role of such net.art projects today and think about new curatorial and exhibition models, be they in person or virtual. The context in which an image or a moving image is presented can transform how that image impacts the audience.

## Approaches to Net.Art in the Museum

The Internet provides opportunities for creating networks. This may seem obvious, but when it comes to artistic practices, it is not. Working on the Internet means transposing the individual into a global community, which results in collective moments where everyone can act in concert (Tozzi 2004: 237). Since its appearance, virtual space has been ideal for establishing new networks that transcend artistic codes and the frontiers of genres—like the assumptions about art common in the postmodern and post-medium era<sup>3</sup>—and bypassed geographical borders. Of course, many other artistic movements and tendencies had transgressed and evolved the boundaries and practices of their predecessors. However, net.art developed and thrived precisely because of and thanks to the conditions provided by virtual space. It is an artistic language which, by virtue of its hypertextual essence, has the ability to connect people with one another by centering its practice on the interaction with audiences.

The term net.art was coined by Vuk Ćosić in 1995, who proposed it at the first international event called Net Art Per Se (Trieste, 1996). It was accepted by the participants as it outlined an artistic practice that produced a new kind of communication and new routes of meaning, i.e. new paths for artworks to convey ideas and feelings (Deseriis and Marano 2007: 32). Sometimes referred to as Internet art or Net Art,<sup>4</sup> net.art is art produced for the web (web-based art): processual, collaborative, distributed, expanding. The very essence of net.art is to establish and be established on a network that reaches the audience, who is at the same time a viewer, a user (Manovich 2002: 116–135), and an actor<sup>5</sup>. User experience is already mediated because of the use of devices, but most of the time artists try to decompose and recompose the interface to unearth the dynamics and mechanisms behind programming language (Tanni 2004: 277–287).

Many studies have focused mostly on the role of museums and galleries in the conservation and preservation of time-based art (Dekker 2018; Ippolito, Rinehart 2014; Noordegraaf, Saba, Le Maître, and Hediger 2013; Serexhe 2013). This visual essay refers to other texts based mainly on how the perception of net.art differs when experienced online or offline (Ghidini 2019; Goriunova 2012; Paul 2008; Verschooren 2007; Gere 2004; Casares Rivas 2003; Dietz 1998). Despite various theoretical discussions and different experiences, a methodological fog still surrounds the phenomenon. This ‘fogginess’ is increased by this historical moment, where people’s lives, including their cultural lives, have moved online. It is once again necessary to emphasize the fundamental separation between art produced on the net and for the net, and art that is *found* on the net, a gimmick now widely used by museum institutions. As has been said, this text will dwell on pioneering projects, reconsidering them in order to further historical, museological, and curatorial discussion of net.art based on its intrinsic qualities, diffusion, and exhibition. This article aims to contribute to the discourse by reevaluating past net.artworks that may spur new reflections in today’s continuously evolving



artistic landscape. The visual element will be used as a supporting tool for the analysis, allowing us to exemplify how the basic elements of net.art become altered in exhibition space.

I propose considering the act of exhibiting net.art in the context of the wider debate around the introduction of moving images to the museum and gallery. As Miriam De Rosa (2020) and Eivind Røssaak (2013) suggest, when audiences encounter a moving image in a museum, as opposed to the fixed image (that is, a canvas or a statue) they expect, they change their attitude towards what they have in front of their eyes. They are accustomed to walking, sometimes hurriedly, within the museum's space, passing in front of a work of art and duly following along the exhibition path. When dealing with moving images, the observer is forced to stop and truly consider what they are seeing to grasp the meaning. The exhibited moving images are largely defined by the environment that is created to interpret them. Let's consider that 'every exhibition tells a story, by directing the viewer through the exhibition in a particular order; the exhibition space is always a narrative space' (Groys 2008: 43). This is a significant detail that reveals that every exhibition that deals with moving images is unique and non-reproducible. By extension, for Boris Groys (2019), 'an exhibition cannot be reproduced' but only 'reenacted or restaged' (p. 176). Relatedly, Groys also argues that 'a digital image can not only be shown or copied [...] but only staged and performed' (p. 127), which denotes the 'performative character of digital reproduction' (p. 128).

In the case of net.art, Groys' interpretation is particularly fitting, as the observer is also a user, as already mentioned, and must confront the medium directly to create her/his own narration. In fact, to draw on Vincenzo Estremo's ideas (2016), curating data and digital images means manipulating them, thus proposing new narrations. We can then infer that net.art's ability to create new narratives arises from its main characteristic of openness. The net.artwork itself depends on the spectator/user who *intervenes* in it by interacting with the work and modifying it. The version of a net.artwork proposed by a cultural institution—and by those who work for it—depends on establishing a new environment, a new reality. The experience one draws from it differs from when the net.artwork is left to its own devices, a fact on which Marialaura Ghidini (2020: 303) also reflects. It should be considered that even the fictitious reality on which each user is able to operate autonomously on the Internet is extremely filtered. Indeed, as Groys (2019:175) tells us, the internet is a mirror that shows us only what we want to see. It then follows that the distinction between the two experiences (i.e., the one in the museum and the direct one, interacting with net.art autonomously) depends less on the mediation in and of itself than on the context that surrounds it. 'As a fiber of an organic whole, moving images weave into the environment, becoming part of its texture, a component of that place' (De Rosa 2020: 227),<sup>6</sup> and it is those same surroundings that make the audience conscious of the mediation implemented (Røssaak 2013: 130). More precisely, according to Groys (2008), again, 'the curator can't but place, contextualize, and narrativize works of art—which necessarily leads to their relativization' (p. 44).

In this context, it is also worth mentioning the distinction made by Nilo-Manuel Casares Rivas (2003: 101–104), who distinguishes two components of electronic art: the ripple and the corpuscular. The first is conceived as ephemeral and invasive, as it allows the artwork to get closer to the public without barriers, while the second is thought as material and concrete, as it might appear in a private space autonomously, as opposed to being experienced as a ‘museum fixation.’ Yet, following Groys’ (2008) reasoning, one might think that, when dealing with net.art, the role of the exhibition re-empowers the curator, allowing her/him to consecrate what is exhibited as art. The debate on whether this is possible certainly cannot be solved within the limited space and scope of this article. Rather, I would like to show and demonstrate how a net.artwork changes when exhibited online or offline.

### An Analysis through Visual Case Studies

As already anticipated, net.art longs for interaction among different artists (and people in general) from various countries; it promotes collaboration and exchange. Therefore, Craig Saper has proposed the expression ‘networked art,’ which is a very useful definition in the context of this work, but a bit too wide as it describes different artistic and cultural practices based on networks (Saper 2001).

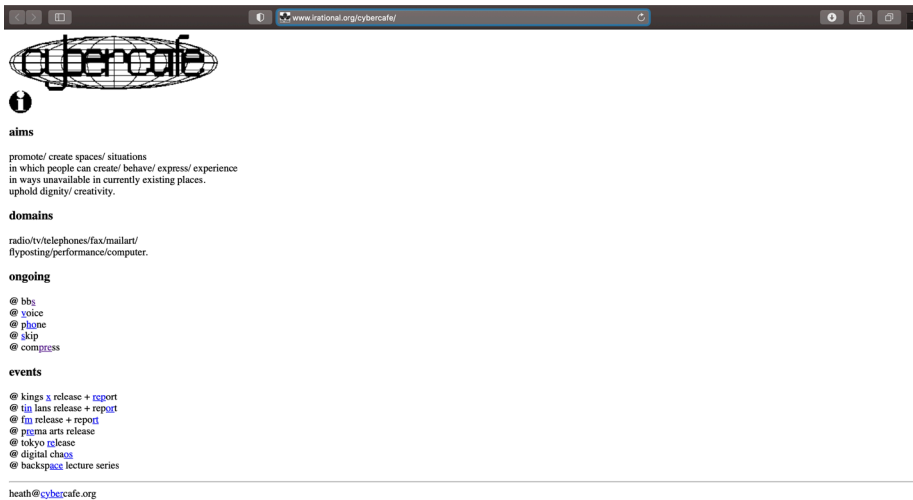


Figure 1. A screenshot of Heath Bunting's *Cybercafe*, [www.irational.org/cybercafe](http://www.irational.org/cybercafe), 9 September 2021 (courtesy of the author).

Let us consider, for example, Heath Bunting's *Cybercafe* (1994). He aimed to use the Internet as a platform to promote interaction with people, to create new forms of communication and networks. Indeed, 'a network is about difference, transformation, and heterogeneity, realized through ongoing relations between various actants' (Dekker 2018: 22). Another early example of this practice is Wolfgang Staehle's *The Thing*. Similarly to Heath Bunting,

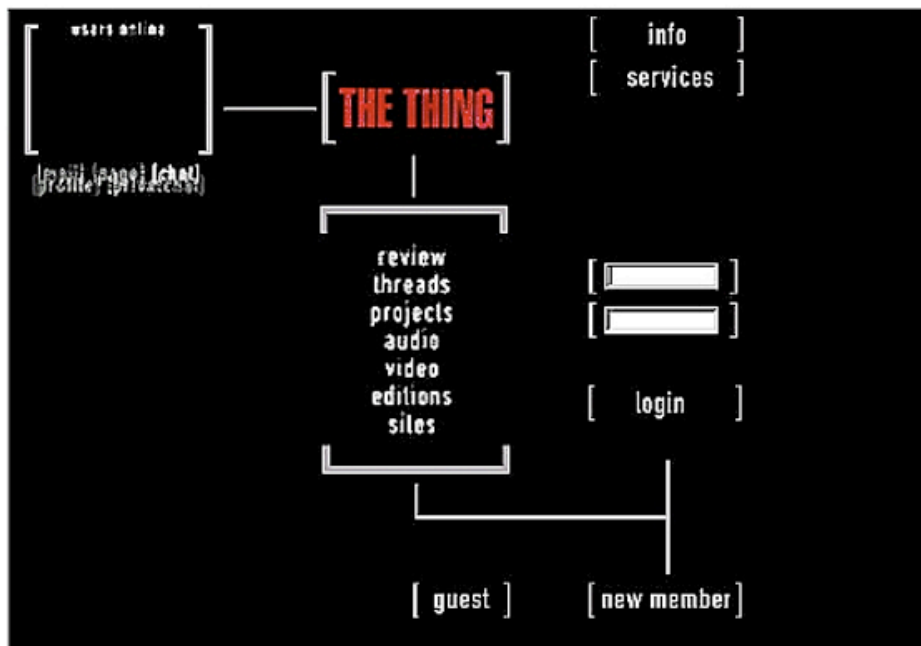


Figure 2. A detail from Wolfgang Staehle's *The Thing*, 22 July 2010 (courtesy of Wolfgang Staehle, licensed under Creative Commons 3.0).

he created a BBS (Bulletin Board System) which was meant as a generator of critical and theoretical artistic discussions. It was first a mailbox system but in 1994, thanks to the spread of WWW (World Wide Web), it went online and developed into a distributed research hub. Both examples worked by bringing people together, providing them with a place to meet and communicate outside the officiality of institutional walls. They thus created artistic communities which people could join simply by connecting remotely, without any boundaries, an idea that may seem obsolete today (as they may be considered predecessors of first online forums and then social networks), but that was completely avant-garde at the time.

During the '90s, pioneering net.artists moved inside an open space. They exploited an ephemeral but, at the same time, extremely tangible place<sup>7</sup> to create continuously expanding works, undefined and undetermined.<sup>8</sup> Net. artwork is defined by multiple possibilities of analysis and interpretation. As a guideline, it relies on Theodor Nelson's notion of hypertext as something which doesn't follow a linear and fixed structure, which has no end. 'The word "hypertext" [means] a body of written or pictorial material interconnected in such a complex way that it could not conveniently be presented or represented on paper. It may contain summaries, or maps of its contents and their interrelations [...] Such a system could grow indefinitely, gradually including more and more of the world's written knowledge' (Nelson 1965: 66).

Net.art's audiences are users who participate and produce meaning. Collaboration is the essence of net.art, which reflects the need for a democratic art that is available to everyone and free. This is evident



Exhibiting net.artworks requires artists to be programmers, producers, curators, and, of course, the audience, too. Autonomous and independent fruition are thus the basis of exhibiting net.artworks. Spontaneous contact with the work, sometimes being dazed and confused, maybe even shocked, is the starting point for developing viewers' sincere perception, critical thinking, and fruitful discussion. Indeed, when someone explores a net.artwork by herself, through her PC, most of the time she can directly write to the artist, inserting herself into the very same network. Freedom of interaction is unavoidable. This aspect of net.art is characteristic of contemporary culture more broadly as defined by Nicolas Bourriaud as 'a culture of use or a culture of activity' (Bourriaud 2005: 19).

'In this new form of culture [...] the artwork functions as the temporary terminal of a network of interconnected elements, like a narrative that extends and reinterprets preceding narratives. Each exhibition encloses within it the script of another; each work may be inserted into different programs and used for multiple scenarios. The artwork is no longer an end point but a simple moment in an infinite chain of contributions' (Bourriaud 2005: 19–20).

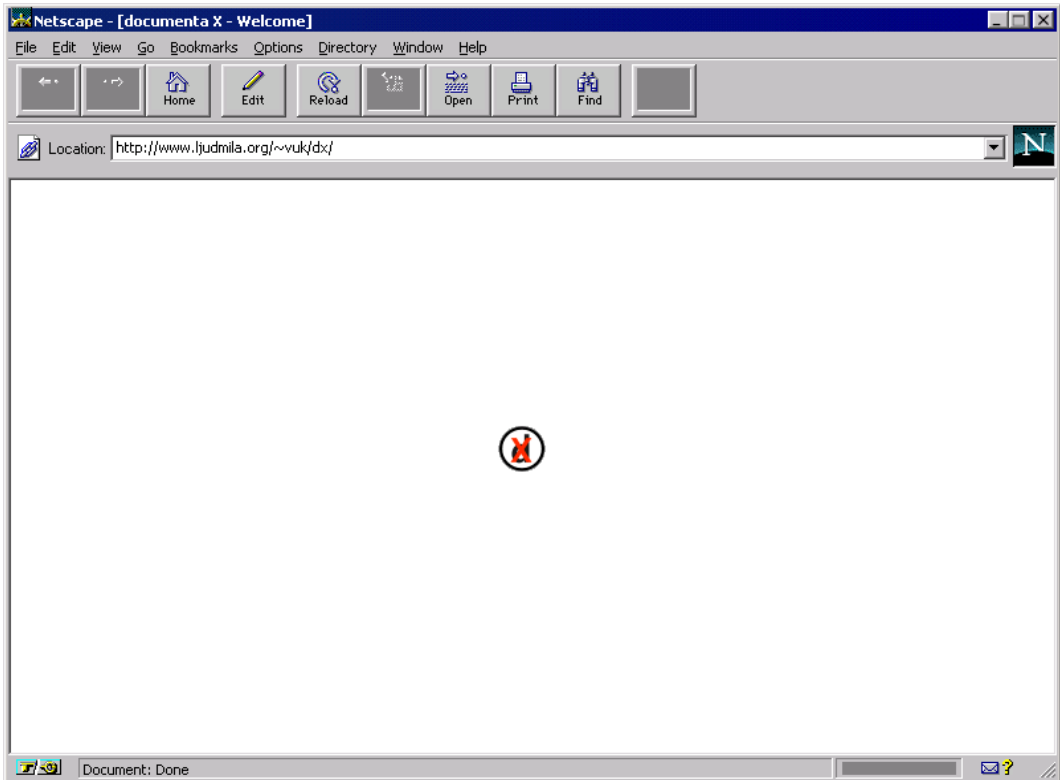
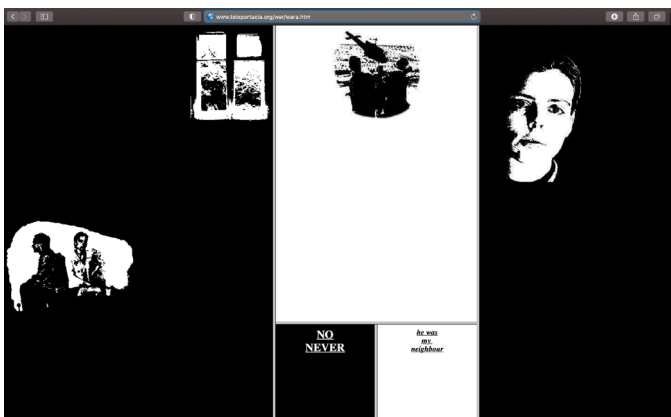




Figure 5. Above: Vuk Ćosić, *Documenta Done*, 1997, [sites.rhizome.org/anthology/documenta-done.html](http://sites.rhizome.org/anthology/documenta-done.html) as seen in Netscape Navigator 3.04 Gold for Windows (courtesy Rhizome and the artist). Below: Vuk Ćosić, *Documenta Done* at the exhibition *Net-art per me* for the Slovenian Pavilion during the Venice Biennale, 2001 (courtesy Rhizome and the artist).

Researchers tend not to consider exhibitions net.art, almost as if they were two separate things. Indeed, this is the case. Exhibiting net.art in museums does create unexpected new synergies, but it is tricky since, in a museum or a gallery, the audience traditionally expects to be given a complete, fixed, and well-determined object. Institutions have nonetheless been showing net.art, sometimes proposing a deconstruction and a 'concrete,' objectified composition of the net.artwork, sometimes offering technological support inside the institutional space.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps here we should remember Danto's discussion of the role of museums after the death of art: 'The end of art means some kind of demotion of painting. So does it also mean the demotion of the museum?' (Danto 1997: 173). The objectification of net.artworks in the exhibition context can prove to be that 'moment of truth and revelation' Marshall McLuhan anticipated when he stated, 'the moment of the meeting of media is a moment of freedom and release from the ordinary trance and numbness imposed by them on our senses' (McLuhan 1994: 55).



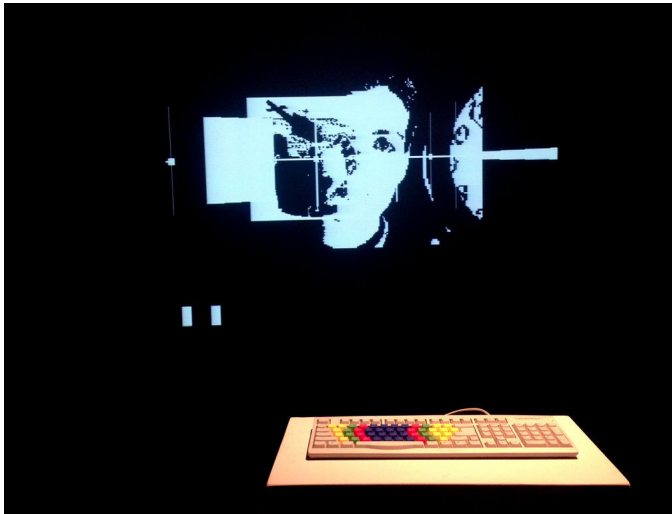


Figure 6. Above: a screenshot from Olia Lialina's *My Boyfriend Came Back From the War*, [teleportacia.org/war/wara.htm](http://teleportacia.org/war/wara.htm), 9 September 2021 (courtesy of the author). Below: the exhibition *Olia Lialina: 20 years of My Boyfriend Came Back From the War*, held at Mu in Eindhoven in 2016 (courtesy of the photographer, Rosa Menkmen, licensed under Creative Commons 2.0).

But, while exhibiting net.art can be a perfect way to promote and historicize it, offering it to people who know nothing about it may reduce the quality of their interaction with it. It is indeed hard to feel free to navigate through HTML pages, click on buttons, and reload pages when you are surrounded by people who are waiting for their turn at the same machine. Moreover, a gallery or a museum is a non-neutral space and the suggestions that arise from the visit are necessarily filtered. The exhibition space, despite how effective the curators' efforts may be in excluding external reality, will always contain traces of mediation (be it the curatorial choices, the place itself, or the exhibition occasion). Indeed, even if the curator's intervention can facilitate the audience's understanding and confidence in interacting with what is exposed, it also inevitably influences the audience's perception. This stands in contrast to what O'Doherty (2012: 128) has suggested, namely that new media now transform the gallery and not vice versa. Our point is that physical, institutional places tend to rule over artworks (be they net.artworks or traditional). They protect and maintain traditional habits such as amplifying (overamplifying, even) the role of curatorship, where instead ad hoc solutions should be sought and adopted.

Two interesting cases are Ćosić's *Documenta Done* (1997), an act of hacking to demonstrate the difficulties of incorporating net.art into institutional systems, and Olia Lialina's *My Boyfriend Came Back From the War* (1996). They both were exhibited in physical, institutional places, resulting in what has just been described: they became projects that lost their outrageous or intimate essence. But also, Jodi's *asdfg* (1999) is a perfect example of a work whose perception changes if experienced remotely or in a framed set. Both Jodi's and Lialina's cases ask for direct user interaction. Jodi's work may not be noticed if displayed, as the audience may be reluctant to interact with flickering images on someone else's monitor. For Lialina's work, the visitor would be expected to modify the narrative construction and



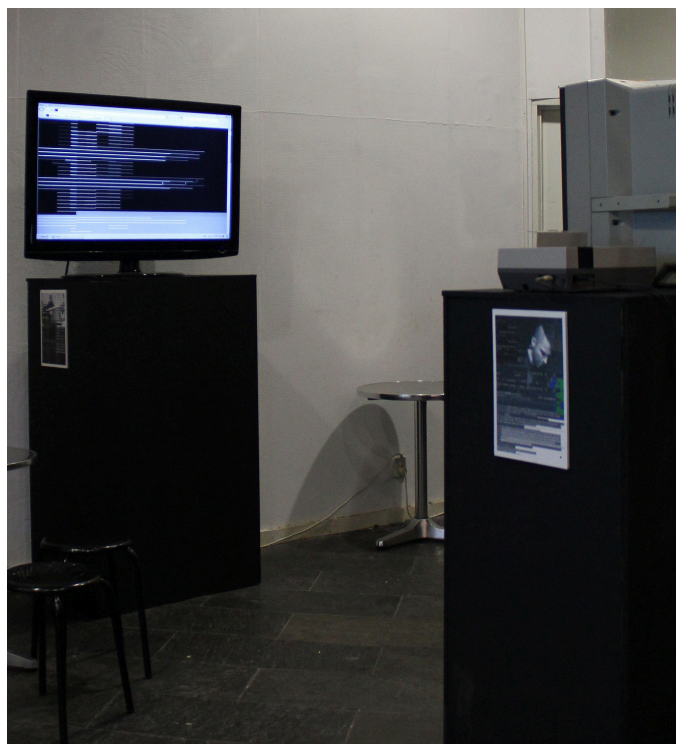
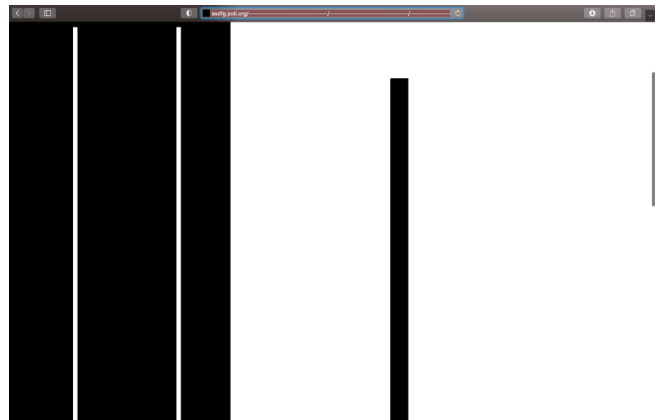
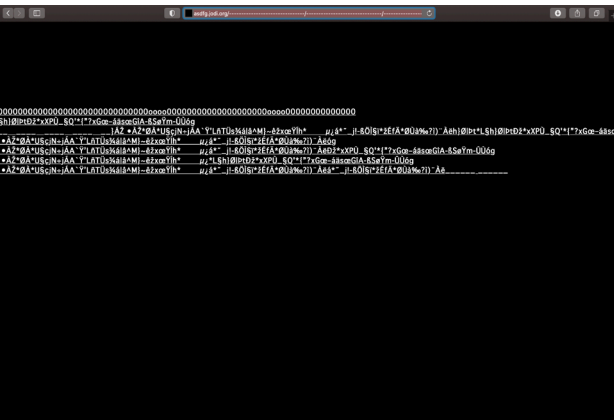


Figure 7. Above: Screenshots from Jodi's *asdfg*, *asdfg.jodi.org*, 9 September 2021 (courtesy of the author). Below: Jodi's *asdfg* at the exhibition *Filtering Failure* held in Amsterdam in 2011 (courtesy of the photographer, Rosa Menkman, licensed under Creative Commons 2.0).

therefore the emotional perception of the story told, making the audience into a sort of co-author. Čosić's instead is the perfect example of an act that, when put on display, loses its provocative impact. It represents something that has concluded, that is finite, and which thus becomes an object of memory.

As Natalie Bookchin and Alexei Shulgin (1999) suggest in their 'Introduction to net.art (1994–1999),' net.art can be considered a T.A.Z. (Temporary Autonomous Zone). As Hakim Bey (2004) claims, a T.A.Z. ceases to exist when it becomes known, when it gets absorbed by officiality and



loses its essential grey area. So, exhibited net.art shouldn't exist in only one place; it should be as free on the Internet today as it was in the technoutopian '90s described in the opening quote of this article.

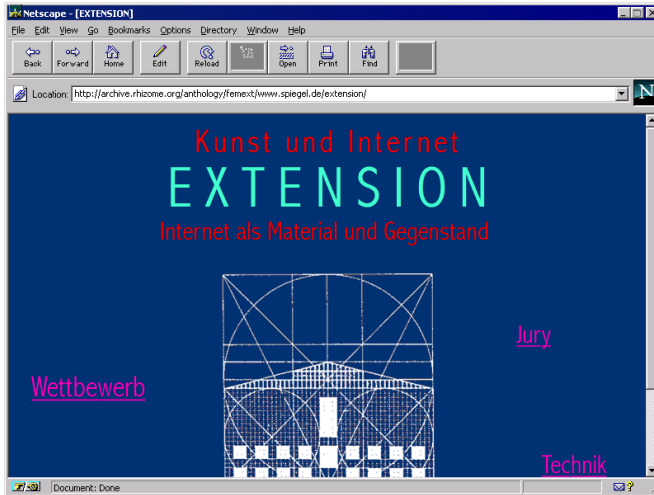


Figure 8. Cornelia Sollfrank, *Female Extension*, 1997, sites.rhizome.org/anthology/female-extension.html as seen in Netscape Navigator 3.04 Gold for Windows (courtesy Rhizome and the artist).

The same net.artwork affects audiences differently when it is situated where it was conceived (the Internet) and exactly how it was meant to be experienced. Recalling Bey's definition, I would argue that net.art's fruition must be based on autonomous and independent interaction rather than being mediated and filtered by other curatorial and institutional choices. Ghidini (2019) refers to 'web-based exhibition [...] as a system of artistic production and display mediated not only by the curatorial role, but also by the communication patterns, formats of publishing and modes of distribution enabled by web technology—the mass media of our time.'

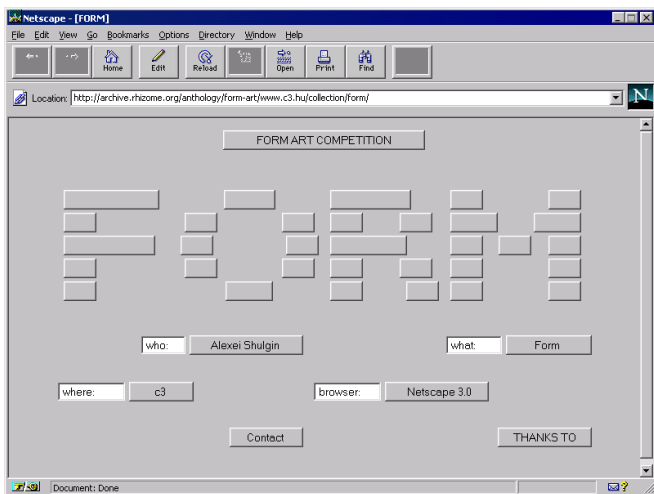


Figure 9. Alexei Shulglin, *Form Art*, 1997, sites.rhizome.org/anthology/form-art.html as seen in Netscape Navigator 3.04 Gold for Windows in 2021 (courtesy Rhizome and the artist).

A very important project that is focused on the relationship between institutions and net.art is Cornelia Sollfrank's *Female Extension* (1997), created as a statement about institutional discrimination in the art field. It was, again, a form of hacktivism that directly demonstrated the social potential of net.art.

Alexei Shulgin took a similar step, creating a competition based on his project *Form Art* (1997) making fun of the structure of institutional prizes such as Prix Ars Electronica. But while Sollfrank's work was a fake collaboration (she created hundreds of profiles who submitted trash data to Extension, the net.art competition organized by Hamburger Kunsthalle), Shulgin received actual contributions, thus creating a real alternative official art world. As for Ćosić's project, these interactions with the viewer/user take place remotely, so that they become mainly historical memory. Therefore, here lies the relevance of conserving net.artworks and works of new media art more broadly: preserving the traces of different projects allows for their survival without having to reconstruct them, which risks distorting them.

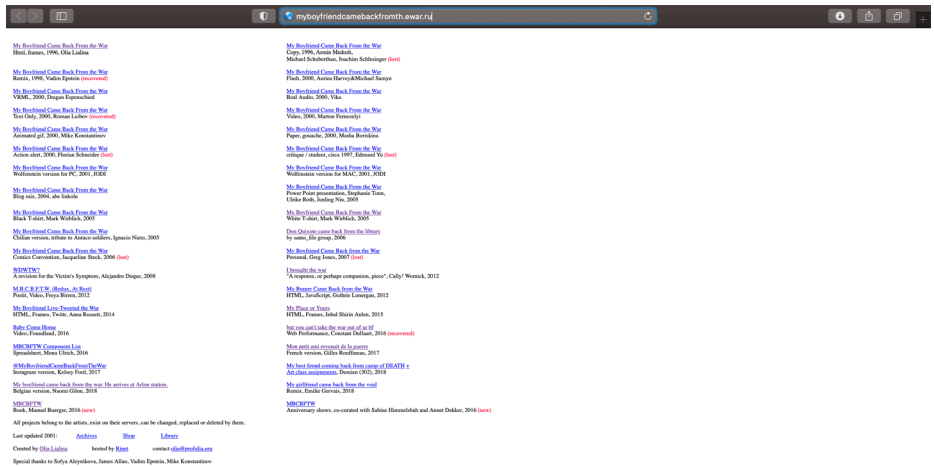
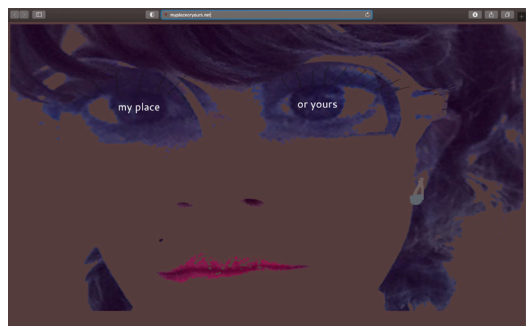


Figure 10. A screenshot of the home page of Olia Lialina's *Last Real Net Art Museum*, <http://myboyfriendcamebackfromth.ewar.ru>, 9 September 2021 (courtesy of the author).



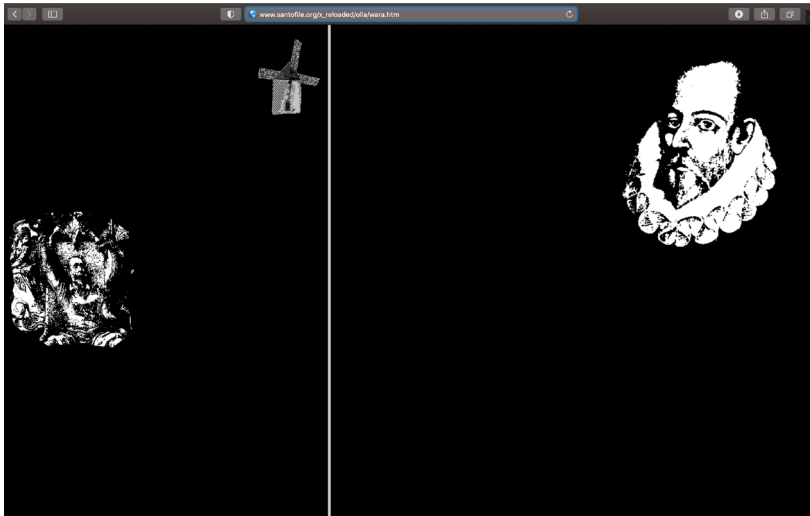
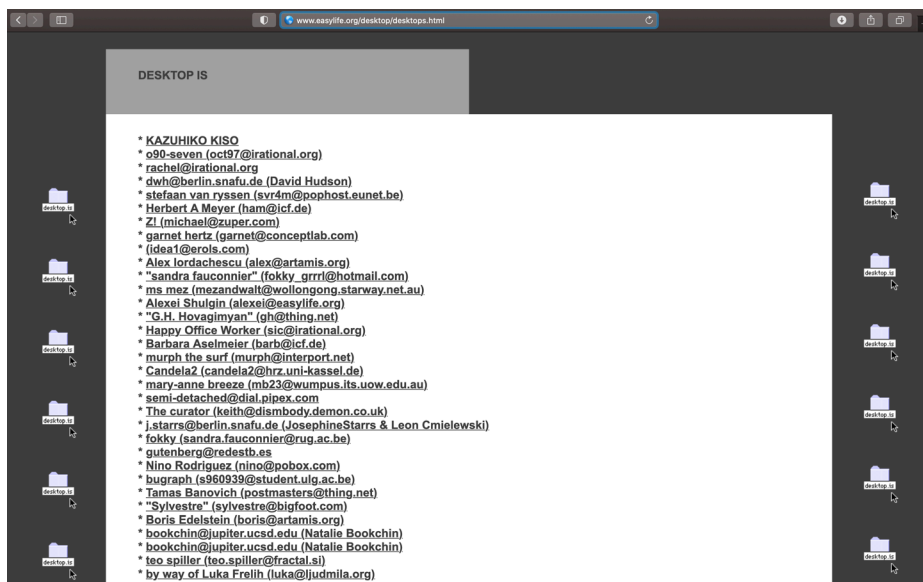


Figure 11. Screenshots of works from Olia Lialina's *Last Real Net Art Museum*, 9 September 2021 (courtesy of the author). Above left: French version of *Mon petit ami revenait de la guerre* by Gilles Rouffineau, 2017, adoptercritiquer.fr/guerre. Above right: *My Place or Yours* by Inbal Shirin Anlen, 2015, myplaceoryours.net. Below: *Don Quixote came back from the library* by santo\_file group, 2006, santofile.org/x\_reloaded/olia/war.htm.

Čosić's colleague Olia Lialina did something similar creating the first real net.art gallery (or 'former first,' as the artist refers to it on her website) and the last real net.art museum. These online galleries and museums are, again, founded on collaboration on the creation of an artistic network. The same principle can be found in Shulgin's *Desktop Is* (1997–98), where he collected frames of desktops that were sent to him. The user finds herself in a virtual art gallery that she can visit (browse) without limits or interferences. It is a work within the work, as the artistic platform itself contains and proposes other projects, enriching itself with facets that intrigue the user.



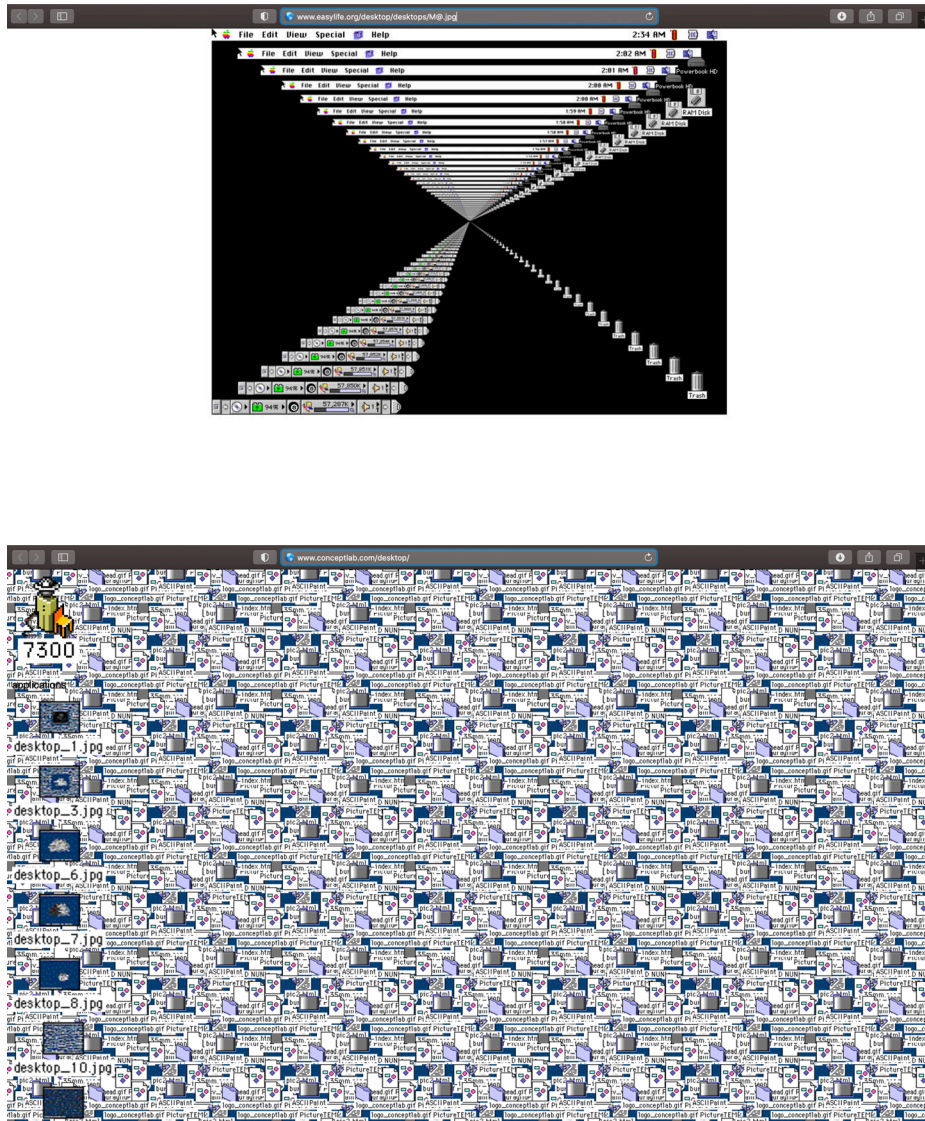


Figure 12. Screenshots from Alexei Shulgin's *Desktop Is*, [easylife.org/desktop](http://easylife.org/desktop), 9 September 2021 (courtesy of the author). Bottom left: [easylife.org/desktop/desktops/M@.jpg](http://easylife.org/desktop/desktops/M@.jpg). Bottom right: [conceptlab.com/desktop](http://conceptlab.com/desktop).

Founding a platform for online and offline artistic experiments is what John Borthwick and Benjamin Weil did with *äda 'web* (1994),<sup>11</sup> exploiting the web's possibilities both for medium-specific creations and for sharing other practices. It was another bid to offer an ephemeral but tangible place for art exhibitions and favored critical discussion, removing the limits implicitly imposed by institutional walls. As is the case with Lialina's and Shulgin's works, which we just examined, *äda 'web* is a work of art that contains other artworks. Once again, the viewer relates to the project by interacting with the machine without mediation (except for curatorial choices), deciding what, how, and how many times to click.

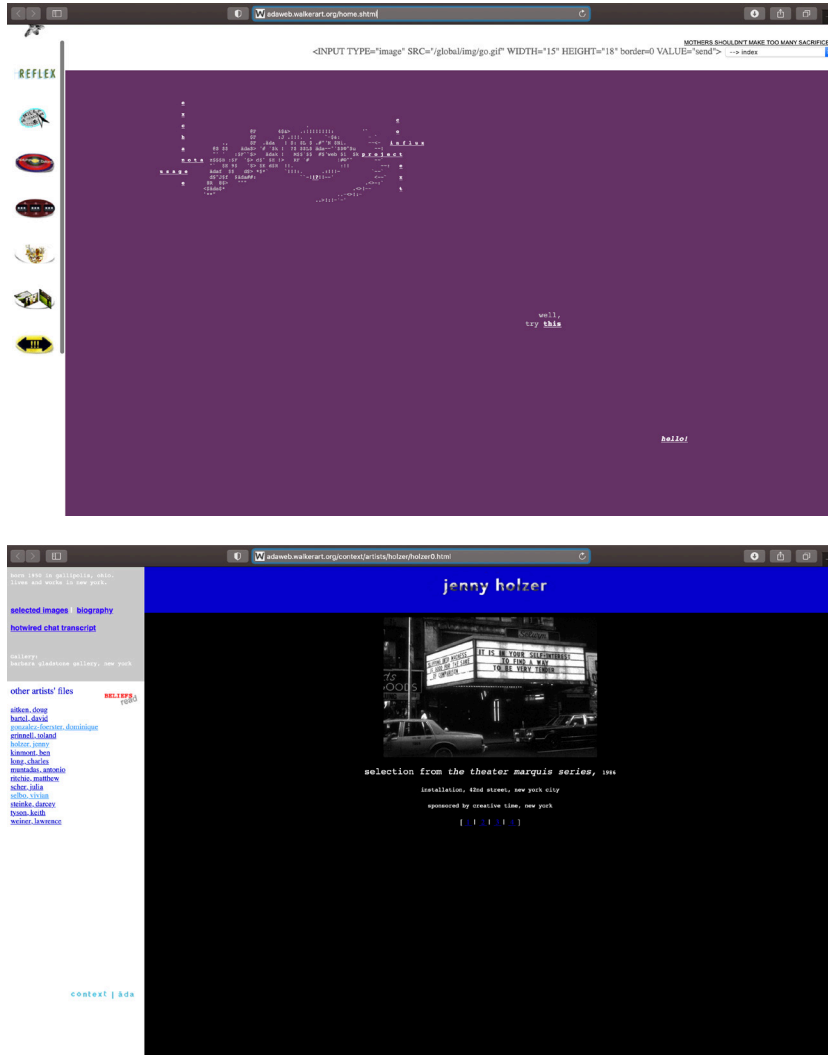


Figure 13. Screenshots of *ada>web* (courtesy of Walker Art Center).

## Final Remarks

In conclusion, net.art is an essentially collaborative artistic practice whose objective is to create a network and develop interactions. As such, it should always be exhibited maintaining its characteristic features without distorting the basic elements listed above. It would be interesting to research further whether ongoing projects are preserving their nature as T.A.Z.s, or if they are being inserted into and consecrated in the contemporary (meaning institutional) art world. Exhibiting net.art in a physical place, fixing it, does not necessarily entail the decay of this artistic practice, but it could mean that its intrinsic components—which have been examined above—are undermined.

The case studies considered belong to the beginning of net.art as a practice and continue to be key examples of net.art's original intention to transcend the 'curatorial turn' (O'Neill 2012) of the '90s, according to which exhibitions allow contemporary art to be studied and recognized, but which at the same time are highly mediated by the individual curator.

I find that the advent of social networks has inevitably changed the game, introducing a type of interaction between user and machine which is wholly different from the one net.artists aspired to create. Social networks have bolstered the confidence of the network's users, but they have also drastically lowered the expressive potential of the medium. Nowadays, moving images are unremarkable to us, and interacting with electronic and digital devices is a daily routine, even when we encounter them in artistic and cultural environments. We interact with technology in a distracted, automatic manner; we hardly expect it to surprise us. In a sense, we confront technology with bold superficiality. Refocusing on net.art's pioneering experiences is then fundamental to reestablish an enjoyment of human-machine interaction. This could be achieved by implementing virtual use platforms (some already exist) where the visitor can discover the exhibition autonomously. We must also consider that the net.artist is a curator as well as a creator because she must envision a path of exploration by the user who approaches her work. This widening of the artist's role does not limit the role of the institution, but rather could be an incentive to develop new ways of use that allow audiences to get in touch with an artistic language such as that of net.art (and digital art in general) still unknown to most.

How the experience of net.art can be combined with exhibition practices and museum needs remains to be explored and seen.

1. You can visit the site at [anthology.rhizome.org](http://anthology.rhizome.org) (18.11.2021).
2. A way to undermine this process has been proposed by Hito Steyerl (2009), who defends poor quality images that are 'copy in motion.' They are images edited and reworked to contrast with the high-resolution images that respond to the needs of the neoliberal market. This makes mass users aware of the surveillance they are subject to, allowing them to dominate virtual space.
3. Referring to Jean-François Lyotard's (1981) and Rosalind Krauss' (2000) concepts.
4. For a full definition see Sarah Cook and Marialaura Ghidini (2015).
5. The term actor here refers to the central role of net.art audiences and not the way ANT (Actor-Network Theory) has been intended by many. In fact, as Bruno Latour (1996) points out, 'nothing is more intensely connected, more distant, more compulsory and more strategically organized than a computer network. Such is not however the basic metaphor of an actor-network.'

6. Here we should also recall De Rosa's (2020: 224) distinction between space and place: 'I term the neutral environment of space and the marked environment place. Now, the main difference between space and place is that, because marked by its presence and action, that is, by the design it informs around itself and the disposition it elicits, place is the specific space of an entity—the space where I live is "my place."'
7. Charlie Gere (2004) wonderfully refers to this as 'cyberspace's simulacrum of presence.'
8. I am using Umberto Eco's (1976: 203) terms to denote an open work which needs the cooperation of the audience.
9. The work is available online at [whitney.org/artport/douglas-davis](http://whitney.org/artport/douglas-davis) (22.06.2021).
10. In her master's thesis, Karen A. Verschooren (2007: 152–173) proposes three levels of net.art's incorporation into the museum or gallery: 'separation,' 'segregation,' and 'integration.'
11. For the full story, see Domenico Quaranta (2004).

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