

Florida State University Libraries

Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations

The Graduate School

2003

The Internet as Creative Environment: Practice and Explorations with Internet Technology of Three Selected Artists

Ying-Yi Chou



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS AND DANCE

THE INTERNET AS CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT:
PRACTICE AND EXPLORATIONS WITH INTERNET TECHNOLOGY OF THREE
SELECTED ARTISTS

By
YING-YI CHOU

A Dissertation submitted to the
Department of Art Education
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:
Summer Semester, 2003

Copyright © 2003
YING-YI CHOU
All Rights Reserved

The members of the Committee approve the
dissertation of Ying-Yi Chou defended on April 29, 2003

Sally McRorie
Professor Directing Dissertation

Ithel Jones
Outside Committee Member

Tom Anderson
Committee Member

George Blakely
Committee Member

Approved:

Marcia L. Rosal, Chairperson, Department of Art Education

Sally McRorie, Dean, School of Visual Arts and Dance

The Office of Graduate Studies has verified and approved the above named committee
members

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a dissertation would have been impossible without the support and advice of my friends, family, and mentors. Certainly it would have been impossible without the excellent mentoring and supervising I have received over the years from Dr. Sally McRorie; she has been, in every way, an excellent and deeply encouraging advisor. I owe her not only my study under her supervision, but an important part of my well-being, and my education as an educator as well. I cannot thank her enough for the time and care she took with me and my work.

Several professors were kind enough to read early drafts of my dissertation and made very helpful comments. Dr. Tom Anderson, a preeminent scholar in art education, his thought-provoking comments with my work were invaluable; Professor George Blakely also reviewed every chapter and has been very generous in giving his time and insights; and Dr. Ithel Jones, who has served as an outside committee member, made several useful suggestions that I kept in mind. For participation in the data collection of this study, I am grateful to artist Shu-Lea Cheang, Juliet Martin, and Michael Oliveri. I have found my conversations with them about artistic creativity very helpful. For the mentorship and friendship over the years I am deeply indebted to Professor Tan-Huei Liang. Her support and belief in me have been a strong mental support for me.

I owe my family my greatest debt. All meaningful relationships are complicated, yet I cannot imagine choosing any family other than I have: my father, Chun-Ming Chou; my mother, Chia-Ying Lee, my grandfather, Dr. Sung-Yang Lee; my grandmother, Man-Ling Liao; and my sister, Yi-Wen Chou have been more than one could ask for in a family. My debt to my husband, John Fleming, is beyond words. He encouraged and supported me to write this dissertation through all of my doubts and anxieties about doing so. I am grateful to him for a love that has endured and been wonderful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	1
1.2 Overview of the Study	2
1.3 Rationale of the Study.....	3
1.4 Limitations of the Study.....	6
1.5 Definition of Terms.....	6
1.6 Summary	9
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Philosophical Foundation.....	12
2.2.1 Creativity and its System Model.....	12
Definition of Creativity	12
Systems model.....	13
Domain	14
Fields	14
Persons and Internalization	15
2.3 Domain.....	15
2.3.1 Context of Internet Culture	15
2.3.2 Social/Cultural Context.....	17
Culture and the Self.....	17
Marxism and cultural industry	19
The Aura and the Evaporation	22
The Public Sphere and the Social/Psychological Impact.....	25
2.3.3 Aesthetic and Philosophical Context	28
Traditional aesthetic discourse.....	29
Expression and Interpretation of Art	33
Family Resemblance	34
Institutional Theory and Interpretation of Art.....	35
Between Essentialism, Expressionism and Institutionalism	38
2.3.4 Context of Art and Postmodernism.....	39
Bringing Internet Art to Life	39
The Divorce of Art and Aesthetics.....	40

The Loss of Real	41
Nostalgia	42
The Death of Author	44
2.4 Field	44
2.4.1 What is Internet Art and what is not	44
Problems of Defining Internet Art	44
Interactivity and Forms	46
2.4.2 Theoretical Positions of Art Education in Technology.....	52
Technology Determinism and Substantive Theory.....	52
Current Practice of Internet Art and Art Education	53
2.5 Conclusion	55
2.6 Chapter Summary	57
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	58
3.1 Introduction.....	58
3.2 Framework of the Study.....	59
3.2.1 Utilizing a Model of Creativity for Data Collection.....	59
3.3 Criteria for the Selection of Internet Artists.....	60
3.4 Setting	61
3.4.1 Interpretation of Internet Artworks.....	61
3.4.2 Data from Interviews with Artists.....	62
3.5 Summary.....	62
CHAPTER 4 ARTISTS' INTERNALIZATIONS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES	64
4.1 Introduction.....	64
4.2 Inquiry of Internet art professionals.....	65
4.2.1 Juliet Martin	65
Demographic Information.....	65
Process of Creating Artworks	67
The medium and the expressive means	69
Conceptualizations of Internet Art	71
The Environment of Internet.....	73
Interpretation of Martin's work	74
Summary	75
4.2.2 Shu Lea Cheang	76
Demographic Information.....	76
Process of Creating Artworks	78
The Medium and the Expressive Means	82
The Environment of Internet.....	84
Conceptualization of Internet art	85
Interpretation of Cheang's Artwork	86
Summary	88
4.2.3 Michael Oliveri	89
Demographic Information.....	89

Process of Creating Artworks	89
The Medium and the Expressive means	91
Conceptualization of Internet Art.....	92
The Environment of the Internet	94
Description of Michael Oliveri’s web site	96
Summary	97
4.3 Chapter Summary	97
CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	98
5.1 Introduction.....	98
5.2 Findings.....	99
5.2.1 Educational/Learning Experiences	99
5.2.2 Process	100
Technical process	101
Frustrations and Obstacles	101
5.2.3 Expressive Means	102
Subject matter and conceptual content	102
Aesthetic consideration, spirituality, and transcendent experiences..	103
Outside influences and inspirations	104
5.2.4 Conceptualization of Internet Art	104
5.2.5 Perceptions of Internet Environment	105
The Effects of Internet Technology	105
Interactivity with Audience	105
5.2.6 Interpretations of Three Artists’ Artworks.....	106
Conceptual Abstraction.....	106
Pragmatic expression.....	107
Concerns with Interactivity.....	107
Intermingled Practices of Modern and Postmodern Aesthetics	108
5.2.7 Summary of Findings.....	108
5.3 Implications for Studio Art Education in Technologically Based Environment	109
5.3.1 The Practice of Internet Art	109
Interactivity	109
Concept of Happening as Aesthetic Experiencing of Internet Art.....	110
Techniques, Medium, and the Message	111
Artistic Ability, Traditional Art Media Training	111
5.3.2 The Expression of Internet Art.....	112
Reloading of Human Feelings	112
Tacit Knowledge of Civil Disobedience	112
5.3.3 The Nature of Internet Art and Art Program in Post-Secondary School ...	114
5.4 Suggestion for Further Studies.....	116
5.5 Chapter Summary	117
CONCLUSIONS.....	119
APPENDIX A.....	121

APPENDIX B.....	123
APPENDIX C	125
APPENDIX D.....	128
REFERENCES	193
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	204

ABSTRACT

With the rapidly growing population of Internet users, many artists now utilize the Internet as a mean to both access and create artworks, which themselves have a newfound opportunity to communicate with the greater public. However, the heavily technologically oriented medium still is in its initial stage of development. While post-secondary students utilize technology to make art, the field of Internet art is new and not understood, particularly in terms of effective pedagogy. The combination of art and technology has been evolving quickly and is difficult for some people to understand and accept, not to mention that the definitions of art change over time and place, and computer technology is rapidly evolving. Selected artists in this study revealed their processes of creating artworks, their aesthetic views, and their concepts of Internet art, which offered data for better understanding the new media and how it may best be taught to post-secondary students. From a humanistic perspective, this research project was designed to investigate the ontology and functions of Internet art within the contexts of aesthetics and postmodern culture, drawing implications for post-secondary education. The first part of the project attempted to delineate Internet art in various contexts and analytically describe a wide spectrum of varied genres of Internet artworks. In the second part of this research, I gathered further data by interviewing three selected artists with educational and professional backgrounds in painting, cinema, and installation, who now create Internet artworks. I investigated their technology and artistic educational experiences, their conceptualizations of Internet art in terms of art in a larger sense, their aesthetic experience of viewing Internet art pieces, and their further insights into this emerging new medium. I coded and analyzed the data gathered from these artists' interviews, using qualitative methods of analysis, and combined those data with initial findings to develop a practice-based definition of Internet art and its role in postmodern art and culture. I also made suggestions for the teaching and learning of technologically based studio art programs in post-secondary education, based upon the findings from the study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation was designed to chart many directions of art on the Internet, calling on an analysis of data from selected artists and art educators who practice Internet art or teach technologically based art programs in post-secondary schools. Additionally, this researcher provides a descriptive analysis of selected art found on the Internet, and makes recommendations for technologically based art education in post-secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Through this research, I inquired into the following issues related to the practice of selected contemporary artists: (a) the nature of Internet art as compared with other art forms and techniques; (b) the expressive means utilized by selected artists; (c) the artists' conceptualization of Internet art, and (d) the artists' perception of the Internet environment. This inquiry leads to suggestions of appropriate strategies for technologically based art education in post-secondary schools.

In 2000, the Whitney Museum of Art launched the first Internet Art exhibition and thereby bestowed some legitimacy upon the new art form in the eyes of the art world. Internet Art was rarely reviewed and the term was seldom used in contemporary American magazines until the Whitney Museum included "Internet Art" as one of the categories for its 2000 Biennial (Canning, 2000; Jones, 2000). A multitude of sharp criticisms were written about how the Internet exhibits were displayed in the museum, as well as the quality of Internet art selected for the Biennial (Anton, 2001; Canning, 2000; Jones, 2000). Criticisms aside, however, Internet art is now on the world stage and will not be going away soon. This is evident in the great proliferation of many other Internet art shows both online and offline (Deitz, 1999; Greene,

2000; Harris, 2001). The question of whether Internet art represents a significantly different form of aesthetic expression remains to be answered, and the nature of Internet art and the Internet as a creative environment need to be investigated in various contexts.

This research attempts to investigate the explorations and practice of selected artists who create art in the environment of Internet. The primary question is:

What is the nature and quality of the Internet as a creative environment and artistic medium for selected contemporary artists?

In this investigation, I focused on the following specific areas of inquiry with three selected artists:

1. What is the nature of Internet art according to their practice and explorations?
2. How do these artists conceptualize Internet Art?
3. What are the expressive means used by the artists in producing digitally based art that is intended for Internet audiences?
4. What are these artists' perceptions of the Internet environment in terms of communicative and creative values?

Overview of the Study

I addressed these questions through a qualitative study of selected Internet artists. These artists, their art making processes, and their artworks were examined to gain understanding about designated areas of inquiry related to Internet art.

Currently, Internet art is an ill defined field. First, the definition of art in general is slippery and typically viewed as an open concept, and second, technology is constantly evolving, which contributes to its elusiveness. Thus, the amorphous natures of Internet art and the practice of Internet artists make it a difficult area to study. In order to best frame the broad range of data related to the nature of Internet art as compared with other art forms and techniques, the expressive means utilized by contemporary artists, and the artists' conceptualization of Internet art, I utilized a systems model to present the interconnections between the art, technology, and the artists' internalization of the field.

Use of such a model consists of mapping the relationships among three interconnected components, each of which is necessary for understanding the concept under investigation. In this study, I use a systems model like that employed by Csikszentmihalyi (1996) in his study of the similarly amorphous concept of creativity. In that version of a systems model, the three interconnected parts were domain, field, and individual. In my study, domain is represented by the cultural, social, aesthetic, and philosophical contexts in which Internet art resides. The field is represented by art curators, both on- and off-line, critics, educators, and media theorists who may function as the gatekeepers of Internet art. These first two components, domain and field, are presented through the review of literature. The third (and most important for this study) component of individuals is composed of selected artists who produced technologically based art intended for Internet audiences. I interviewed these artists using traditional face-to-face meetings, as well as email programs and technological means that are in keeping with the nature of the study. I also included descriptive analyses of selected works of art by these Internet artists. Conclusions and discussion follow the presentation of these data, and implications for technologically based art education at the post-secondary level are drawn.

Rationale of the Study

This dissertation examines detailed information about the Internet as an environment and medium for art as drawn from observations of three selected artists with works installed on the Internet and interviews with selected Internet art professionals. Many contemporary issues of Internet art focus on big questions: What will Internet art look like in the future? Will Internet art create a new form of aesthetic? Which theories will become dominant? What will happen to the professions related to Internet art after the crash of the economy and the decline of the computer technology boom? When *Leonardo* and *Flash Art* (Anton, 2000; Ippolito, 2001; Romano, 2000), contemporary art magazines, in 1999-2001 raised these big questions, detailed information was not provided. One observer forecast that the new form of aesthetic of Internet art would be “detritus” and “sprawl”(Helfand, 2001, p. 29). Another saw that “Net.art suffered from an anemia that comes from a steady diet of neo-Conceptualism and raw, uncut theory”(Anton, 2001, p.118). These comments were far from being constructive observations.

Many amusing and intellectual Internet artworks have been exhibited; there is no doubt that various Internet technologies and computer multimedia are fascinating. However, the issue of how to construct an environment that offers equal opportunity for everyone is more urgent than the empowerment of technology per se or the identification of what Internet art should be. To achieve this goal one must rely on some effort in academia which is comfortable enough in computer technology to be critical.

For the past decades, traditional academia seems have been more interested in focusing on the technology rather than in using its considerable resources to make projections about technology's effect on the quality of life (Valovic, 2000). Technology and business clearly have been the loci of attention. Schools often had to catch up with respect to the latest technical advances in computers and technology growth. Although the use of technology and digital media is becoming one of the main interests of art programs for the practical purpose of economics, the collapse of technical job markets also drags down the creative openings for commercial artists (Kingwell, 2000). The academic commentators seem not up to the speed of technology and technologists seem unoriented toward social, cultural, and educational issues. Publications and periodicals that are concerned with digital culture have discussed the artistic, social, and cultural aspects of technologies. Yet many of the issues often result in discussing its impact on a narrow audience, the digital elites (Valovic, 2000). A potential function of the Internet is to support and improve the net-like existence of the world including the field of art. As art educators, it is necessary to provide students with alternatives to existing ideologies and some grounds for challenging prevailing values and assumptions (Ettinger, 1991; Keifer-Boyd, 1997).

As the result of new issues arising from Internet Art, the fields of contemporary art, technology, and art education have become connected. However, understandings of the nature of art, technology, and education may be contradictory. Art, since modern western history, has been viewed as carrying an inexplicable quality of Dionysian freedom and sensibility, whereas technology is commonly seen as reflecting the restraint and sensibility of the Apollonian (Nietzsche, 1927/1998). Gigliotti (1998) used a metaphor to describe education as a bridge to connect art and technology. As the bridge's purpose is to connect, it also can be viewed as an eliminator of the separation between art and technology.

The art world has long insisted on the continuation of the autonomy of art. Even after the postmodern movement of the 1990's, artists must in some way produce products controlled or

contained within the monetarily defined artworld system (Gigliotti, 1998). In terms of technologically mediated art, many notable art organizations have chosen to view these developments as a means to continuing the established hierarchy of the art world rather than opening doors to artists whose work is integrally involved in other possible contexts (Bodow, 2001; Miles & McLennan, 2001). Internet art, for example, has shown the tendency of two extremes, as it is being theorized by mainstream conceptual art institutions while it is heavily technology driven or commercialized by technical institutions. The former indicates that Internet art is being legitimated in the artworld yet also shows the potential dangerousness of being over-defined. The latter otherwise could be accused of producing artists as laborers that serve a capitalist society (Stalbaum, 1997).

Etinger (1991) points out that art defined and categorized as an exclusive visual object, produced and interpreted by specialized experts, with limited appeal for a narrowly defined audience, results in alienation of art. McRorie (1997) points out that we are no longer in the modernist era and the teaching of art posits educators on the horns of a plurality of dilemmas, "...so much contemporary work in critical response to art and in art making itself, relies heavily upon a range of interrelated theories based on diverse theoretical and philosophical ideas, it is not enough that art students know how to make formally acceptable objects"(p. 103). The teaching of technologically based studio art in the current situation is needed to explore diverse dimensions and aspects of art, education, and culture that come with the activities and phenomena of the Internet.

Implications of this study may allow further developments for technologically based studio art programs at the post-secondary level. Rather than accepting the way Internet art is or should be from a single narrow perspective, I looked to develop a study that explored the dimensions of Internet art in hopes of determining effective strategies for post-secondary education in technologically based media. This dissertation may help answer Gigliotti's (1998) call for action toward realizing the values of teaching art and technology:

The term "education", however, is a term often taken for granted. Various communities with which I have worked, both within the arts and in areas external to them, have assumed I meant what they did when we talked about the value or the importance of education. In my work specifically geared towards a melding of education, the arts and technology, I find myself continually having to explain to the adults involved that what I

mean by education is providing an environment in which students feel absolutely compelled to become involved in the creation of their future by understanding how important they are to the present. Teaching, for me, is about letting each student know you take them seriously, so seriously as to expect them to contribute something essential and unique to a wider communal project of well-being. (p.89)

Limitations of the Study

The sample of contemporary artists in this study cannot be taken to represent a complete overview of activity in the field of Internet art. Additionally, I employed qualitative research methods, which focus on selected artists, purposely omitting all others from the study. By selecting the artists and artworks, I have limited certain discussions in theories of art and the characterization of Internet art. My own aesthetic preferences and subjectivity toward the field are factors involved in making selections and interpretations in this study. Furthermore, conventional journals have not yet delved deeply into discussion of the Internet art field because of its novelty. Thus many of the articles are found in online journals and online art exhibitions, which may not be as scholarly as conventional offline journals.

Definition of Terms

1. **Aesthetics:** Aesthetics is concerned about what art and beauty is, the branch of philosophy that examines the nature of art and the character of our experiences of art and of the nature environment (The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 1999).
2. **Aesthetical consideration:** The notion of what art and beauty is changed from time to time and place to place (Anderson, 2000). In this study, aesthetic consideration is systematically asking and answering questions between the researcher and participants' notions of art, and how participants transform their notion of art into their works of art.
3. **Apollonian:** refers to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, the embodied power of critical and rational as opposed to the intuitive expression displaying.

4. **Conceptual Art:** Art that emphasizes on the artist's thinking made by any activity or thought a potential work of art, without necessity of translating it into pictorial or other material forms (Atkins, 1997).
5. **Conceptual content:** ideas expressed and embodied in a work of art (Pope, 1998).
6. **Creativity:** The concept of creativity in this study follows Csikszentmihaly's (1996) definition of capital C Creativity, as "any idea, act, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one"(p. 28). It is an interaction framework of a system model consisted of domain, individual, and field. He suggests that the capital C Creativity is recognized by the public and descends from the interaction between the system model rather than only a subjective phenomenon.
7. **Creative process:** A set of actions that make up the state that the participants' feel as they are making works of art. This study is concerned with the description of this state by participant's making works of art from the beginning to the end.
8. **Cyberspace:** An Internet user's life space that exists in each user's psychological environment.
9. **Dionysian:** refers to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, the displaying of intuitive expressive power as opposed to critical and rational power.
10. **Formalism:** the view that in our interaction with works of art, form should be given primacy (The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 1999). In this study, Clive Bell, Clement Greenberg and any other Internet artists who use the concept of form mainly wish to contrast the artwork itself with its relations to entities outside itself –e.g. artists who practice net art insist that the only thing relevant to determining the beauty of their works is the interface design or the computer network, instead of the narratives or the themes.
11. **Forms:** the conventional use for organizing content of an Internet art object as a whole.
12. **Happening:** An environmental artwork activated by performers and viewers. According to Atkins (1997), the artists who made Happenings, such as Allen Kaprow and Claes Oldenburg, never issued a group manifesto defining their art form, and that may help account for its variety (Atkins, 1997, p. 103).
13. **HCI:** Human Computer Interface.

14. **Internet art:** In this study, Internet art is defined as art that is produced with Internet technology, that utilizes Internet as a platform, and specifically aimed for Internet users as its audience.
15. **Life space:** centers upon each person's interaction with one's contemporaneous psychological environment (Bigge & Shermis, p. 173).
16. **Metaphor:** a figure of speech or a trope in which a word phrase that literally denote on thing in used to denote another, thereby implicitly comparing the two things (The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 1999) or as Pope's (1998) quote as an image that suggests something else. Metaphor has been an approach for the design of Human Computer Interface, which has been attempted to create computer interface that is user-friendly and viewed the interface as a metaphor that contains denotations of existing objects in human's daily life in hope to carry efficient communication.
17. **Modernism:** A critical position involving mainly two components as the notion of that human history is progressive, and of that objectivity and universality of value based on the claim that Western culture is the most sophisticated (Pope, 1998). Modernism in art usually associates with formalism.
18. **Net art (net.art):** A type of Internet art that concerns the use of computer network protocols and languages such as HTML, HTTP, FTP, JAVA, PERL etc. to implement art ideas that contributes meaningfully to the formalist's idea of Internet art. As a result, works of net art are usually considered conceptual art implemented via protocols when considered as semi-autonomous agents of performance (Stalbaum, 1997).
19. **Online art communities:** Art communities that exist on the Internet. In this study, online art communities include web sites of art organizations, galleries, museums, discussion groups and any other art groups that serve the functions of communication on the Internet.
20. **Postmodernism:** of or relating to a complex set of reactions to modernism and its presupposition as opposed to the kind of agreement on substantive doctrines, and it typically oppose essentialism (The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 1999), although Barrett (2000) points out that postmodernism in art is more complicated, it follows modernism or lives along side it—many artists, critics continue the modernist's tradition (p. 32).

21. **Post-photography:** Photographs that utilize manipulations from computer software programs.
22. **Post-structuralism:** the variety of postmodernism defined by its reaction against French structuralism (Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, 1996). French structuralists generally sought to discover unconscious codes or rules that underlie phenomena and like modernists, strove for objectivity and coherence (Barrett, 2000), whereas post-structuralists—mentioned in this study as Lyotard, Barthes, Foucault, Baudrillard, Danto, use historical strategies to explain how consciousness, signs, and societies are historically and geographically dependent.
23. **Pragmatic expression:** Contents embodied in three selected artists works that are related to the contemporary life in a practical way.
24. **Traditional aesthetic discourse:** In this study, it specifically means theories of beauty and taste from the past two centuries, which have been developed since the Enlightenment era of western history of philosophy and seen as the fundamental problems in aesthetic. These theories deal with the sense and their cognitive implications have served to reproduce dominant ideologies and to construct hierarchies of the sense (Jackson, 1997). For example, Bell (1958) believes that the “significant form” privileges vision over any other.

Summary

This research attempted to investigate the nature and quality of the Internet as a creative environment and artistic medium for selected contemporary artists. I utilized a systems model of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) to inquire into issues related to the practice of Internet art professionals. In answering the main research question, “What is the nature and quality of the Internet as a creative environment and artistic medium for selected contemporary artists?”, I focused on four secondary questions : What is the nature of Internet art? How do three selected artists conceptualize Internet Art? What are the expressive means used by the artists in producing technologically based art that is intended for Internet audiences? What are three selected artists’

perceptions of the Internet environment in terms of communicative and creative values? I then drew implications for technologically based art education in post-secondary level.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter aims to contribute to the domain and field of Internet art by providing a potential map of what Internet art may be. It contains the discussions of reaching a definition of Internet art, and reviews of theories relating to and specific to the field of Internet art.

I have divided this chapter into a number of sections, each of which covers key concepts and problems. Concepts discussed in earlier sections become established ideas for continuing sections. In determining theories relating to Internet art, I considered established traditional fields that are relevant to Internet art, such as aesthetics, philosophy of art and technology, critical theories, examples of Internet artworks that have been released to the public, and art education related to computer media use. The discussion in this chapter follows the order below:

1. Philosophical foundation of Internet art—the notion of Internet art in this research is grounded in Csikszentmihalyi’s definition of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). This section explains the perspective of creativity emerging from the systems model and how this model is used to structure the review of literature and the collection of data.
2. Domain of Internet art, which includes:
 - a. Cultural and social context—locating Internet art into cultural and social context, an overview of Internet culture;
 - b. Aesthetic and philosophical context— an overview of western aesthetic development, which has played an important role in Western visual culture;
 - c. Postmodernity and art— an overview of postmodern theories in relation to art and artists’ roles;
3. Field of Internet art contains:

- a. A brief overview of what Internet art might be, of Internet art players' discussions of their use of form, definition of it from various experts' views, as well as teasing out what is not the uniqueness of Internet art;
- b. Survey of different theoretical and educational positions.

Philosophical Foundation

Creativity and its System Model

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) examines the properties of creativity and analyzes its definition. He clarifies issues of creativity that have been commonly used too broadly, and explains components that construct creativity, based on a five-year study of persons considered highly creative in a variety of fields.

Csikszentmihalyi attempts to tackle the common misrepresentation of creativity as “some sort of mental activity, an insight that occurs inside the heads of some special people” (p. 25). Creativity, Csikszentmihalyi maintains, is a result of an interactive frame work of a systems model, consisting of domain, individual, and field. He suggests that major creativity emerges from the interaction in the systems model, rather than only being a subjective phenomenon. “...creativity does not happen inside people’s heads, but in the interaction between a person’s thought and a socio-cultural context. It is a systemic rather than an individual phenomenon” (p. 23). Several aspects of his theory are summarized in the following.

Definition of Creativity

In order to clarify what is meant by creativity, a word that refers to many entities with a great deal of confusion, Csikszentmihalyi makes a distinction among three types of phenomena that he considers legitimate. Csikszentmihalyi maintains that those persons with varied interests and a quick mind, who do not contribute something of permanent significance to a field, can only be called “brilliant” instead of “creative”. “Brilliant” is not part of the case of his study. He does consider other two kinds of creative people in his discussion. “Personal creative” is a term he uses to refer to those who “experience the world in novel and original ways” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 25). Yet he notes, “...given the subjective nature of this form of creativity, it is difficult to deal with no matter how important it is for those who experience it”(Csikszentmihalyi, 1996,

p. 25). This point of view might be close to what Wittgenstein (1958) calls “first-person illusion” (Kenny, 1994).

We feel then that in the cases in which “I” is used as subject, we don’t use it because we recognize a particular persons by his bodily characteristics; and this creates the illusion that we use this word refer to something bodiless, which, however, has its seat in our body. In fact this seems to be the real ego, the one of which is said, ‘Cogito, ergo sum’. —‘Is it then no mind, but only body?’ Answer: The word ‘mind’ has meaning, i.e., it has a use in our language; but saying this doesn’t yet say what kind of use we make of it. (Wittgenstein, p. 196)

Arguing that language’s unavoidable confusion and vagueness tends to disguise thinking rather than revealing its logical form, Wittgenstein explains how the use of the word “I” is considered (Wittgenstein, 1994). “...The word ‘I’ does not mean the same as ‘L.W.’ even if I am L.W., nor does it mean the same as the expression ‘the person who is now speaking’. But that doesn’t mean: that ‘L.W.’ and ‘I’ mean different things. All it means that these words are different instruments in our language” (p. 193). The use of ‘I’ thus is not the instrument that Csikszentmihalyi utilizes. What Csikszentmihalyi mainly focuses on in his study is the third group, the creative individuals recognized by the public. He also points out that “talent” is a relative term, and “genius” is entirely rejected by the majority of creative individuals he interviewed.

Systems model

After clarifying his definition of creativity, Csikszentmihalyi proposes that authentic creativity emerges from a systems model. It is interaction within the model that generates creativity with a capital C, the kind that “changes some aspect of the culture” and is not only in the mind of a person. His systems model is made up of three main parts: domain, field, and individual person. The first component, domain, consists of a set of symbolic rules and procedures. Many domains are nested into what we usually call culture. The second component is the field, by which Csikszentmihalyi refers to all the gatekeepers to the domains. These gatekeepers decide whether a new idea or product should be included in the domain. The third component, an individual person, uses symbols of a given domain such as music, art, mathematics, etc., and sees and creates a new pattern of ideas, whose novelty is selected by the appropriate field.

Thus, Creativity follows from Csikszentmihalyi's perspective as "any idea, act, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one" (p. 28). And the domain cannot be changed without the response of the field. "A person cannot be creative in a domain to which he or she is not exposed", he states (p. 28). It is this claim that defines Csikszentmihalyi's position as grounded in Empiricism, which posits the individual subject revealed in objects and events. He gives several reasons for supporting this claim. First, a gifted child in mathematics needs to learn the mathematical rules in order to contribute to the field of mathematics. Second, even if the rules are learned, the gifted individual's novel contribution needs to be recognized and legitimized by a field. It explains that Creativity can be manifested only in existing domains and fields.

This model of Creativity allows for the often-mysterious fluctuation in the attribution of creativity over time. Csikszentmihalyi gives several examples of artists. Raphael, Bach, and Van Gogh, were creative, "only their reputation changed with the vagaries of social recognition" (p. 29).

Domain

Clarity of structure, centrality within the culture, and accessibility are the three major dimensions with which domains can help or hinder Creativity. Csikszentmihalyi uses the domains of mathematics, social science, philosophy and psychology as examples to explain the relation between domain and Creativity.

The symbolic system of mathematics is organized relatively tightly and it maximizes clarity. "Therefore, it is easier for young people to assimilate the rules quickly and jump into the cutting edge of the domain in a few years" (p. 39). By contrast, it takes decades for social scientists and philosophers to master their domains, and takes these fields many years to assess their creativity. Psychology, as another example, is a diffuse system of thought within which it takes years of intense writing for a person to say something that others recognize as new and important. Compared to other systems of domains, it has less centrality.

Fields

A field can affect the rate of creativity in three ways. The first is by whether the field is reactive or productive. A productive field solicits and stimulates creativity; while a reactive field does not. The second way is by the field's choice of either a narrow or broad filter in the selection of novelty. A field that has an extremely narrow or broad filter will cause respectively

either starvation of creativity or unassimilated creativity because of admitting too much. The third way is the degree of connection to the greater society of fields, which can encourage novelty. A field that is well connected to the social system will be able to channel support into its domain, such as when nuclear physicists after World War II gained support from society more easily because politicians and voters were still enormously impressed by the atomic bomb.

Persons and Internalization

Csikszentmihalyi notes that a person who wants to make creative contributions must learn the rules and the content of a domain, as well as the criteria of selection, and the preferences of the field (p. 47). The focus of many investigations often is on understanding how a person's mind works; yet he rejects the idea that focus of understanding on the individual is the main and necessary key. He compares creativity to accidents—they are properties of systems rather than of individuals. Yet he does not deny credit to the individual. In addition to luck, individuals need to know where and when they stand, and realize when they are standing in a propitious space/time convergence.

As Csikszentmihalyi defines culture nested by many domains, the following section begins with the discussion of cultural contexts from different domains. I consider Internet art as a type of creativity that is emerged from a diffuse system of art and the Internet technology. The domain of art, in terms of empiricism, is culturally and socially bound; therefore the section of domain is divided into discussions of the context of Internet culture, social/cultural context, aesthetic and philosophical context, and the context of art and postmodernism.

Domain

Context of Internet Culture

I am not sure I know what the Internet is; I am not sure that anyone does...and I don't know if that matters...The analogy of the Internet as a forest composed of thousands of separate and unique trees is appropriate, but we are still at the point where we have to gain a better understanding of the trees themselves, before the forest makes any sense. (Costigan, 1999, p. 4)

Due to the dramatic development of Internet phenomenon, studies that are related to Internet cultural have not been stabilized. A catastrophe might impede Costigan's forest of Internet. After the year two thousand NASDAQ crash, current discussion of Internet culture in the context of American capital society, inevitably was followed by sad employment reports and pitiful dotcom biographies (Lovink, 2002; PBS, 2002). For instance, *Artbyte Magazine*, which discusses digital culture has announced its suspension, and David Kuo's *Dot.Bomb and Boo Hoo*, the story of boo.com's founder Ernst Malmsten (Lovink, 2002), are some of the casualties of the economic crash.

Earlier studies associated with the Internet culture have ranged widely yet shown a sense of religious aspect in referring to the Internet phenomenon (Bender and Druckery, 1994; Dery, 1996; Jones, 1999; Shields, 1996; Stern, 1999). Rod Shields' (1996) edited collection of cultures of Internet contains articles considering France's Minitel, the global information infrastructure, virtual reality, virtual polities, MUDs (multi-user domains), listservs, and the coming of Internet to Jamaica. By calling the collection "Cultures of Internet", the editor seems to take a more process approach in that the "Internet" is referring to a wide range of processes. Steve Jones's *CyberSociety* (Jones, 1995) discusses computer-mediated communication ranging from analyses of computer and video games and virtual reality to Usenet and e-mail. Bender and Druckery (1994) edited a collection that claimed to discuss contemporary culture in relation to technology, which covers cyberpunk, political, gender, identities, bodies and techno criticism that probably are commonly issued in advanced technology experimental labs. Yet all these anthologies are scattered and not systematic, comprehensive or coherent. Furthermore, the population of Internet users has been dramatically accelerated for the past decade. The users are much more different from the early ones, who usually were stereotyped as "computer nerds" and "cyberpunks" due to the fact that the computer technology is user-friendly enough to be more accepted and pervasively used by different social groups. Many writings focus on the early specific population and may not cover the current condition of Internet culture.

With these problems, it is not attempted in this study to make a definition of Internet culture. For the purpose of the following discussion, in putting Internet art into cultural context, it is not intended to suggest that there is a special art in a special culture distinct from the others in the world. However, given that many studies related to art on the Internet emphasize its sociological, economical, and communicational domains, I considered using the term Internet

culture to signal the different domains and foci of this study: the social context, the cultural context, and the key issues of aesthetics and art theories. This section aims to situate Internet culture in relation to a number of other areas of culture, both past and present.

Social/Cultural Context

After he and his wife resign, they spend Thanksgiving in Las Vegas. He finds himself watching Alaska on the IMAX at Caesar's Palace. He is startled into an epiphany by the pictures of "starving, freezing fools" struggling through a snowstorm, "fantasizing about the gold they were going to find." "The truth," Kuo writes, "hit me over the head like a gold miner's shovel. Despite the hype, headlines, and hysteria, this was just a gold rush we were in ... We might look like hip, chic, cutting edge, new-economy Internet workers, but in fact a lot of us were kin to those poor, freezing fools in Alaska who had staked everything on turning up a glittering chunk of gold. (Liebrum, 2001, web resource)

Internet art is dispersed all around the Internet, and its functions are wide ranging due to the fact that the Internet, as well as art, is a communicational and social tool. Some artists' works of Internet art are for the purpose of self-expression. Other than self-expression, individual graphic artists work on web sites to meet the needs of individual clients, and some may be employed by computer firms to work on projects from gigantic organizations. They design computer games, web sites, and CDs to communicate with different social groups.

Within the 1990s, in the field of Internet art, there was a fiction of utopia as well as a dis-utopia, ironically for the same reasons: the economy and globalization. The utopian projects an ideal of a global village that would change the senses of humans, erasing the existing various boundaries of the human world. Yet the skepticism about this utopia moves in many directions; for example, the worries of artists being laborers of perception, the media giants' stoking cultural infatuations with music and imagery, the psychological depression caused by the fast society. The concerns of Internet culture from the visions of both optimists and pessimists can be traced back to the relation between the human self and culture.

Culture and the Self

As Anderson (1995) points out, culture is "made up of individuals and groups who make choices and influence each other in the development of collective values, perspectives, mores, and ways of doing things"(p.198), and is about choices and exchanges of meanings. Koivunen (1997) noted that there is no exchange merely based on material; every exchange is associated

with cultural meanings, which comes from storytelling as a way of human existence. As humans associate cultural meanings with material, consumption therefore means the consumption of meanings (Baudrillard, 2001). For decades, consumption meant the consumption of symbolic signs that refer to life styles, identification of social groups and social class identifications. Consumption is also linked to modern hedonism (Koivunen, 1997). The pleasure of hedonism was derived from the act of consumption itself in the traditional sense, such as consuming of food and clothing, whereas in modern time, hedonistic pleasure is derived from images and a level of expectative illusion. The reality described by the media no longer represents the physical reality yet is a model of reality of its own, which Baudrillard calls “hyperreality”. In an age when hyperreality is more real than physical reality, the human sense of self is also changed (Haraway, 1994; Koivunen, 1997; McLuhan, 1964; Turkle, 1995).

McLuhan (McLuhan, 1964; Carroll, 1998; Freenland, 2000; Kroker, 2001) believes the sense of self has expanded since humans started to utilize tools in their hands. As an optimist who attempted to invent a metaphor that technology refers to social and psychic extensions of the sense of human body, McLuhan wrote:

All media are extensions of some human faculty—psychic or physical”(McLuhan, p. 26). All media works us over completely. They are so persuasive in their personal, political, economical, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered. The medium is the message. Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without knowledge of the way media works as environments. (p.26)

McLuhan notes that “environment is process, not container”(p. 30), suggesting a sense that technology is an “extension” of biology. It implies that at this stage of information society, the human’s central nervous system has been exteriorized. Seeing the technological sensorium as a sign-system to which the human body is exteriorized, he notes that by means of electric media, humans have put their physical bodies inside the extended nervous system. Thus, “...we set up a dynamic by which all previous technologies that are mere extensions of hands and feet and teeth and bodily control—all such extensions of our bodies...will be translated into information systems” (p. 64).

Studying electronic communication, especially televisions in particular, McLuhan thinks that new media provide us with visual access to events from which viewers are remote, serve

functions that change human sense and promote non-linear thinking. Claiming that communication media structure our modality of sensory, he projected his enthusiasm of new media on to Hegel's historical process.

McLuhan's efforts of humanizing technology have offered a metaphorical meaning as Haraway's attempt to draw parallels between human's communication on the Internet and the nervous system (Haraway, 1985). In this understanding, Haraway's vision of cyborgs is corresponded with the notion of McLuhan's information system: the expansion of Internet technology as the metaphor or environment of the experiences of the twentieth century. Haraway's writings are an attempt to break beyond the various boundaries of human society. In her essay, *Simians, cyborgs, and woman*, Haraway noted precisely why humans are seen as assimilated as cyborgs as she defined a cyborg as "a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (p. 149), which offers a very vivid image of humans in the information society. Using the image of cyborgs as metaphor, she addresses the "self" of human in the technological society as multiple, synthetic, and artificial rather than nature. Although she wrote "I would rather be a cyborg than a human"(1985), Haraway's vision of cyborg is paradoxical. It does not seem apparent that information technology could erase the boundaries of genders, social classes, and the relation between human and animal; it also contains an implicit message that the human sense of self is bound up in an industrial culture in the post industrial society. While McLuhan deals with the biologic sense of human input through electronic media, Haraway raises the questions of human social structure in the post-industrial age. As the Internet has become pervasively used as a communication tool, it creates another sphere of public communication that reflects the offline cultural phenomenon. Yet the advantage from new technology seems to open more opportunities for democratization. Internet art, if seen as cultural product of the new public sphere, consequently would be avant-garde art that optimists like McLuhan would think takes humans to another level of history.

Marxism and cultural industry

However, Internet art, if seen as a cultural product of a capitalist society, would suffer in the negative estimations of contemporary writers who attempted to approach it with theories to accommodate other forms of art, especially by traditional aesthetic discourse that treats the essence of art as fixed for all the time, for instance, Adorno, Greenberg, Bell, and many formalists who will be reviewed later. Theodor Adorno, who establishes his fundamental

criticism of cultural industry, grounds his notion of art in this camp. To discuss the relation between Internet art and cultural industry, the following review begins with examining the other way of viewing art from a Marxists approach in which the structure and the role of art is floating on the river of history.

Marx portends of the bankruptcy of capitalism and agitates the oppressed proletarians to go through various stages of violent revolution, in order to reach his ideal society to which the intellectual creations of individual nations become common properties. He claims that 1). The bourgeois society that had sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonism; 2). The bourgeois brings disorder into the whole society and is turning against the bourgeois itself; 3).The proletarians should go through various stages of development to struggle with the bourgeois.

Marx supports his claim that the bourgeois has not done away with class antagonism by pointing out the phenomenon, which shows the bourgeois are becoming another group of oppressors that exploit the laborers. He compares the bourgeois with absolute monarchy; although the bourgeois has been stripped of feudal exploiters halo, they “has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation”(p. 82). The means of productions that the bourgeois built up were generated in society, and these bourgeois become another group of oppressors who utilize the oppressed by updating the instrument to replace the laborers.

The bourgeois, Marx believes, prevent the crises by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means. They built up the society with its industries constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production and destroying the old-established means. Therefore the instruments produce more production that the laborer cannot afford and do not need, and the over-production makes the bourgeois exploit the laborer more, yet the proletarians have less and less ability of consumption. This commercial crisis circulates and eventually put the society back to barbarism.

Marx believes that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles”(p. 79). “Every form of society has based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes”, and the essential condition for existence, for his point of view, is to sway the bourgeois class in order to reformat a society without superincumbent strata. Locating in Marx’s framework and believing that there is a certainty of art as “autonomous art”,

Adorno sees art containing function of transcendence that is generated by its rejection of the dominant forms of world order to promote the authenticity of art. Held noted that the usage of “form” of Adorno refers to “the whole internal organization of art—to the capacity of art to restructure conventional patterns of meaning” instead of simple insistence of the primacy of style and technique; and the authenticity of art “derives from its ability to reformulate relations between subjectivity and objectivity” (p. 83). The embodied notion of idealism of art is viewed as ideology and the remembrance of what might have been and what could be. The true works of art are those which express dissonant characters of modern life, the characters that consciously or unconsciously react against the requirement from the oppressing classes in the society. Adorno raises a phrase “cultural industry” to refer to the standardization of the cultural oppressing class, which is integrated into capitalism. Under the cultural industry, the standardization of art serves the function as to control people’s everyday life by the recurring situations in which people cannot cope. Thus, the art is threatened because “whereas once it had sought to fulfill the idealists dictum—purposiveness without purpose—it was not bound by purposes set by the market—purposelessness for purposes”(Held, p. 93). For Adorno, works of Internet art that are driven by commerce would impede the development of autonomous art.

Regardless the argument of whether the development of art should be autonomous or not, Internet art in Adorno’s category of cultural industry indeed has served its function to control people’s everyday life. A recent documentary program *The Merchants of Cool* on PBS shows how pop culture is being manufactured by giant media through many ways (Dretzin, 2001). According to the report from the program, there are five dominant mass media corporations that now define America’s pop culture, whereas seventeen years ago when Ben Bagdikian first published his book *Media Monopoly*, there were 50 dominant mass media corporations (Dretzin, 2001). Due to the media mergers from the past decade, it has produced a complex web of business relations that offer mass opportunities for promoting their products both online and offline.

One of the examples observed by Rushkoff (Dretzin, 2001), a soft drink brand Sprite, firstly created a party offline to attract teens to visit their new web site online. He describes, “Scores of kids were paid to show up and revel in the sounds and styles of urban authenticity... there, some of the biggest acts in rap music appeared on stage under the company logo. Here it was, the ultimate marriage of a corporation and a culture. Sprite and hip-hop had become one

and the same, each carrying the other to its audience”(Dretzin, 2001). The marriage of corporation and a culture therefore appear online to attract more of an audience by inventing a game rule on their web site. Looping the hip-hop music incorporating with motion graphics of inner street images on the web site, Sprite.com has encouraged many teens to consume their products and culture.

The Aura and the Evaporation

To defend Internet art, artists who practice it as net art in terms of formalism would demand a new approach instead of serving as commercial art. Net artist Lialina states the need of a new approach as below (1997):

Developing a theory of its own could enhance the value of Net art. At the moment it is understood in the context of media art, of computer art, of video art, of contemporary art, but not in the context of the Internet: its aesthetic, its structure, its culture. Works of Net artists are not analyzed in comparison with one another. We are always viewed from an external perspective, a perspective which tries to place native on-line art works in a chain of arts with a long off-line history and theory (Lialina, 1997, Cheap art).

For the demands of new approach to examine Internet art, Benjamin’s analysis of the possession of artworks “aura” in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Benjamin, 1930) offer a defense for Internet art in terms of autonomous art. His philosophical view of mechanical reproduced art can be posited from the framework of materialist Karl Marx’s concept of history as well.

Walter Benjamin addresses several concerns of artworks that are reproduced by machines: the uniqueness, the aura, the authenticity and the idea of original, and the changes in human apperception. As many writers point out that Benjamin’s essay is notoriously confusing with mixed message, which has evoked different interpretations by later scholars (Carroll, 1998; Freenland, 2001; Wolf, 1995; Held, 1980).

Believing that art and the philosophies of art developed within the context of social class struggling, Benjamin thinks that mechanically produced art including films, photograph, and radio, is a new type of art with the emerging technology of productive force. The new type of art therefore is suited to the productive labor strata, and it functions in a way that both expresses and promotes the ethos of the new culture of the proletariat. Several steps explain the process.

First, he asserts that traditional manmade art works possess “aura”. The aura is a “unique phenomenon of a distance between however close it may be conditioned by its existence embedded in ritual and tradition (Held, p. 87). A manmade artwork often is made for ritual functions and located in a definite geographical location. People necessarily need to travel in order to worship it, and it is this reason that makes a manmade artwork unique. As artwork produced by machine, the “aura” accordingly evaporates to the air for several reasons, that the art of mass industrialization is not religious in content and not aesthetical unique since it is reproducible. “Art, in the age of mechanical production, can be brought to the spectator, rather than vice versa, and by artworks out of unique ritual and cultic context, the aura of the artwork as such is further diminished”(Carroll, p. 121). Yet Benjamin believes that machine-produced artwork therefore manipulates art toward the interests of the masses and contributes to democracy. Since aura-absented artworks can circulate around the world, therefore they enable consumers to appreciate the object “in its absence, sans auratic presence”(p. 122).

Other thinkers believe that the evaporation of aura does not promote democracy. Instead, this point of view is criticized as oversimplified, “the anarchistic romanticism of blind confidence in the spontaneous power of the proletariat”, says Adorno. Carroll points out that the weakness of the ideas of that the disappearing of aura is salutary for the emancipation of classes lays on his analysis of aesthetic distraction and the change of human perception.

Artworks on the Internet result in changes in each of the above areas, raising many questions regarding these issues. Artworks on the Internet are not directly constituted by tactile material such as pigment or wood, rather binary data. If it is the physicality that withers the aura of artworks in the age of mechanical reproduction, then artworks on the Internet have lost the aura and originality. Yet the loss of the physical properties has a host of implications (Wolf, 1995). Since an Internet artwork does not have physical property, the “aura” has been reexamined and critiqued often (Wolf, 1995). As Wolf quote from Patrick Frank, the aura is seen based on cultural authority and consensus:

If we see aura as a by-product of cultural authority rather than as genius, we will see that mechanical reproduction need not take away from the aura, but today helps to create it. This seems to be especially true in contemporary art, where consensus is still being formed. The role played by magazines in granting authority or “importance” to artists or styles is widely accepted fact. Most works of art have little or no aura when created, but

reproduction imparts to them a certain legitimacy that lends aura. To try to create art without aura in the age of mass media is, to say the least, extremely difficult (p. 121).

Other than Benjamin, members of the Frankfurt schools have applied this notion of Marx to fields as mass culture and aesthetic theories in term of critical theories. As Held (1980) emphasized, critical theory does not form a unity due to the fact that the work of several noted members, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas, did not always form a series of tightly woven, complementary projects (p. 15). Held summarizes that Frankfurt theorists' attention was focused on the assessments of transmission between art, ideas, beliefs and popular culture, which is seen as the development of sociology of mass culture.

Lazere (1990) points out that critics grounded on Marxism have raised the possibility that interpretations of authors past and present are colored to some extent by biases of class, race, sex, nationalism, and historical moment. Recent studies of mass media and pop culture have continued the work of members of Frankfurt School who attacked the capitalist "culture industry" for debasing the masses into conformity with mindless distraction and consumption of commodities (Lazere, 1990). As the product of the industrial age, cultural industry is seen as negative by Adorno, which meant the technology production crushed the authentic pure arts as opposed to mass culture. However, cultural industry seen by Benjamin nevertheless holds the opportunity for the practice of democracy and liberation since the mechanic reproduction of arts liberate the aura of arts from the old tradition. The position and usage of cultural industry therefore is paradoxical.

In terms of Internet art, Marxists nevertheless offer approaches for the practice of art to challenge dominant capital ideology, practice and culture on the Internet. Seeing ideology as a system of representations including texts and imagery elements of web pages, interface design and technology sign system, which exists on the Internet have a role within our society. Internet art acts as representation system work on users by escaping users from the society both online and offline. Internet art professionals in this camp have attempted to move art away from various oppressions in many dimensions, gender, cultural, economical, even technology itself. Stalbaum (1997) points out that the value of art in any cultural or productive system of economics is a result of the complex interplay of technologies, resources, productions, distribution and thought. Taking Foucault's view that human self-knowledge has developed and the "Technologies"

through which self-knowledge is formed, Stalbauum quotes from Foucault the following four basic types of technologies (Stalbaum, 1997):

Technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform or manipulate things; 2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use the signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; 3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; 4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality (web resource).

Stalbaum (1997) describes the post-industrial society as the technologies of sign systems, which computer software are behind the phrase—the control of production, the application of power through telematic control systems, and in the dispersion into technology of self through discourses of consumptions. Artists, who ground them on modernism, would lose most of their creativity charm and social status. Because the paid industrial work has shifts from working on objects to the computer application of design, control maintenance of production and disciplinary systems, “it is not a matter of talent, genius or necessarily even meaning within aesthetic domains where we should conjure the status of art, but rather in art as knowledge work capable of agency within the post-industrial economy” (Stalbaum, 1997). Internet art, then, has shown its double layered problem of being gelled on the fixed foundation of avant-garde art in the age of consumption. However, to serve the commerce is not the only choice Internet artists have, many Internet artists find the Internet as a public sphere to escape from the hierarchy of the artworld and to express their points of view through different means of communication.

The Public Sphere and the Social/Psychological Impact

The Internet is seen as a new sphere for communication. The population of computer users has been increasing exponentially as more and more people find it a space to express their points of views and to communicate with others. Earlier advocates of technology were more optimistic toward the sphere. While the Internet was still relatively new, the promise of the novel was tapping into amazing, undiscovered sources of libidinous energy, puts cultural theorist Lovink’s (2000). He writes because “we are such human, simple creatures who love to forget

and are easy to impress with the ‘new new thing’”. Example as Rheingold wrote about his view through his year’s experiences in the Internet community (Rheingold, 1998):

The technology that makes virtual communities possible has the potential to bring enormous leverage to ordinary citizens at relatively little cost—intellectual leverage, social leverage, commercial leverage, and most important, political leverage. But the technology will not in itself fulfill that potential; this latent technical power must be used intelligently and deliberately by an informed population. More people must learn about that leverage and learn to use it, while we still have the freedom to do so, if it is to live up to its potential. The odds are always good that big power and big money will find a way to control access to virtual communities; big power and big money always found ways to control new communications media when they emerged in the past. The Net is still out of control in fundamental ways, but it might not stay that way for long. What we know and do now is important because it is still possible for people around the world to make sure this new sphere of vital human discourse remains open to the citizens of the planet before the political and economic big boys seize it, censor it, meter it, and sell it back to us (Rheingold, 1998, Introduction).

In a sense, Rheingold’s notion of the Net as public sphere is Habermas’s sense since the Habermasian subject is the ‘modern’ or ‘Cartesian’ subject, rational, stable and autonomous. This point is certainly open to debate, since Habermas’ idea of public sphere seems to be not only greatly idealized yet dangerous. More recent observers (Manovich, 2001; Jones, 1997; Stone, 1991) hold a more of conservative attitude towards the Internet. Manovich sees the Internet from a different angle:

A Western artist sees the Internet as a perfect tool to break down all hierarchies and bring art to the people. In contrast, I cannot but see the Internet as a communal apartment of the Stalin era: no privacy, everybody spies on everybody else, always presents are lines for common areas such as the toilet or the kitchen (p. xii).

Nevertheless, Internet sociologist Stone (1991) points out that one must return to the physical world since human life is lived through bodies, it is impossible to leave our bodies behind even in the age of techno-social. Observing the usage of the Internet, Jones (1997) also points out that the communication of Internet may not be necessarily interactive and communicative; Making a comparison to the users’ communication on the Internet, he uses a

metaphor of socialist Hoggart's description from his observation of the working class during the 1950's: "...old men who fill the reading-rooms of the branch public libraries...eccentric[s] absorbed in the rituals of...monomania...existing on the periphery of life, seeing each other daily but no contact"(pp. 60-61). The old man did not become estranged from those around them because of the reading room, or because of reading. They visit the reading room because it is their refuge, a place to be among and not with, in terms of interaction (Jones, 1997. p.14). Jones has made a point that the communication on the Internet may not be two-way or multiple. In other words, the non-communicative public sphere causes a sense of alienation for users. In fact, APA Journal released a research report of psychological impact from using the Internet in 1998, and the conclusion of the research results seems negative (Kraut, Lundmark, Patterson, Kiesler, Mukopadhyay and Scherlis, 1998). This research examined the social and psychological impact of the Internet on 169 people in 73 households during their first 1 to 2 years on-line. The researchers used longitudinal data to examine the effects of the Internet on social involvement and psychological well-being. The research concludes that the use of Internet is harmful—"greater use of the Internet was associated with declines in participants' communication with family members in the household, declines in the size of their social circle, and increases in their depression and loneliness"(p 1017).

Yadav (2001) also published research results showing that a fast society with advanced technology has harmful social psychological effects to human, including artists who utilize Internet as a tool. The researcher made a note of caution regarding artists in the fast culture:

...in today's modern world even artists have started using machines/ technology for their work and they are also involved with financial/business/commercial thinking. In addition to this they are also exposed to highly over stimulated environments like the rest of the population. Because of these factors even the mind of an artist of a fast society has become quite different from the mind of an artist who lived in any slow/non-industrial society of the past. A modern artist is thinking more and feeling less than an artist of the past (Yadav, 2001).

Yadav's conclusion above at least reflects a point of what has been discussed in the session that artists nowadays are different from the past because of the fast society in which they live. This difference would affect the way artists process works of art. Yadav defines emotion as "the gap between thinking" and makes the statement that modern artists "think more" and "feel

less”. It can be interpreted as that artists are becoming more cognitive than ever yet less emotive. It is also mentioned that a slow emotion is diagnosed as disease in a fast society. Whereas Benjamin believes that audience in the age of reproduction has becoming more “absence minded” and “distracted”, as a result, it frees the repression of art from the past and therefore a new perception of art is produced. McLuhan thinks that humans’ communication is calibrated in terms of the degree to which dominant communication media conserve the variegated texture of multi-channeled human sensorium. Yet it is hard to agree that an Internet art viewer, when standing in the position as an audience, will be typically thrown into the situation of critical reflection would produce a new structure of perceiving art. The stand that other members of Frankfurt school posit otherwise creates potential dangers of consensus that has happen to modernism in art. And yet, the commentators who have been discussed so far—e.g. Benjamin, McLuhan, Adorno, Manovich, and Yadav—have linked mechanically produced artifact into the notion of avant-garde art, either explicitly or implicitly. What is the nature of avant-garde art in relation to mechanically produced art in relation to Internet art will be discussed in the following section in terms of aesthetic and philosophy of art.

Aesthetic and Philosophical Context

Internet art could be traced back to some roots from aesthetic theories or art theories. Philosophers write aesthetics theories and philosophies of art, attempt to define what art is and the consequence of such definitions. Ideas of art from these writers apply to the viewing and processing of art. Writers from different philosophical perspectives have different definitions of aesthetics, or deny the necessity of ontological inquiries. I consider essentialism of art as Immanuel Kant (Kant, 1951; Scruton, 1995; Carroll, 1998; Cook and Kroker, 2001), Clive Bell (Bell, 1958; Higgins, 1996; Pope, 1998; Carroll, 1998) and Clement Greenberg (Greenberg, 1939, 1990; Jackson, 1997; Carroll, 1998, Pope, 1998;), family resemblance to define art as Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, 1953; Weitz, 1973; Scruton, 1995, Dayton, 1998) and Morris Weitz (Weitz, 1956; Carroll, 2000), interpretation and expression of art as Dewey (1958), and Danto (Carroll, 1993, 2000; Rollins, 1993; Danto, 1973/1998, 1997, 2000). Throughout I will draw upon the structures I have explored and work toward building an appropriate structure of Internet art that reflects somewhat systematically on the grounds I have mentioned.

Traditional aesthetic discourse

Aesthetics suggests a set of appositions that many writers in the postmodern camp attempt to avoid. It implies a sense of distinction between the beautiful and the ugly, high art and mass culture, the valuable and the unimportant. Yet it has been a western liberal art tradition that has fostered a great discourse of contemporary art. In order to discuss current trends of philosophy of art, it is unavoidable to discuss the development of aesthetic from the time of the Enlightenment era. It not only plays an influential position in a great deal of art making, but many notions from the grand narrative of aesthetics have been transferred into many different forms of presentation and representation on the Internet. In the following I exam traditional aesthetic discourse since modern to current development (Kant, 1951; Bell, 1958; Greenberg, 1939, 1990) in an attempt to make two points that 1) there are traditional aesthetic qualities in some works of Internet art; 2) Traditional aesthetic discourse is not adequate for many other Internet artworks, which will be the reason to call for other theories that transcend the discourse of aesthetic. In order to expose these two points, I will begin by reviewing modernists' aesthetic theories, later development of family resemblance (Wittgenstein, 1953/1998; Weitz, 1956), and Interpretation of art derived from Hegel's notion of art (Dewey, 1958; Dickie, 1974, 1984, 1993, 2000; Danto, 1973/1998, 1997, 2000).

Immanuel Kant. In order to expose formalists' traditional aesthetic discourses, I begin by reviewing German philosopher Immanuel Kant's notion of "subjective universal combinability" (Higgins, 1996). Immanuel Kant establishes aesthetic theory as the concept of universality based on the transcendental imagination. For Kant, the aesthetic imagination sends one back to the origins of aesthetic in the sensibilities of the natural world. This sensibility expresses itself in the desires, which share with the imagination the structure of calling to "life", what is not there. The senses are determined by the "natural" causality of fulfilling desires. The will, which is determined by these natural causes, is claimed by Kant to be free a priori as a transcendental moral agent whose chief characteristic is its disinterestedness (Cook & Kroker, 2001).

Clive Bell. Taking Kant's accounts of self-critique and disinterestedness, formalist critic Bell had asserted the essence of fine arts lay on the ineffable forms that can only be manifested by unique-medium specific attributes. In *Hypothesis of Art* (Bell, 1958), Bell discusses his idea of what constitutes a work of art. His major claim is that all that can be called "art" can be

identified by a consistent element existing in all works of art, which he calls “Significant Form.”

His reasoning follows thus:

There must be some one quality without which a work of art cannot exist; possessing which, in the least degree, no work is altogether worthless.

What is this quality? What quality is shared by all objects that provoke our aesthetic emotions? What quality is common to Sta. Sophia and the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto’s frescoes at Padua, and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero della Francesca, and Cezanne? Only one answer seems possible – significant form. In each, lines and colors combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combinations of lines and colors are aesthetically moving forms (p. 8).

This quality is what Bell calls the “Significant Form.” Later he cites examples of great artworks that have been accepted as such for years. The reason he argues is because the artworks have the essential “Significant Form.” He answers his detractors who view art as being subjective and not able to be defined objectively. They ask why it is that there is so much disagreement about art if it were objective. Bell replies, “We may all agree about aesthetics, and yet differ about particular works of art. We may differ as to the presence or absence of the quality x.”

Bell’s second major claim is that of the “aesthetic emotion” being superior to that of everyday emotions. He defines “aesthetic emotion” as, “a particular kind of emotion provoked by works of visual art.” He further states that not everyone has the sensibility to experience this emotion. Therefore, just because one cannot sense it does not negate the fact that it exists. The emotion is the effect from the appearance of “Significant Form” in an artwork. This pure experience as he calls it is contrasted to an impure one. An impure experience is where emotional response from an artwork is entangled and confused with that of everyday emotions.

Bell’s definition of art is based on the premise that all works of art contain within it a “Significant Form,” however that x as he alluded to is something even he can not objectively define. Although I agree that there is an “aesthetic emotion” associated with forms existent in an artwork, it is too presumptuous of Bell to then conclude that all artworks must necessarily contain significant forms in order to be called art. He also argues that primitive art being less representative are superior because they are more concentrated on forms, which would have been

good support except it is untrue. Most primitive artworks were made for functional purposes, ceremonial, religious, etc. In his search to objectify art Bell just makes the definition of art too narrow in scope.

Clement Greenberg. As well as Bell, Greenberg's aesthetic judgments has to be inspired by or received from the formal medium itself, the content of any media which is seen the only subject matter of art can be understood as aesthetic quality (Kafala, 2000; Carroll, 1998; Greenberg, 1986). The idea of pure abstraction, as Greenberg believes as the "concrete abstractness" thus is viewed as an orientation or aim for artworks in any medium. He argues that avant-garde art, as genuine culture, should detach itself from society by becoming autonomous and introverted. "The excitement of their art seems to lie most of all in its pure preoccupation with the invention and arrangement of spaces, surfaces, shapes, colors, etc. to the exclusion of what is not necessarily implicated in these factors (Greenberg, p. 9). In the article *Avant-Garde and Kitch*, he maintains that art produced in the context of new mass society is pressured by the urban masses to be suited to their consumption and is hardly genuine. He insists that the genuine culture is avant garde that preserves the value of past culture, detach from the industrialized society and reduce the market values (Carroll, 1998). Thus avant-garde art should be introverted as just about its medium itself. Insisting that contemporary aesthetic tastes as the introverted, his statement formalizes in language the quality of artworks, which eventually leads to aesthetic judgment as if quality were the property of medium and visual design.

Problems of formalism. If following Bell's "significant forms" or Greenberg the "abstractness", a proper Internet artwork must avoid communication with anything not essentially inherent to the Internet and computer technology, which might result in limited types of Internet artwork. For example, interface design that does not constitute other subject matter but interactivity, or design of programming in computer network that refers to nothing but the Internet itself. Carroll (1998) later has a thorough reexamination of formalist theories of art. Tracing formalists concern of disinterestedness/non-representation, he points out that Greenberg relies upon fragments of Kant's aesthetic theory, so did other formalist critics as Bell who deployed only selected elements of what maybe constructed as Kantian theory in order to discount other art. According to Carroll, what Kant deliberates in his theory is not theory of art (1998). The problem that Kant is concerned with is to offer an analysis of judgements of free beauty such as things like sunsets, "Put crudely, Kant wants to explains how, on the basis of my

subject experience alone, I can justifiably expect everyone else to assent to my judgement that the sunset is beautiful” (Carroll, p. 91).

Nevertheless, the notions of formalist’s aesthetic are well exercised among net artists. Instead of the paint and pigment, the digital binary data are seen as the origin for a “religious narrative of progress” and the digital imaging is seen as a dominant paradigm of representation (Makela, 1997). Using examples such as *Jodi*, Stabaum (1997) claims “network art should therefore be concerned with the network as form, semiotic agency, and concept, not merely with looking at pictures”. Stabaum proposes an “art-of-being theory”, which he considers time as element of aesthetic quality as he explains that “time in hypermedia is an issue of implementation and not representation, and must be considered carefully within the net.art context”. Robins (1996) believes that the most dramatic and significant development of the “post-photography” is the “capacity to generate a realistic image on the basis of mathematical applications that model reality”(p. 38). Yet Makela denies the essence of digital photography. He argues that the “paradigm shifts are cultural fictions” regarding the essence of digit. Positioning in the ground of postmodern as oppose to formalist, he addresses the problem of formalists approach toward art regarding technology as follows:

I am convinced that the process of making techno formalist art can be an extremely intellectual and creative practice—for those who do it. The problem with techno formalism is that it stands in a way of experience and critically engaging activity by those who spend their most time looking at or using the work. However, content free media art is not more responsible or conservative than any other content free art—or criticism (Makela, 1997, Techno formalism and polygon aesthetics).

Makela has made a point that formalist art could be merely enjoyable within certain circles. Even though *Jodi* is considered temporal esthetical as Stabaum attempts to theorize, its institutionalization heavily lies on the interpretations from computer gurus, which just proves that the disinterestedness is not really independent—it depends on the interests of those who understand how Internet technology works, how to utilize computer codes to challenge the Internet browsers. Interpretation thus plays an important role for examining Internet art. Dewey (1934), focuses on experiential whole that are ordered by their own individualizing qualities and self-sufficiency, offer a foundation to interpret Internet art. The aesthetic of *Jodi* in this case, does not lie on its intellectual ideas of challenging the browsers, the technical coding, nor does

the Romantic notion of “time as aesthetic quality”. For Dewey, *Jodi* would be communicative because its experience is social and meaning is a collective property of a community of experiencers.

Expression and Interpretation of Art

John Dewey. The article “Having an experience” is one of the chapters in John Dewey’s book *Art as Experience* and is key to understanding John Dewey’s philosophy of art. In this article, Dewey’s main purpose is to interpret art as experience. For Dewey experience is a key word that he uses in much of his philosophy. It goes beyond the Kantian notion of experience part of knowledge or interpretation of reality. Experience for Dewey is the undivided continuous transaction or interaction between human beings and their environment. It includes not only thought, but also feeling, doing, suffering, handling, and perceiving. Experience is the organic intertwining of living human beings and their natural and artificial environment. Thus, for Dewey, human beings are not subjects or isolated individuals who have to build bridges to go over to other human beings or the things of nature; human beings are originally and continually tied to their environment, organically related to it, changing it even as it changes them. Human beings are fundamentally attached to what surrounds them.

He then relates experience in general to that of art and proposes that it is the complete and unique experiences that make both object and event to be art. Using an idealist’s perspective to view the world, he explains what the pattern of various human experiences is, analyzes the structure of artists’ creative processes, and proposes art as experience. Dewey considers art experience to be the interaction of doing and undergoing. The word “art” is the ability of execution and it is from the producer’s standpoint. The other word, “aesthetic”, is the mental and is from the consumer’s perspective. These two activities are comprised in a relation that cannot be separated. A work of art is an intellectual product as a result of these two interactive activities.

Art, as experience, is the fusion of subjectivity and objectivity. The physical stuff, such as material, is the raw stuff that is worked by an artist transformed into medium, a mode of language, and an organ of experience and communication. Art is both subjective and objective. It is subjective in the mind, and objective on the performance of act. These two activities interact with each other as aesthetic experience, and it is this aesthetic experience that Dewey defines as art.

Family Resemblance

Ludwig Wittgenstein. Many contemporary thinkers of philosophy of art ground their theories from Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of language, the "family resemblance" account of concept. "...these phenomenon have no one thing in common which make as use the same word at all, --but they are related to one another in many different ways...it is because of the relationships, that we call them all language"(Wittgenstein, p.66). There is no common element to the various forms of language. He believes that the uses of "art" preclude any definition of art (Weitz, 1973). He uses the analogy of game that can be substituted as the concept of art. "Look and see", he wrote, "...we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail"(Wittgenstein, p. 66). What he suggested is an aspectual seeing. When a viewer pays attention to perceive an aspect of a thing, it looks different than it did before. Using a drawing of duck-rabbit, Wittgenstein demonstrates that images can be seen in different ways. It is multi-stable. The perceptual multi-stability involves seeing a structure supervene on the perceiving parts, and the structure is the center issue, the aesthetic evaluation. This "seeing as structure of perceiving" is very similar to the phenomena of family resemblance because the "seeing" is a kind of resemblance that consist the structure.

Morris Weitz. Grounded on Wittgenstein's theory, Weitz also argues that there is no art theory that has successfully composed a real definition of art (Weitz, 1956). He proposes that art is a revolutionary open concept. He claims that it is wrong in principle in thinking that a correct art theory is possible; and art in principle is open to revolutionary change.

Weitz rejects the problem where the statement purports to be a true or false claim about the essence of art. He writes that "My intention is to go beyond these to make a much more fundamental criticism, namely, that aesthetic theory is a logically vain attempt to define what cannot be defined, to state the necessary and sufficient properties of that which has no necessary and sufficient properties"(p. 149). Many theorists have contended that their enterprise is an absolute necessity for understanding and evaluating art. In Weitz's point of view, each of the theories of art such as Formalism, Voluntarism, Emotionalism, and Intuitionism...etc. is legitimate and serviceable as a closed concept of art but not complete. Each of them is only drawn for a special condition and purpose.

He thinks that the concept of art demands its openness. Instead to question “what is art”, he asks, “What sort of concept is art”. Deriving from Wittgenstein, Weitz uses the analogue of a game to compare with the concept of art. He quotes what Wittgenstein says about games, which considers that there is no commonality to all the games but instead similarities and relationships. He then concludes that “The problem of the nature of art is like that of the nature of games...if we actually see what it is that we call ‘art’, we will also find no common properties—only strands of similarities”(p. 151). He also emphasizes that it is not wrong with the evaluative use of art. What the author believes cannot be maintained is that theories of evaluative use of art are absolutely true and offer sufficient properties. Aesthetic theories should be read as summaries of seriously made recommendations to attend in certain ways to certain conditions.

Problem of family resemblance. Weitz offers two major arguments; the open concept argument and the family resemblance argument. He thinks that art is expansive and the novelty in art will always emerge. Yet his interpretation of game and art applied to family resemblance seems to suggest that the expansion and novelty in art is limited. It seems that it is conflicting and the contradictions have been questioned (Carroll, 2000). One may ask, what if, George Bush resembles a teddy bear in certain aspects, does it indicate that Bush and teddy bear are the members of the same family? Thus, the perceptual resemblance does not fit Weitz’s theory in this case. Rather, it suggests another solution that the family resemblance is not merely governed by the visual features as perceptual elements, but also the genetic foundation—the condition. Therefore, the genetic condition might offer a crucial role in the task of defining art. George Dickie and Arthur Danto explore this possibility in different ways. Vickie’s institutional theory of art, later he renamed as art circle, suggests a contextualized approach to identifying art. Danto proposes that the genetic status lay in the context of works of art, which are art theories and art narratives (Carroll, 1993, 2000).

Institutional Theory and Interpretation of Art

George Dickie. George Dickie (1974, 1984, 1993, 2000) tries to give a definition of art using the properties that are not included in the perceptual features of art works. In many of his essays, he clarifies common misinterpretations of his early work of institutional theory of art, which he later revised as “art circle”, which imply the “circularity” characteristic that traditional theories do not have (Dickie, 1984). Rather than discussing the essence of art that is isolated from cultural context, what he proposes is a structure of art, instead of the content of art.

Dickie felt that what every traditional theory attempts is to establish cultural phenomenon. These traditional theories are considered “quasi-institutional” yet none of them is adequate. Thus, he offers the framework, which is the structure that tries to avoid defeat by works such as the Fountain made by Duchamp. In the very beginning, he formulated the framework as 1) an artifact 2) a set of the aspects of which has conferred upon it in the status of candidate for appreciation by some person or persons acting on behalf of certain social institutions (Dickie, 1974). He specifies five definitions that he regards as the core concepts of the framework (Dickie, 1984).

1. An artist is a person who participates with understanding in the making of a work of art.
2. A work of art is an artifact of a kind of created to be presented to an artworld public.
3. A public is a set of persons the members of which are prepared in some degree to understand an object which is presented to them.
4. The artworld is the totality of all artworld systems.
5. An artworld system is a framework for the presentational of work of art by an artist to an artworld public (p. 80-82).

Dickie mentions that what he means by “Artworld” is culturally constructed, it is something that members of society have made collectively into what it is over time. Thus, his theory is a structural theory, purposely made to “gelled” the context of art therefore to reflect a broad scope of human culture and its history.

Arthur Danto. According to the family resemblance approach, a viewer can identify art by looking for the perceptual similarities between works already considered as artworks and new candidates of artworks. Yet, the problem of this approach is not compatible for explaining some contemporary artworks, such as Brillo Box and the Fountain.

Using several cases of “indiscernible” such as Pierre Menard’s Don Quixote, Andy Warhol’s Brillo Box, Danto asserts that the interpretation of works is determined by the context in which it is presented (Danto, 1973). Based on his Hegelian concept of history and Wittgenstein’s concept of art, and observing the art works in New York city, he proclaims that art has reached its end and he views it as a liberation for artists. Everything could be a work of art by transfiguring into proper circumstances. Carroll (1993) indicates that Danto’s philosophy of art is fundamentally a “variant of expression”. His theory of “Transfiguration” of a work of art is summarized as follows (Carroll, 1993):

1. A work of art is about something.
2. The aboutness is that the work of art projects some attitude or point of view.
3. The aboutness is by means of rhetorical ellipsis.
4. The ellipsis engages audience's participation in filling-in what is missing. In other words, every work of art demands interpretation
5. The missing part, rhetorical ellipsis, is in questions and the interpretations thereof require an art-historical context.

The context, in Danto's point of view, is generally specified as background of historical situated theories. Hence, artists must make statements by means of it, and the possibility of what will depend upon not only the artists but the history of art at that point (Danto, 1997).

Some other critics have pointed out that Danto's significant study is the art-historical turn he shaped as the chronicle story of the "New York City artworld (Barrett, 2000). He saw the victory of Greenbergian's abstraction expressionism evoking the grand crisis of modernism. Picking on Andy Warhol's Brillo Box, he makes distinctions between perceptually indistinguishable of the art-ontological problems from Anglo-American's history and philosophy of art (Danto, 1997). That is, the philosophization of art history is only valid in the case of contemporary art in New York City. It means the "genetic root" of the nature of art is merely categorized from New York contemporary art, many of his opponents may say.

Nevertheless, Danto and Dickie found the anxiety from Wittgensteinian's perceptual visual similarity and created a tension between essentialism and institutionalism. Negotiation in between is therefore a space for contemporary aestheticians to investigate the nature of art (Carroll, 2000). Dickie's framework of art circle structure the social external context that is requisite for creating art, and his theory of art is more sociological, more about a world of audience, artists, and their publics. Danto's theory of transfiguration is heavily emphasizing art-historical and art-theoretical internal context, and his world is more about ideas. Combining Dickie and Danto's approaches, which include cultural, social, historical, philosophical, internationalist contents, they move away from the essentialists's narrow defining of art, the modernists over emphasis on the autonomy and manifest of art, decontextualize the perceptual properties of art forms and set stage toward to a liberation of creativity in art and more possibility of theorizing art.

Between Essentialism, Expressionism and Institutionalism

The meanings, interpretations, even the definitions, and theories of art works vary from different artists to artists and viewers to viewers, and theorists to theorists. It deeply depends on the theorists' times, cultural and study backgrounds, philosophical perspectives, even their personal preferences. As sounds and images being transferred into tapes or nowadays as bit by bit traveling on the information highway, people query the existence of the spirituality, originality or as Benjamin puts, aura, of artwork. For Danto or many other writers, Barbara Savedoff has something to say about contemporary art theories (Savedoff, 1989).

...the object has more central role in the interpretation and identification of art works than is allowed by either Danto... There is no question that the importance of theory and convention in determining the identity of art works must be recognized, but recognition must not blind us to the equal importance of the object... (p.166).

Savedoff claims that the aesthetic properties of the work are generally essential and argue that over-emphasis on theory is destructive of good art criticism, however, the art in digital form seems very different—maybe because of the imagery's lacking of physical properties, or the audio sound does not sound as vivid as from the traditional instrument, more important, an original artwork on the Internet is qualitatively equivalent to the copy, which remains original still. In this case, Dewey theory that art as experience has offered a foundation for Danto's theory in taking the interpretation of a work to be determined by its art historical context. The internal historical context of Internet art in terms of essentialists is short and suffering from anemia. The descriptive evident, as the subject matter, the computer media, the form, and the relations among the three, are not easy to recognize for many audiences. However, if Internet art is observed in a broader context of the arts, it thus carries mass complicated meanings multiplied by many dimensions.

As sounds and images being transferred into tapes or nowadays as bit by bit traveling on the information highway, people query the existence of the spirituality, originality or as Benjamin puts, aura, of artwork. What would be the aura, the meaning, and the functions of art after the history of industry and post-industry, are discussed as following session.

Context of Art and Postmodernism

Bringing Internet Art to Life

In 2001 August, Internet artist Keith Obadike launched his Internet art performance on ebay, a popular online auction web site. The item Obadike intended to sell is his “blackness”. “Keith Obadike’s Blackness Item #1176601036” was the title of the item that Obadike put on *Ebay*. Without any imagery information regarding this item, Obadike wrote an illusive description of “what buyers would obtain in exchange for money was ironic but elusive references to the history of objectifying black bodies in the slave trade and the contemporary commodifying of black culture”(Fusco, 2001). Obadike had received various responses from web visitors, including European net.art curators. Yet this item on auction was terminated by ebay four days after he launched this performance on the web. *Ebay* informed him that the item “was found “inappropriate”(Fusco, 2001).

According to Fusco (2001), there have been many artists who have claimed that their selling items on *Ebay* are their artworks, and most of their actions are ironic on purpose. Yet Obadike was the only artist that has been heard whose sale on ebay was terminated by ebay. Obadike states his intention as follow in his interview with Fusco:

I was interested in making a project that dealt with commerce online. I was also very tired of the trend of net.artists posing as corporations and not really saying much. While watching what many were doing with net.art, I didn’t really see net artists dealing with this intersection of commerce and race. I really wanted to comment on this odd Euro colonialist narrative that exists on the web and black peoples’ position within that narrative. I mean, there are browsers called Explorer and Navigator that take you to explore the Amazon or trade in the ebay. It’s all just too blatant to ignore(Fusco, 2001, web resource).

Keith Obdike’s work is an example of Internet art that has moved away from the notion of traditional aesthetic discourse and the technology itself, an example that the medium is not the message. As Fusco (2001) has documented the Obadike’s work on the Internet, which the performance artist utilizes the Internet auction web site to create the aura that does not lie on the art form. Although there is no fancy website design, no specific computer coding, yet the “aura” of this work is created—from the text, the discussion, and the consequence from the performance

of artists. More important, artist's political concern has generated the meaning in the multicultural society of America.

As with every other type of art, the conditions under which approach of Internet art is practiced, the effects and the climate of Internet art are qualitatively different from artists to artists. Concerning the condition of Internet art, there are three categories that can be discussed under social context: the values expressed by Internet artworks, the positions of individual Internet artists in relation to communities, and the players of Internet art. All of these concerns are related to the communication of information infrastructure. As discussed, many writers point out that the image of artists as a social deviant (Bell, 1958) is historically recent and culturally contained (Braman, 1994; Anderson, 1995, 1997). With various human experiences under different time, space and domains, artists are "cross-dimensional glue that links the spiritual with the material, the past with the present, social continuity with the need to adapt and innovate" (Braman, 1994). Thus, Internet artists and their works of art are the sources that offer opinions toward human society, or as producers and consumers of ideology (Adorno, 1990). Taking the position to view that an Internet artist is the border crosser among systems of society, a source of complexity and of innovation, I then next discuss the ideas of postmodern theories in relation to the consequential development of contemporary art that have influenced the practice of Internet art in recent years.

The Divorce of Art and Aesthetics

Art historian David Hopkins points out that the crucial shift from an aesthetic model to societal model of the postmodern came with the French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, first published in 1979 (Hopkins, 2000). Lyotard's concept dismisses the grand narrative of styles with little narratives. He believes that the Enlightenment tradition that was derived from Emmanuel Kant of modernism does not stand on its credibility anymore. The society produces an enormous number of language games and different social groups speak for different interests.

Habermas nevertheless holds a counterpart vision of Lyotard. Being associated with the Frankfurt school, his roots are in the tradition of German thought of idealism. Worried that the rational mandate of modernity is in danger of being lost, he argues that the basis of non-coercive culture is communicative consensus among its members (Craig, 1994). Habermas laments for the withering of modernists, and suggests for the continuation of the progressive project from the

enlightenment era. As Barry states, Habermas is “simply one voice in a chorus which is calling for an end to artistic experimentation and for order...unity, for identity, for security” (p. 86)

Fredric Jameson believes that the artists in this philosophical stage would not endorse postmodernists’ pluralism, nor modernists’ universalism. He points out that artists, as culture products, are unavoidably bound to capitalism. Using Andy Warhol as an example, Jameson asserts that aesthetic and commodity had become indistinguishable due to the technology of reproduction. Art and commodity has fused and sponsored by commerce (Hopkins, 2000). According to Hopkins, “...Art was increasingly sponsored by commercial companies, leading to a new interdependence of art and advertising...avant-gardism was now a commercial signifier rather than a deeply rooted position”(p. 199). The social leveling has caused shifts in class values. The elite class and working class had been fused, as the result of crash of grand narrative led by modernists. “The refined cultivation of the aristocracy of the principled militancy of working classes, to which the avant-garde had once appealed, had become absorbed into an undifferentiated consumerist philistinism. Since enshrined academic principles and moral pieties also were no longer met by any opposition, it led avant-garde to speak for nothing. This results in the phenomena in the 1990’s, the atmosphere largely concerned with gender and identity politics, yet these issues were socially de-centered (Hopkins, 2000).

If the narrative theme that Hopkins depicts is true, post modernity has evoked an anxious mood with sliding signifiers floating around in contemporary visual culture. As a thinker of the dark side of the chaos, Baudrillard (Barry, 1995; Baudrillard, 2001; Jackson, 1997; Kroker, 2001) foregrounds the fiction of hyperreality. His approach, “reading the text against itself”, points out the eclipse between mass media and reality.

The Loss of Real

Observing the post-industrial society of America, Baudrillard claims that social sign production, with signifiers already detached from the references, float in free play as de-realized “simulacra”. Baudrillard is associated with what is well known as “the lost of the real”(Barry, 1995; Jackson, 1997), which indicates the mass media such as TV, film, advertisement in contemporary life have lost of the distinction between real and imagine, reality and illusion surface and depth (Barry, 1995). Substituting for representation the notion of simulation, he explains that sign has reached its present stage of emptiness in a series of steps. On the first stage, the sign represents a basic reality. The sign in the second stage distorts the reality behind

it. Next stage, the sign disguises the fact that there is no corresponding reality underneath—on this stage, the sign is a representation of representation. The last stage, the sign bears no relation to any reality at all.

The crucial point of Baudrillard's four-stage model is the third order, in which the sign conceals an absence, which conceals the fact that the supposedly "real" which it represents no longer exists (Barry, 1995). He is well noted from the famous depiction of Disneyland as both the model of third-stage simulation and a deterrence machine (Barry, 1995; Jackson, 1997; Stalbaum, 1997) "...Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the "real" country, all of the "real" America that is Disneyland... The imaginary of Disneyland is neither true nor false, it is a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate the fiction of the real"(Baudrillard, 2001, p. 175). His main thrust is that the model of the real has become more fundamentally real. He theorizes contemporary social space as one in which meaning and foundations of difference based on the real implode. In *Simulacra and Simulations* (Baudrillard, 1994/2001), He wrote:

It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory—precession of simulacra—it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map (p. 169).

Based on the notion of hyperreal, Baudrillard addresses that the implosion of the real and the power of the model has become the dominant social facts in the construction of existence and being, and simulation has become the leading process via which the "hyper-real" is intervened. Baudrillard's explanation of simulation as culturally central has influential consequences for the evaluation of art on the Internet due to the fact that the Internet is a major and expanding cultural center of simulation (Stalbaum, 1997; Kroker, 2001).

Nostalgia

Nostalgia for the lost object? Not even that. Nostalgia was nice in the way it sustained the feeling vis-à-vis things that have taken place and could also branch out to encompass those that could come around again. It was beautiful as a utopia, as an inverted mirror of utopia. This is beautiful in the way of never being fully complete, like a utopia never fulfilled. The sublime reference to origin in nostalgia is just as beautiful as the notion of the end in utopia. On the other hand, things stand quite differently when one is

confronted with literal evidence of the end (where dreaming of the end is no longer possible), and with the literal evidence of origin (where the dream of origin can no longer persist). Today we have the means to implement our origin as well as our end. Through archaeology, we excavate and exhume our origin; with genetics, we reshape and custom design our original capital; through science and technology, we are already able to operationalize dreams and utopias of the most idiotic kind. We assuage our nostalgia and our utopias in situ and in vitro (Baudrillard, 1992, *Hystericizing the millennium*).

Baudrillard's writings on aesthetics and postmodernity are concerned with the rupture in postmodern discourse represented by the collapse of normalizing, expanding, and positive cycle of the social into its implosive and structural order of signs (Kroker, 2001). As above, human's desire for the pure prolepsis has exteriorized into the processed world of technology. The normalizing nostalgia undergoes an inversion into a floating order of signs as endless recycles. In his recent essay "A conjuration of Imbecile", he compared contemporary art with French politics, which he believes is "the embodiment of worthlessness and idiocy". He wrote:

Resulting in two situations, both critical and insoluble. One is the total worthlessness of contemporary art. The other is the impotence of the political class in front of Le Pen. The two situations are exchangeable, and their solutions are transferable. Indeed, the inability to offer any political alternative to Le Pen is displaced to the cultural terrain, to the domain where a Holy Cultural Alliance prevails. Conversely, the problematization of contemporary art can only come from a reactionary, irrational, or even fascist mode of thinking (Baudrillard, 1997).

Baudrillard implies a sense of pessimistic bitterness regarding contemporary art: Artists float in the loss of "authentic historical awareness", lost in the collapsed sign system. Although he successfully characterizes the problem of contemporary art, Kroker and Cook (2001) point out that Baudrillard is "a tragic philosopher of a society as a sign-system" because "his writings are the mirrored reflection of the nihilism of the sign system they seek to describe" (p. 179). The nihilistic characters of his theory serves as destructive power to collapse the conception of real lacks the acknowledgement of human need—as human, we need contingent ontological conception of the real to live on (Jackson, 1997). Baudrillard's post-structuralism has provoked the deconstruction of the past yet his reconstruction is absence.

The Death of Author

In light of this concern, Roland Barthe's view from his crucial essay "The Death of the Author" empowers the viewers of art. In this essay, he announces the death of the author, rhetorically asserts the independence of the text and its immunity to the possibility of being unified by any notion of what the author might have intended (Barry, 1995). Instead, the text is free by its "very nature of all such restrains"(p.66). According to Barthe's approach, an Internet artwork, as viewed as an art text, the death of the artists is the birth of the audiences. The boundary between artists/audiences thus erased, audience's interpretation is a process of recontextualization. One might argue, how can such interpretation be valid? Believing in the absence of a fixed point in the de-centered universe, reality itself is textual (Barry, 1995). For post-structuralists, there is no truth of an artwork extant. Yet, in terms of art education, ethical consideration must be taken into the account. The following section therefore discusses different theoretical positions of art education in terms of the philosophical consideration of technology.

Field

What is Internet Art and what is not

Problems of Defining Internet Art

Attempting to define Internet art is challenging and possibly impossible. Its difficulty mainly stems from two sources. First, it is difficult to define art itself. There has been a long history of argumentative debate about what art is between philosophers, such as the argument between essentialism (Kant, 1951; Clive, 1958; Greenberg, 1990) and institutionalism (Dickie, 1974/1992, 1984/1998, 1993, 2000; Danto, 1973/1998, 1997,2000); some philosophers claim that art cannot be defined (Wittgenstein, 1953/1998; Weitz, 1956, 1973). Recent thinkers such as Jean Baudrillard believe that art is merely simulacra and worthless (Stalbaum, 1997; Baudrillard 1994, 1997). Secondly, the use of the Internet and computer technology is relatively new. Therefore many writers believe that since the technology itself has not yet crystallized, neither has Internet art (Ekenberg 1997; Anton, 2001; Dietz, 1999; Penny, 1995). Yet it does not mean that we do not know what art is or what Internet art is. The way it is understood depends on where we stand in relation to the developments of Internet art (Ekenberg, 1997; Stalbaum, 1997).

It can be approached from other arts and media tradition, such as utilizing the visual languages and strategies from photographs, literatures, cinema and such to organize information and structure the perceivers' experience. It can be discussed in its epistemological sense, its material properties such as computer technologies, the interface and the software. It also can be analyzed from a cultural perspective, which is multi-layered and functions in many dimensions.

What is Internet art can be first answered by listing its visual and physical properties that are commonly discussed as hardware, software, computer networks, and especially interactivity, which has been prevalent in many discussions regarding this topic. Robert Atkins, editor of "TalkBack", one of the first magazines about online art, wrote his explanation of "Online Art" as the following, which I consider to be part of the explanation of Internet art. He wrote (Atkins, 1997):

Online art is presented "on"—and designed for—the Internet; it must be accessed via phone lines from modem-equipped computers. Although myriad artists have recycled their output for online consumption, a photograph displayed in a virtual gallery on the World Wide Web remains a photograph rather than an online artwork...Some viewers confuse the Internet and the World Wide Web. The latter is a component part of the Internet; it is based on the hypertext technology that allows linkages to the other sites on the Web. This means by clicking a spot or a delineated word, or "hotspot," in one document, a "Web-surfer" can be instantly linked to a sound, graphic, or text file located on a computer anywhere on the Internet. Online artworks are not necessarily confined to the Web. They may also come in the form of e-mail or newsgroups (bulletin-board-like conference), although the Web's capacity for image transmission certainly makes it the format of choice for today's online artists...But the crucial distinction exists between media and online art: The new format is interactive, allows viewers to actually contribute to most works of online art...although interactivity has previously been incorporated into media artworks in the form of surveys or onto computer works that actually responded to viewers, never has a medium had such potential for interactivity (p.137).

Atkins's description of online art has successfully characterized the physical features that constitute many types of Internet art. One of the characteristic features, interactivity, has been widely regarded as a unique characteristic in many discussions regarding art and technology. Yet, interactivity occurs continuously in perceiving any type of artwork, whether as an artist

creating works of art or as a viewer perceiving works of art (Csikszentmihalyi & Robin, 1993; Dewey, 1958). Does Internet art carry such “potential for interactivity” is questioned, and will be discussed in the following sections.

Interactivity and Forms

Interactivity. Most artworks, in many forms, types, categories, and styles, whether contemporary or classical, western or eastern, contain an aspect of interactivity in many different ways from both artists’ and audiences’ perspective, physically and psychologically. From an artist’s perspective, John Dewey has a very elusive description of the interactivity that takes place both internally and externally (Dewey, 1958). In his famous work, *Art as Experience*, he points out that experience lays on the interaction of the “doing and undergoing”, the objectivity and the subjectivity of the artist. From an audience’s perspective, the viewing requires an audience to bring their structure to decode the messages from the artwork (Wittgenstein, 1953/1998; Csikszentmihalyi and Robin, 1993). With traditional paintings, photography, and other two dimensions imageries, the viewers need to pay attention to observe the figures, icons, colors, and composition to perceive the display. With the three dimension sculptures, the viewers are required to move around physically to experience the spatial structure. In both instances many inner emotional reactions and intellectual interpretations transpire in their minds. Many modern and contemporary artworks such as installation, happening, performance, place a demand on the viewers to restructure the messages from the works by participation.

It would be a mistake to identify interactivity as a unique character of Internet art for the reasons mentioned above. That interactivity is not a unique character of Internet artworks is not immediately apparent, since there is the visible component of physically choosing a link, moving the cursors around, and pressing the mouse buttons (Hazan, 1998; Manovich, 2001). When using the concept of “interactivity” to identify Internet art, it is very easy that the notion will be mistakenly interpreted as the physical interaction literally. The psychological process of “filling-in, hypothesis formation, recall, and identification, which are required”(p. 57) from users’ comprehension of the text could be misinterpreted as objective physical properties of the computer interface. However, I am not dismissing the physical interactivity of Internet art. I am suggesting that the physical interactivity cannot be seen as the only aspect of Internet art. Suzan Hazan also questioned the “border between an art experience per se and the underlying interface that governs it”(Hazan, 1998), “Do all artists need to design their own interface? Can such an

interface be the essence of an art experience? She asked in her article “Are the Engineers Holding Hands with the Artists?” The term “interface” in computer technology already suggests a sense of “interactivity”. She listed an example of artwork “I/O/D 4: The Web Stalker”(Fuller, Green, and Pope, 1997), which poses as a new form of Internet browser by dismissing the conventional browsers page metaphor. It displays links as a series of circular lines and relies on spatial references to refresh visual distractions from the html series of links, which had been accustomed to on the Internet (Hazan, 1998).

The “Interface” Hazan wrote is in relation to computer-based media. In other words, it is in the context of HCI, Human Computer Interface. The current use of HCI is interactive by default (Manovich, 2001). The computer interface allows humans to operate and process information displayed on the computer monitor. Once an object is represented on the screen, it carries the function to be interacted upon automatically. Thus, the concepts of interactivity and human computer interface are overlapped. What Hazan expressed is a question in terms of, an art experience that heavily lays on redundancy of “interface of interface”. In other words, the formalists’ concept of self-critique is challenged. Media theorist Manovich made a comment in regards to this concept of interactivity and human computer interface: “...to call computer media interactive is meaningless”, because it just simply states the basic fact about the computers (Manovich, 2001).

Guggenheim museum curator, Jon Ippolito, however holds a different point of view toward artists’ challenging of computer interfaces. He calls it as a creative concept of “misuseness”. Ippolito (2001) explains his concept of “creative” and “misuse” as below:

While managing technology is certainly a valuable skill—for artists and others—it’s not the same as creativity. When you manage technology well, you are simply carrying out the agenda of the designers of that technology. A composer who uses a car to drive to the concert hall is managing technology. But when Laurie Anderson composed a drive-in concert of motorists beeping car horns, she was being creative (Ippolito, web resource).

Ippolito’s applies the concept to decode artist Mark Napier’s Internet artwork Shredder. He explains that Mark Napier’s utilizing of Cascading Style Sheets, which was “originally intended to pin down the elements of a Web page so that designers could specify the same fixed page layout on different computer screens”, however, “turns this page metaphor inside out by swapping the placement of scripts and images to reveal what the designers have deliberately

concealed”(Ippolito, 2001). He then points out that although the misuse usually has practical value, sometimes the “misuse” can turn out to be in the norm. Therefore, it stretches human minds to accommodate what is not “supposed to be”, just as the role of artists in human society—as the border crosser among systems, a source of complexity and of innovation.

Forms. However, the objective of computer “interactivity” has been the key concept for many existing Internet art works now. The keywords that have been commonly used to describe Internet artworks such “hypertext, nonlinear narrative, browsers behaviors, codes” suggest the physical properties of the art objects and are seen as kinds of Internet art forms to a certain degree. Simon Biggs, an Internet artist who also writes about Internet art, explains his view of interactivity specifically for Internet art (Biggs, 1997):

The term interactivity can be used to refer to those works that feature some form of responsiveness to the reader, where that responsiveness causes the content of the work to be altered. Such an approach is in marked contrast to the unresponsive character of non-linear navigable work.”(Biggs, 1997, web resource).

Artworks *My boyfriend came back from the war* and *Jodi* are examples of this notion. In beginning to introduce these two well-known artworks as players of Internet art, it is necessary to be cautious to warn that I am not saying that the aesthetic quality of these two works simply lays on the physical interactivity from the hyperlinks. The artwork, *My boyfriend came back from the war* by Olia Lialina, utilizes computer interface interactivity from the artist’s design of navigation scheme presents opportunities to pursue multiple, intersecting threads, creating an interface on the World Wide Web. As users click the links, the action of selection, reading, clicking and viewing create conversations that become realized in the users approach to the interface. As Harris (1998) describes, the work “captures the flavor of a complex and personal situation in a presence that reveals anticipation, anxiety, hopes, mixed messages, and personality transformation, in what appears as a mixture of said and unsaid expressions”. Artist’s utilizing of images, words and windows presents performative characters and a sense of time as users’ experience. Users would feel the boyfriend’s presence as viewing the visual property that is divided into multiple static frames with the interactions with the work. “This piece works well, and integrates the medium in a way that doesn’t get in the way of the content and message”, stated Harris, it shows that the medium does not stand by itself in this work. Instead, as he point

out, it is the combination of message, content and interactivity all together as a whole that makes viewers' experience rich and interesting.

Jodi, a project developed by Jaon Heemskerck and Dirk Paesmans, is an example of a particular type of work that concerns the form, interactivity, and interface on the Internet. Many writers and artists who practice art on the Internet believe it is a well known accomplishment of the net art movement (Stalbaum, 1997, Packer, 1998; Bookchin, 1998; Weil, 1998). Instead of presenting a combination of images, words and frames as many other conventional websites, *Jodi* employs only codes that works in experimental fashion of Internet browsers and “bad codes” that was not intended by the engineers who designed for the browsers and language specification. As a result of the use of codes, *Jodi* creates a sense that the browser is an autonomous agent that stands on its own. The concept that lies behind this work is what Ippolito referred as misuse—and the misuse in this case is treated as innovation as avant garde artists' agenda toward art.

Further discussing the formalists' characters of artworks on the net, another example of “form” art on the Internet is a cyborg flat image created by Alexander, which although lies on a different concept is still viewed as a formalists work. The visual elements of the cyborg are various sizes of window scrolling frames, which are a function that comes from window browsers—which suggests that the “form” is purely referring to computer reproduction. The “form” here is conceptual. The artist's use of form is a visual language referring to modern western art history.

Regardless of the different view of “forms” of Internet art, “Interactivity” is merely an approach of Internet artists' creating works of art, instead of the new genre. Certainly, the examples above generate more than one single meaning as a form. They carry more complex meaning and connotation more than the form itself. Artists' making great deal of form and interactivity do not merely refer to the visible, it also has a relation connected to the interests of Human Computer Interface, which is seen as a structured system of the signs (Johnson, 1997; Manovich, 2001). HCI, which has been viewed as a metaphor that contains denotations of existing objects in human's daily life in hopes to carry efficient communication, has evoked many discussions in its relation to culture.

Steven Johnson, the author of *Interface culture*, analyzes elements displayed on computers by means of a semiotic approach (Johnson, 1997). Devising the elements into five

categories as desktop, windows, texts, links, and agents, he claims that western culture from the past to present has been filtered through the computer; especially the existing human computer interface which carries cultural significance. By organizing information in some certain ways, the interface provides a particular model of culture that is distinct from the others in the world. He notes, “ The interplay between past and future forms drives the creative process more than it impedes it. Interface designers have much to learn from the invention of Renaissance perspective, or the buildings of Frank Gehry, and interface critics have much to learn from the interpretative schools that have developed around those older movements. We need new language to describe the new medium of interface, but that doesn’t mean we can’t borrow some of our terminology from the forms that have come before it”(p. 19). In his approach of analyzing interface culture, Johnson believes that human-computer interface has become a key semiotic code of the information society. His claim that the computer interface has provided a particular model of culture is argumentative, however, despite whether the “interplay between past and future forms” drives the creative process more or impedes it more, artists have shown many interests and explored many ways in computer interface in terms of interactivity. As Benjamin Weil (Golonu, 2000), the curator of ada’ web, points out that various designs of interface reveal the fact that artists are highly interested on what the Internet can be used for, how it could change the structures of communication. However, Manovich (2001) points out an ironic point such as utilizing multiple links to generate multiple possibilities of reading, purport to erase the boundary between authors and readers, also can be viewed as another ultimate nightmare of democracy. Authors and readers are actually locked in to a prison-house of language. He sees that the desire of artists to externalize the mind can be traced from the project of Enlightenment in western history, which is related to the demand of modern mass society for standardization:

The subjects have to be standardized, and the means by which they are standardized need to be standardized as well. Hence the objectification of internal, private mental processes, and their equation with external visual forms that can be easily manipulated, mass produced, and standardized on their own. The private and individual are translated into the public and become regulated...Unobservable and interior processes and representations were taken out of individual heads and placed outside...What was hidden in an individual’s mind became shared (pp 60-61).

The perspective of Manovich was that the enthusiasm of many optimists' embracing of computers and networks was not a universal condition. Internet art is not universal. It varies upon different users perspectives, which are mainly caused by different culture or cultural background. Viewing computer media as cultural products of Western modernism, he sees it as endless recycling of past artistic styles and content. The forms and structure of thinking of 1920's avant garde artists have been embodied in the use of computer software. In his article *Avant Garde as Software* (Manovich, 2001), he claims that:

1. The old media avant-garde of the 1920s came up with new forms, new ways to represent reality and new ways to see the world. The new media avant-garde is about new ways of accessing and manipulating information. Its techniques are hypermedia, databases, search engines, data mining, image processing, visualization, simulation.
2. The new avant-garde is no longer concerned with seeing or representing the world in new ways but rather with accessing and using in new ways previously accumulated media. In this respect new media is post-media or meta-media, as it uses old media as its primary material (Manovich, 2001, web resource).

Reflecting the view from Walter Benjamin's idea of historical retroactive, he follows Fredric Jameson's usage of postmodernism as "a periodizing concept whose function is to correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of a new type of social life and a new economic order" (Manovich, 2000, p. 131; Jameson, 1998, p.15). Culture is no longer "new" since the nineteen eighties, which has been identified by some writers as the postmodern age. Artists have entered a stage of endless recycling and quoting from the past because the discovering and exploring of artists' styles and forms have reached its end, the media society is saturated. He summarizes that the visual culture now is "busy re-working, recombining and analyzing the already accumulated media material"(Manovich, 1999). Quoting on Jameson's words that postmodern cultural production "can no longer look directly out of its eyes at the real world but must, as in Plato's cave, trace its mental images of the world on its confining walls", Manovich adds that the "walls" are made from traditional media.

Now the "walls" apparently seem to be the domain ruled by postmodern ideas. Economical wise, it provides postmodernism a laboratory for experimentation and testing due to the situation on the Internet fits the ideology of free-market in Western World. From the stand of visual cultural, it is believed that "PC possesses depthlessness, schizophrenia, and exhibits the

death of the subject and the loss of historicity”(Mihalache 2000; Maitra, 2001). Internet art therefore at this stage seems as if it has been lost in an abyss of postmodern culture.

Theoretical Positions of Art Education in Technology

Technology Determinism and Substantive Theory

There are mainly two theoretical positions to look at Internet in terms of education. Feenberg (1991) has summarized two extreme theories as instrumental theory and substitutive theory to examine how technology performs in human society.

As he points out, in instrumental theory, technology is neutral and used for human intention. For instance, the computer graphic applications and the infrastructure of Internet are believed good and useful; these computer technologies don't have any implication for the goals. The goals are set independently from technology. Technology determinism is generally associated in this camp. There are two aspects in technology determinism. Firstly, there is only one direction and possibility of technology development in the progressive human society. In this view, the usage of Internet is unavoidable in order to advance human society. Thus, the human society has to adapt to technology—this is the second aspect of technology determinism. The history of avant-garde is an example of artists' attempting to adapt technology for the sake of the progress of fine art (Manovich, 1999). Artists such as Georges Seurat's approach of psychological theories about the effects of simple visual elements and colors on the viewer to determine directions of lines and colors in his paintings, Kandinsky's approach of synesthesia to completely abstract paintings were all about exploration of technology in art. Many modernists' art works were sets of psychological stimuli, similar to the ones used by psychologists to study human perception and the emotional effects of visual elements. Visual atomism acquired a new significance in the 1920s when the artists were searching for ways to rationalize mass communication. If the effect of every simple element is known before hand, so the logic went, it may be possible to reliably predict the viewer's response to complex messages put together from such elements. This approach was most systematically articulated by formalists. Formalist artists and designers, who were in charge of State art schools and research institutes, setup a number of psychological laboratories in order to put visual communication on a scientific basis. Yet formalism is highly deterministic in nature, it results in the other side of conclusion that is different from the initial idea of that means of art as technology is independent from the goal.

Believing that the means of art is independent from the end, formalists allow only one approach to evaluating the aesthetic quality of art and media. Its program dictates that the artworks are a totally autonomous material object and make no reference to anything beyond its boundaries.

There is the other camp's position toward art as technology, which view art and technology standing in opposition. German philosopher Martin Heidegger is an example of Luddite who argues that mean and end cannot be separated (Feenberg, 1995). Although technology is intended to serve the goal, it does not neutrally achieve the goal. Instead, it "technologizes" the society (Feenberg, 1991). For instance, whereas avant-garde attempting to extract fine art, modern art lost all its instrumental functions other than purely aesthetic interest. Medium thus becomes the message.

Current Practice of Internet Art and Art Education

Whereas the post-industrial society has adapted to changes associated with the change of visual culture on the Internet, many schools are have failed to acclimate quickly to the changes (Maitra, 2001; Gregory, 1997). It is possible that many educators and administrators still hold the belief of the separation between high art and low art.

Barrett points out that theory largely affects the field of art, such as art criticism in the art professions, art markets, and teaching philosophy in undergraduate and graduate levels (Barrett, 1990). It largely determines where programs of Internet art are located such as departments of design, fine arts, mass communication, human interface design, or computer science, and whether Internet art is offered separately or in conjunction with paintings, graphic design, photography, film and video or digital art. Theory affects whether Internet Art is taught as art or as communication media, whether commercial art is included like many design schools and mass communication departments do, and whether the history of computer art is taught as part of human technology history, through department of Technology and Humanity and by its own computer faculty, such examples can be found in some technology institutes. The experience of Natalie Bookchin 's conceptual art is an example. Natalie Bookchin, a professor and artist in California Institute of the Arts and a former member of the Net-art collective Rtmrk, developed a seminal piece through a coincidental collaboration with students and colleagues online (Berwick, 2001). She assigned students to complete a web site with three criteria for their project. She asked her students to build a site, which uses outside links as an integral part, construct a faux documentary of appropriate and official interface, and build a site which is new

media specific. From the given requirements she tried to see if it would “give the illusion of choice”(p.114). As the result, Rtmart usually presents many sites that could be seen as satires that mock western capitalism and politics. By coincidence, Bookchin’s and her students’ collective online assignment were found by online Heath Bunting, who posted the assignment to an online list which happened to include some of the most influential early Internet artists. These artists saw the project not as an assignment but a definition of Net art at the time and asked if Bookchin would let them do the same project and grade their works. Given this experience, Bookchin’s believes that “the work in the end is about what action is created”(Berwick, 2001). However, unlike painting, sculpture, photography, or even film, Internet art is still in its infancy. In other words, Internet art is lacking of internal context. Erica Matlow, who has taught graphic information design in the University of Westminster thinks that the technologies has impacted and transformed graphics education (Matlow, 1999). She suggests “the potential for an interactive graphic design theory which supports a non-linear, non-unified, and non-specific approach to the study of the theory, history and practice of graphic design”(p.107). Kiefer-Boyd (1997) proposes a “Postmodern approach” to criticism of interactive art for postmodern art education (1997). Victor Margolin (Margolin, 1995) in his introduction to the spring issue of *Design Issue* states that in order to grasp the significance of the new activities of design as it moves further into the realm of artificial “we must be continually changing our understanding of what design is whilst we are simultaneously preoccupied with establishing its historical narrative”(p.13). It is largely agreed that we are not simply creating new media of art, but are overhauling the foundations of culture (Binkley, 1997). “The consequences of digitalizing our discourses encompass not only expanded phenomena, but also extended interconnection between art and the rest of cultures as we interact more frequently and more fully with each other across geographic, political, and cultural boundaries”(p. 107). Although, whether Internet art crosses these boundaries or not is debatable, Internet art, as a type of art, is believed to be as any other art forms, which is culturally bounded instead of being a universal language (Penny, 1995).

Conclusion

The current position of Internet art is ambiguous, which has led to disparate approaches in art education concerning Internet art. On the one hand, Internet art can be rooted in instrumental theory, which gives a vision that it is a neutral tool for human's progression toward a material rich society. On the other, the role of Internet art can play a role as a mechanism of social repression. Art criticism plays a crucial role in educating art students to recognize the dual aspects. The dialectic approach in art education would enhance artists' well being in the abysses of postmodern culture.

The postmodern situation is one dominated by images and visual culture (Maitra, 2001). Internet art, playing a relatively new yet weighty role in visual culture on both sides of production and consumption, is under the influence of capitalism and the third-stage society pointed out by Jameson. Many evidences show that the shift of visual culture into postmodernity has evoked negative reactions. The writing of Jean Baudrillard is important. Although being destructive, his disavowal of the real nevertheless points out a problem and signals a direction for art educators to work on—living on the earth, humans need the meaning of authentic lived experience.

In this regard, Walter Benjamin's concern of aura is worth to pursue further. His notion of "authenticity" that traditional artworks carry no longer exists in mechanical reproductions. Mass productions through print, photography, and films are not authentic. While the original photograph, for instance, still keeps the authenticity, the copies of the original loses the quality from the process of mechanical transfer. Therefore he suggests the "aura" lies on the viewer's "distraction" and their absent minds. Despite the belief that his theory of the "aura" is doubtful, the "aura" of Internet artwork can be explained as the content, rather than the material itself (Jackson, 1997; Wolf, 1995). The aura of Internet art can be explained by Danto's theory that an artwork expresses content. "To understand the artwork is to grasp the metaphor that is, I think always there"(Danto, 1981, p. 72). To grasp the metaphor, or say aura, art professionals such as art critics have been becoming more important in the game of art. From this concern arose the questions of how the content is embedded.

John Dewey has offered the best fundamental theory for this concern from the process of creation and interpretation. An Internet artwork carries the artist's emotions, feelings and expressions as they are transmitted through the media. The elements of the artists' experience embedded in the work start with the emotions followed by the action of processing artwork, and the artwork may be expressed in various forms through the Internet. While audiences perceive an Internet artwork, the artwork offers a resource rich with meaning embedded within for interpretation. It thus generates complex meanings for audiences to understand in many directions. In a later chapter of this study, the artists' art experience as creative process are explored in order to investigate what inspires Internet artists and gives meaning to their lives, the nature of their communication engaged within it, and the nature of Internet art communities.

Jackson (1997) points out that "the postmodern sense of aura or aesthetic value of art is systemic in nature, indicating the social, political and economic dimensions of interpretation as well as the formally ascendant notions of beauty and taste. Equating aura of a work of art to its materiality is an oversimplification of the complex relationship of the content of a work of art to its affective nature" (p. 59). Lovink (2001) expresses his view toward new media in terms of technology, which explains the necessity for more articulate consideration of the conditions:

First of all they are to be used in an ironic way. We have warm, nostalgic feelings for authentic photo cameras, rusty magic lanterns and Telefunken tube radios even though they were as virtual and alienating, fascinating and global at their time. Still, we are such human, simple creatures who love to forget and are easy to impress with the "new new thing". I am the last to look down on the primal drive to curiosity. The promises of the new are tapping into amazing, undiscovered sources of libidinous energy. It is a lazy, even cynical intellectual exercise to deconstruct the New as an eternal repetition of the Old. Scientific and historical "truth" in these cases is not empowering today's tinkering subjects. I am all for a passionate form of Enlightenment which is willing to cross borders. The absolute, radical new is a deeply utopian construct, which should not be condemned because of its all too obvious shortsightedness. It is only when the mythological story telling is getting reduced to a rigid set of ideas that vigilance needs to be exercised for a belief system in the making. So, through redefining categories such as the old and new, we get a better understanding where analysis and critique could start in order to be productive. (Lovink, 2001, web resource).

The passage reflects the rationale of this research, following Lovink's call for redefining categories of the old and the new and understanding where analysis and critique could start. The next chapter, regarding research methodology, discusses the methods that I utilized to investigate the experiences and the practice of selected artists, who use the Internet as the primary environment for their digitally based art. Following the discussion of research methodology, chapter four begins with the qualitative studies of Internet artists in order to understand the meanings of Internet art, which may lead to redefining the old and new.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter of literature review, I set out the philosophical foundation to begin the investigation of Internet art. Using the Systems model of Creativity to map this study, the chapter grounds the discussion of Internet art from an empiricist's perspective. Viewing Internet art as a creative phenomenon, the discussions and reviews are considered two components of the Systems model: Domain and Field. In the section on Domain, Internet art is viewed as being diffused by different domains, thus, this chapter reviews literature from different contexts: Internet culture, social/cultural, aesthetic and philosophy, and those of art and postmodernism. In the section on Field, I reviewed various opinions from theorists, art critics, curators, and art educators who play the role of gatekeepers to filter the selection of novelty of Internet art. Also, the review of technological determinism and substantive theory in relation to art and technology is included and discussed so as to set a ground perspective for art education. The last section of this chapter is the Conclusion, in which I synthesize the literature reviewed in this chapter as well as set a pragmatic perspective to design the inquiry into contemporary artists' experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

To answer the primary research question, “What is the nature and quality of the Internet as a creative environment and artistic medium for selected contemporary artists?,” I conducted qualitative studies of three selected artists, wherein the artists’ conceptualization of Internet art , their creative process of making artworks, and their artworks were examined. Using Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996) perspective that creativity lies in the interaction between a person’s thought and a socio-cultural context, the goal of this study was not to define what Internet art is, but to identify and explore qualities of creation and expression through a qualitative study of three selected artists, their process of making artworks, their interaction with the environment of the Internet and the field of contemporary art, and their conceptualization of Internet art.

Because the essential nature of art and aesthetic has not being defined (Weitz, 1956, 1973; Wittgenstein, 1953), and the definition of creativity is viewed in terms of a systems model composed of the three elements of field, domain, and individual, my research thus is naturalistic (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). This approach allows this study to be concerned with contexts. I explored the details and specifics of each artist’s situation to understand in what contexts they came to being. The data gathered from artists and artworks were viewed from a holistic perspective, as integral parts of a current world in order to have a better understanding of the complexity of the art environment.

Framework of the Study

The methods in this dissertation for surveying Internet art included interviews of selected artists and descriptive analyses of selected Internet artworks, as well as reviews of recent journalistic accounts of art exhibitions and scholarly studies relating to art and the Internet.

This research attempts to investigate the explorations and practice of selected artists who create art in the environment of Internet. The primary question is:

What is the nature and quality of the Internet as a creative environment and artistic medium for selected contemporary artists?

In this investigation, I focused on the following specific areas of inquiry with three selected artists:

1. What is the nature of Internet art according to their practice and explorations?
2. How do these artists conceptualize Internet Art?
3. What are the expressive means used by the artists in producing digitally based art that is intended for Internet audiences?
4. What are these artists' perceptions of the Internet environment in terms of communicative and creative values?

To investigate the main research question and the related sub-questions, I observed selected artists' websites, conducted interviews with artists and provided descriptive analyses of selected works by these artists. A systems model was employed as a framework to structure the study. Utilizing Csikszentmihalyi's systems model of creativity as a framework for this study, the goal was not to define creativity of Internet art, but to recognize the interconnected components for understanding the experiences and practice of selected artists in the Internet environment.

Utilizing a Model of Creativity for Data Collection

In order to understand the creative potential of Internet art, Csikszentmihalyi's model of creativity was adapted to triangulate the data for this study as follows:

1. Domain: Review of aesthetics, theories and philosophy of art and art criticism of modern to current to sustain the study. Contemporary professional art magazines were considered resources to understand the current domain of art as well.
2. Field: Journalistic articles of curators, critics, educators, media theorists, and commentators who were considered to be the “gatekeepers” in this field of Internet art were also be taken into account as data. This was designed to understand the “filter” of this field, such as how the field fostered creativity, and how artists were nurtured from the field.
3. Persons and Internalization: Observations, descriptions of artists’ web sites, interpretations of artists Internet art works, and interviews were to be methods in gathering the data from selected artworks, web sites, and the artists who created the artworks. The technique of observation in this session was used to describe and interpret Internet artworks and web sites that were selected by the researcher from the categories that emerge from the data gathered from domain and field. The techniques of interview in this study which were utilized were face-to-face, as well as by electronic mail programs.

Understanding artists’ intentions, creative processes, and artists’ statements, is helpful and even necessary in some cases, in order to understand works of art (Barrett, 1990, 2000). Yet the perceptual facts in some cases need to be examined carefully and cannot be ignored. Works of art also can be the vehicles to understanding context and meaning (Anderson, 1995). By carefully observing artworks and interviewing artists, I hoped that selected aspects of the internalization of artists were revealed in this study.

Criteria for the Selection of Internet Artists

Due to the fact that Internet art is hybrid in nature, and the proliferation of published interviews and public Internet Art exhibitions, the types of Internet artists are wide-ranging. Three artists were selected according to (a) their use of Internet as an art platform; (b) their accessibility, and their willingness to participate in this research; (c) their diversity of use of media and study backgrounds; and (d) their status within the field of contemporary art. All of the

artists who participated in this study have been making art seriously and have careers as contemporary artists. Following is brief information about the selected Internet art professionals.

The first participant was Juliet Martin. Martin holds an M.F.A. in computer art from the School of Visual Art. She currently teaches design and technology courses and is developing an undergraduate program of digital design in Parsons School of Design in New York City. She is an active artist specializing in telecommunication programming, human computer interface, and painting and drawing techniques, who exhibits her works frequently.

The second participant was She Lea Cheang. Cheang holds an M.A. in cinema from New York University. Cheang has been working as a full time artist since the late 1970s. She has been living and working in New York City for more than twenty years, and currently she travels to participate in invited exhibitions around the world in major cities. She also has conducted large Internet art projects with major contemporary art museums internationally since the 1990s.

The third participant was Michael Oliveri. Oliveri is the chairperson of the digital art program in University of Georgia. He holds an M.F.A. in new genre from University of California, Los Angeles. He has been working in many different fields and with different media as an installation, sculpture, film, and web designer. Currently he is an art educator who teaches digital art courses, as well as a practicing conceptual artist who utilizes various media such as video and Internet technology.

Setting

In order to gather the descriptive data of Internet artworks, I (a) observed and interpreted selected artists' web sites and artworks installed on the Internet; and (b) conducted interviews with selected artists face to face and by electronic mail programs.

Interpretation of Internet Artworks

One recent Internet artwork or artist's web site from each selected Internet artist was interpreted following the analysis of his or her interview data. The strategy of interpretation was based on Anderson's cross-cultural approach of art criticism (Anderson, 1995). The four main questions to be answered when viewing artists' works were: 1) what is it, 2) what does it mean, 3) what is its value, and 4) what is it for. These four steps led me to gather data from the artwork

and address each artwork in its context. Although all the selected artists in this study are considered contemporary American artists, their works were examined by the approach in which “what is it for,” or the contextual examination is significantly important. In this study, the interpretations of artists’ artworks or web sites were based on my observations of the artworks along with comments derived from interviewing the artists. The URL of Internet artworks are listed in Appendix D. However, many artists relocate their artworks on the Internet due to the reasons of economy or administrations, and the URL may not be valid now if any of the artworks have been relocated by the artists.

Data from Interviews with Artists

By interviewing the artists both face to face and through electronic means, I was able to gather extensive data about their experiences and concerns with Internet art. These data were categorized according to the research question and sub-questions as outlined above, and led to conclusions about the individuals’ experiences which in turn led to my own conclusions about Internet art and related issues. These artists and their experiences cannot be construed to represent those of the entire, wide range of Internet artists, but they did provide a rich source of specific data from which specific (not generalizable) conclusions and implications were drawn, against the backdrop of the review of literature and the interpretations of their artworks.

Summary

The methodology discussed was adapted from the systems model of creativity developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1996), of which is comprised of three main components: domain, field and persons and internalization. By using this methodology I was able to frame Internet art within a “domain” particular to it, as borne out from current literature. Furthermore, I filtered by “field” to gain a better understanding of the contexts in which Internet art resides. By interviewing selected artists both face to face and via electronic mail programs, and observing and interpreting artists’ works installed in the Internet, I hoped to find further meaning, insight, and essential qualities through my own insights and those of others. Lastly, this study did not attempt to define what creativity or what Internet art are. Instead, it was designed to offer meaningful findings of a

descriptive and analytical nature that could be helpful for modification and development of postsecondary studio art programs in technologically based environments.

CHAPTER FOUR

ARTISTS' INTERNALIZATIONS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES

Introduction

In the literature review of Chapter Two, I provided a philosophical consideration of art in terms of the systems model of creativity, which views Internet art like Creativity (i.e., emerging from three components: domain, field, and individuals' internalization). I have discussed Internet art within the component of domain as defined by social contexts, aesthetic and philosophical contexts, and postmodern culture, and the component of field as defined by reviews from art curators, media theorists, Internet art commentators, and art educators.

In this chapter, I present the internalization of three selected artists' experiences of practice in art with Internet technology. The term "artists' internalization" refers to the third component of Csikszentmihalyi's Systems model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), in which the creative individual uses symbols of given domains, and sees and creates new pattern of ideas, whose novelty is selected by the appropriate field. This chapter includes a discussion of the interviews conducted with three such contemporary artists working in the environment of the Internet in 2002: Juliet Martin, Shu Lea Cheang, and Michael Oliveri. Due to the proliferations of published interviews, exhibitions, and awards from major art institutions, She Lea Cheang is considered an established artist, and Juliet Martin and Michael Oliveri are considered emerging to mid-career. The selection of criteria was based on (a) their status within the field of contemporary art; (b) their use of Internet as an art platform; (c) their diversity of use of media and study backgrounds; and (d) their accessibility, and their willingness to participate in this research. A brief selection of professional information of each artist is included in Appendix D.

In three sections, each of which corresponds to one artist, I coded the inquiry with six categories: demographical information, process of creating artwork, the medium and expressive

means, conceptualizations of Internet art, the environment of Internet technology, and description/interpretation of artist's work.

Inquiry of Internet art professionals

Juliet Martin

Demographic Information

Juliet Martin is the youngest of the three selected artists I have interviewed. She is an emerging artist based in New York City, and has been teaching in the Design and Technology Program of Parsons School of Design. She holds a B.A. in visual art from Brown University and an M.F.A. in computer art from School of Visual Arts in 1997. Martin's works have been reviewed by many digital art magazines since 1996, such as *NY Arts* (Wands, 2001) and *Journal of Digital Information* (Walker, 2000). Her works have recently been featured by Rhizome, an online new media art organization based in New York. She has exhibited in the European Media Art Festival in Berlin, Germany, Stephen Gang Gallery in New York City, and Museum of Image and Sound in San Paulo, Brazil. The face to face interview with Martin took place in New York City.

Trained as a painter from her undergraduate study, Martin's interest in digital art was first sparked by viewing a Peter Rabbit CD-ROM shown to her by her mother. As she described her initial interest in computer art, seeing the rabbit jump around on the computer screen was amazing to her at that time, which prompted her to apply to graduate school for computer art. "When I started graduate school, it was just as the web was just starting to take off and so one of my classes was in the web and they showed us what you could do with it," she recalled. She found the communicative aspect of the web medium exciting, because of its unexplored potentials. It was also at this time she started to create hypertext Internet artwork. One of her initial hypertext works, "Drowning Girls are Sexy," a short, simple literary artistic creation is a puzzling event interwoven by five first person narrators as "She," "He," "They," "Us," and "I," incorporated by images of fish.

Many of Martin's works deal with feminist issues, yet she prefers to consider herself first as a person rather than a so-called "woman artist." She stated about her position when talking about the conceptual content of her work:

...I do consider myself as a feminist. Um, although while my works deal with feminist issues, I'd like to consider myself a person first instead of a "woman artist." You know I don't want this to be a qualifier. So speaking, you know, well, a woman artist, compared to an artist, um, although a lot of these issues that I deal with definitely would fall under a feminist's umbrella, trying to confront sexuality, and look at how the perceptions of sexuality can be changed through language and through approach. I also try to look at a more exposed view of experiences women may have, and sort of expose what it may feel like for women to go through an experience that one might not want to talk about normally.

Martin's art educational experiences have been very supporting and encouraging. She has had very intensive learning experiences in art since beginning at a young age, and she believes that her learning experiences with traditional media in painting, sculpture, and ceramics benefited her creating artworks in the environment of computer technology. She said:

...I think having a background in aesthetics, that I had sort of, learning the visual language, really help me to move into a place that I could adopt that language to fit the computer aesthetic itself. And it really allowed me to change things so I could make them into what I want it to be. I already had a voice that I could sort of mold and sculpt within the computer environment. And one reason why I found it very helpful is I feel there can be a problem with a lot of Internet art, where aesthetics aren't really considered. Where it's very conceptual and I found aesthetics to be terribly important to my work, is sort of gives it more of an expression than just a few words per se. And for myself, it just enriches my work.

Two instructors she met in high school and college have profoundly influenced her engagement with the making of art. One is her high school teacher who gave her a safe environment to freely explore various aspects in the media of art, and the other is a college professor who encouraged her to express her voice as a female. Martin recalled herself as being "very shy and didn't feel comfortable talking to people" when in high school, and the art class was a place she felt she could express herself without criticism. Another professor, Jane Galleon,

whom Martin described as incredibly influential to her, “was crazy ... really encouraged us to look inward toward to what we truly believed in, and she really helped me find my voice with regard to women’s issues. And you know we also did also crazy pieces and explorations of feminism and it really just seemed like a very natural thing once I was able to find that part of myself, it was a very natural direction to go in.”

Process of Creating Artworks

Emotional aspect. Martin feels that when her ideas start to come together and she can foresee the silhouette of the pieces, “when I start to get a vision of what the piece is going to turn out to be like,” that this is the exciting and mesmerizing moment that keeps her going. She thinks that the moment is the most satisfying and rewarding aspect of her creating Internet artworks. “I’ll get really, really excited, and I’ll get this surge of energy and it comes from creating the work itself, having that moment of passion, and it’s a great rush, it’s an incredible feeling and it really keeps me going.”

Technical and creative process. Martin’s believes that her creative process and technical process work simultaneously with each other. She said:

...I think that the creative process, I really believe if it works on its own, it can very much not be incorporated very well with the technical aspect, and same vice versa, you know, if you do the technical part first and then you do the creative part they end up just looking like they’ve just been pasted on top of each other. So I like to work both of them together as much as I can.

When creating a hypertext art piece, Martin usually has the pieces of text and images she made. “I made the images first. I went out into the park and drew trees, and then I took my camera at home and scanned my body, and I combined the drawings of the trees and the scans of my body,” she said. After creating images from drawing the trees and scanning her body, she reexamined the imageries and thought about what those images meant to her. “And I decided that was really dealing with bringing an organic element into computer art, which I think sometimes is lacking and it’s a very literal translation, but I think it’s almost necessary at this point.” In attempting to translate how the images bring organic elements to computer art, she started to write pieces of texts and link these pieces together. She intimated that the writer Shelly Jackson’s works had a great impact on her. With the inspiration from the feminist writer, she then started utilizing web authorizing software to incorporate texts, ideas, images, and links.

The center of Martin's process of making Internet art pieces is the medium of the web itself. It has allowed her to manipulate creative thoughts and techniques at the same time with and each step influencing the next. She explained:

I wrote the text and linked them and made the website at the same time. So being able to sort of collaborate the technical aspect with the conceptual aspect was very important to me. It sort of folded in together. Then I started to incorporate the images which I had made into the hypertext piece, into the web pages so now they have images and text on them. Now I am in a place where I am trying to make the rhythms of the piece more smooth. Because right now it is very repetitive, you go from text to text, it's very literal, basically it's just repetitive. You go from place to place to place and there's no really no real bite or change. So I have been making these changes in rhythm through better choices of shorter text and more accent with regard to the language.

Frustration and obstacles. Martin recalled one of her frustrations from her past experiences, which has significantly changed her point of view toward technology while working on a large one-year project that heavily involved complicated computer programming with the computer language Java. After a year of hard work on her master's thesis with Java, the version of Java with which she was working was updated making the version she worked with obsolete. Thereby her work was rendered un-viewable on the Internet. "It really made me almost anti-technology," she said. The frustration made her think about what technology could and couldn't do. "I would say it really put me off to developing very complex pieces of work, technically. Because there is so much uncertainty with the technical aspects of it, but I like to work with very sure things with web technology." Although Internet technology has been rapidly evolving, Martin prefers to work with technology that has been stabilized. She explained what she believes after the negative experience:

It's not gonna be the technical things that carry the pieces. You know, you can program the most complicate bells and whistles around, and it's not going to make a piece interesting, if you don't have an idea, a concept, and a creative aspect to it. It's lost. And, I think if the idea is strong, and the technology is simple, you will have a much better chance of it succeeding than vice versa, which doesn't mean that I don't want to use the technology to take advantage of it, but I don't want technology to be the piece. And I guess my experience with my thesis, really made me aware of this. Because I feel like I

got so caught up with the technology that I forgot about having people being able to see the piece.

The medium and the expressive means

Subject matter and conceptual content. The conceptual content of Martin's work includes themes dealing with body and sensation, particularly in relation to females' autobiography. Martin gave me an example to explain her process of making Internet artwork. "Hyperbody," a very recent work that she has been working on, is a hypertext piece that she intends to confront the idea of sexuality. She explained, "It's about sensation on the body and it's about body parts." Although she has expressed that she would rather be considered as "a person than a woman artist," she agreed that she has been dealing with feminist issues, especially sexuality, body, sensation and the concept of autobiography. Language plays as important a role as imagery in her works because she tries to "appeal to someone's sense of language, and experimentation with words," yet at the same time, she attempts to present images that are "challenging and exploit feelings." She also attempts to challenge the notion of "autobiography." She said:

...A lot of the pieces I do, have to do with confronting sexuality in a different way than you would think of it beforehand and I also try to deal with the concept of autobiography, and reexamine what is autobiography and when you think a story is true, so if I tell you a story about the time that I went horseback riding, when are you going to start thinking it's true. And I think that's even carried out even more so on the web, because of the nature of the medium there's this recognition of truth right away even though it may be totally contrived. And so when I am writing things or when I am drawing things, I am trying to convey a sense of autobiography, that they may be totally constructed. So, you know, there is a piece that I did about a woman who's raped, and it was totally made up. But it was supposed to come across as this voice telling, you know, being honest and true about an experience that happened to her and I've had people think it was me that I was talking about. You know think that was my experience. And in a sense it is my experience but that physical thing did not happen to me. And I guess I look at that along with feminist issues.

Aesthetic consideration, spirituality, and transcendent experiences. I asked Martin if she could explain her aesthetic consideration or spirituality when creating pieces of Internet art. Martin took the term "aesthetic consideration" in two different ways, one is aesthetic

consideration in the visual properties of her works, the other is in a metaphorical way. In response to the aesthetic consideration in visual elements, she expressed that “Oh yes, very much so.” She felt that there was a problem with many Internet artworks in that the aesthetic wasn’t considered. While her works were very conceptual, she found “the aesthetic to be terribly important” to her works because it plays an important role in her expression. As for aesthetic consideration in a metaphorical sense, she merged it together with spirituality and transcendent experiences, and she paused to ponder for a while before she replied that there was a spirituality which she defined as her own. “I don’t have a specific goal and things I look toward per se, but there is a sort of, inner peace that I would say that I am looking for. I’m looking to be at a place where I feel comfortable about myself and comfortable with my works,” she said. She felt that she had not found a comfortable place yet, and she attempted to communicate with the uneasiness. Or in her words, “I am uncomfortable, you’re uncomfortable, let’s all be uncomfortable and talk about this as compared to being sort of satisfied let’s say, with what I am with myself. It’s become very psychoanalytic but at the same time not some sort of spirituality that I’m looking for and I say it is a part of my work, it is sort of, how I approach the “goals” in my life.”

Martin intended to express the feelings that people have. As a woman, she tried to convey the feelings she felt inside that were communal to other people. An example, she made an online art piece which allowed audiences to read a poem she wrote while taking a survey and reading the results. “I wrote these little poems as sort of outlets.” She told me that she was experiencing tremendous pressure at that time, so she attempted to share her feelings with audiences without divulging her personal life. And the desire of conveying the uneasiness of people’s lives, was one way of her approaching the goals.

The effect of Internet technology. I asked Martin if she felt that the use of the Internet and digital technology affected her creating and expressing through her works of art, and she replied “Yes” without any hesitation. In her own experience, she felt that the Internet and technology definitely influences the inspiration. “Because it is always there, it is always part of what I am thinking about, whether I want it to be or not,” she said, and gave me an example of how Internet technology affects her creating artworks:

For awhile I was doing these drawings, and I was thinking ‘Oh I can animate this on the Internet, and they can become a cartoon, and then I can make them into a web site, and

they can be this, and I got very excited about it...I just, just feel so passionate about using that medium. And I really feel it can really push me forward in directions I normally wouldn't go.

She reiterates how different the creative processes and expressions are from the other mediums, "It also is structured enough in its own wierd abstract way, that it keeps me going, you know, it gives me a goal to aim for. It's like tackling that technical piece with a creative solution is a very challenging thing to me and a very exciting thing to me."

Conceptualizations of Internet Art

She tends to think about Internet art conceptually, but also about the "passionate part of a piece" in what brings audiences toward an artwork. She explains why "concept of an artist" plays an important role in an artwork:

What I was saying about the artwork's being what is defined by the artist is really what comprises a good piece of Internet artwork. What I would say to my students 'if you can defend it to me, then I will give you good grade'...If they can give me a good reason of why they did what they did, and convince me that this is what they believe in, and this is why they do and what they do. That would mean so much more to me than a little package about what supposedly is exactly what art should be.

Martin also pointed out the difficulty of making an Internet artwork piece conceptual. Due to the external context of Internet art, if there is no "passionate part" expressed though the piece, it would be difficult to evoke responses from audiences. She believes that "passion" is the part that gives audiences an aesthetic encounter, without it the viewing experience might just consist of "thinking it's a great idea and then forgetting it." She further explained the reason why a piece of Internet art's being "conceptual" and "passionate" is especially crucial but difficult to achieve:

...And being such a way that, you can defend yourself with the work, but also the work stands up on its own. I think the work should be able to stand up on its own to be able to survive without the explanation as well. If it can't survive without that explanation, it is going to be in trouble. Because in the Internet, it is such an anonymous medium, then if it can't stand on its own, you're really in trouble because you are not going to be there to defend it, you are not going to stand next to your piece saying this is what it's about.

There is not going to be a gallery owner saying 'this is what you should be feeling', you

know, your piece is going to be there by itself, but that's why it is so attractive about the medium, it is this anonymous nature you can create very safely. Because of that you also have to create things very carefully.

External context. The optimal way for audiences to experience Internet art as Martin's way is very similar to Happening. She describes how she considered the optimal way of encountering Internet art for the Internet audiences:

At their home, by themselves, on their computer, at three in the morning, just surfing on the web and looking for things, very randomly and coming across a piece of art by mistake, almost, and then experiencing it very naturally and in a very curious way, as compared to, going to the gallery and standing there with the computers in the gallery, looking at the work and being pushed off the computer because there is someone else is waiting to look at the piece of art.

She recalled her experiences of seeing Internet art in a gallery setting, which she believed not to be an ideal space to exhibit Internet art. "I don't think that galleries right now are a good way to experience Internet art. I think there is a personal place at home for the piece as well. As for the person and, I think that's very important to experiencing the work." In order to view Internet artworks, the one to one connection between viewers and the Internet in a personal space is very important, and it is very difficult for an open space gallery to create such an environment for the audiences.

Functionality and quality. Martin believes that Internet artworks do carry functions and qualities that are different from other conventional artworks. She pointed out that the "structure" of the web is the uniqueness that makes Internet art different from the others. She explained, "I'm using the web for its branching capability, being able to have a structure where you know, a place that you are at, and then you have choices of going to other directions but it isn't decided for you, cause you have you many links you can choose and so you can go in one direction or you can go to another direction, and you have all these choices available for you, and that's the sort of pathway which I don't think you can do the same thing in painting."

Forms of Internet Art. Martin believed that Internet art comes in many different forms and it's still new, many questions haven't been answered, and that's why being able to create Internet art is an excitement to her. She considered artists as mediators of what Internet art should be: "...with any art, I think that the artist defines what the art is, you know, if Jeff Koons

says this sculpture of this baby chimp is a piece of art, and someone says this is a piece of kitch, you have to take it for what the artist says it is.” And she gave me a further example she saw on the Internet, in which the artist claimed it to be a piece of Internet artwork:

I don’t remember the artist’s name, but it was almost just documentation of what art is. I mean it didn’t seem like a piece of art, it seemed like a research paper... It is a paper on the Internet but this artist considered that a piece of art. My reason of bringing up that example is I wouldn’t think of that as a piece of art. But he says “this is art” and I think that’s ok, I think that’s the only way you can really talk about art. It doesn’t mean we won’t criticize it, it doesn’t mean I really like the piece I saw today. But, I think if you don’t have an open mind with regard to what you can accept as art, you are really going to be screwed (laughing) and I believe the same with Internet art.

The Environment of Internet

Online environment. Martin has an ambivalent feeling toward Internet art communities. She has joined several art exhibitions online and her works have been well discussed among the different online communities, yet when asked if she is involved with any Internet art communities, Martin replied “No, I am sorry” right away, yet she paused and seemed to hesitate for a few minutes. Then she said:

I would say I have had very mixed feelings about the online communities, the online art communities, I would say that, a lot of it is very male oriented, and very much dominated by men’s works, and I think that’s a shame. I think that’s too bad. I think it’s very unfortunate that it’s a real loss to the medium, and it really makes no sense in a way, because it’s a new enough medium that men and women should have equal opportunity online. And I don’t think it’s openly intentional, but I do think there is a tendency towards favoring men’s work, and with regards to that community I mean I have been in situations where the sort of white male has really dominated the community that I have been part of.

She recalled one of her experiences during an online exhibition that discouraged her from being active among online art communities. “I was in a show, a group show, and there were two women and six men and that’s unreasonable and that makes no sense. And it was really strange that the ratio was so off balanced. So, I would say as much as a community as I can say I am a

part of it. But in a way I don't feel I am a part of that community; it's very hard to feel like you are a part of something that's so separated."

Offline environment. The online unbalanced phenomenon between male and female in the field of Internet art can be traced back from the offline learning environment. Martin talked about her schooling experiences when she was in the computer art program:

I can look back to when I was in graduate school, and I know that there were more men than women in programming classes, and more women in my aesthetic classes than men, and the people who taught the programming classes were men and the people who taught aesthetic classes were women. So it does make a difference of who are your role models, you know, if you have a woman, a strong woman who is a programmer, you know, you are going to be much more likely as a woman to endeavor into programming. And same with aesthetics, if you have a strong male who is interested in aesthetics, you are going to have a much more likely chance of men being interested in studying aesthetics. With the stereotypical role models, it is very hard to explore different avenues. I mean, that's a problem I would see.

Interpretation of Martin's work

"Instant Future" is one of Martin's artworks installed on the Internet, and the work has also been collected by Rhizome.org artist database. As a viewer visiting the first page, I am instantly confronted with her animated looping image of a hand-drawn rabbit, with a text-link lying below the looping rabbit, "Your future is a rabbit-moon-guilty." Clicking on the text link, I then enter a web installation art piece with capricious linear narratives and Dubuffet-like hand drawing animations.

The way Martin utilized Java to manage the artwork was ingenious. The first click calls JavaScript to open a new window that is visually connected to the looping rabbit page. The new window browser hangs on the top of the screen with an image of a lined cloud and a whimsical hand drawing of a man atop a pitch-dark background. While the rabbit in the first window continues its circular motion on the trace of the moon, clicking on the image of the hand drawn man starts the narrative with scrolling handwritten texts and free hand drawing. "He pierces with a contact-paper gaze of your insecurities and dental desire," sentences and sentences swim horizontally across the window and the rabbit keeps looping forever, no matter anywhere I click on the sentences. Clicking the sentences, the narrative continues with another black and white

line drawing. I was able to read through the first persona narratives by clicking on every image and texts on the HTML pages.

Unlike many of Martin's other non-linear narrative Internet art pieces, "Instant Future" is a linear story. Reading through the sentences and images make me feel as if I am reading someone's diary or sketchbook with quick jotted down self-reflection and secret free hand pencil drawings depicting a psychological state and segments of life experience of the narrator's being as a woman. "Tomorrow is eternally inescapable," reading through the texts and images as many flashbacks of the narrator, the rabbit still keeps running endlessly across the dark on the bottom of the window as the last message showing on the screen, "my overdoses of disappointment when I didn't drown from the tears was about 24 sleeping pills, but the sun did come up next morning."

Her management of the technical and aesthetic aspects of this piece is skillful and clever. The use of JavaScript and animation does not distract my focus on the work yet creates a dynamic dimension to the message expressed. Martin's work carries a very personal voice to the Internet. The images and texts suggest a strong sense of human's feeling and expressive emotions. As Martin says, she believes that bringing the "organic feeling" and traditional aesthetic elements to the Internet is very important. Unlike many other cookie cutter images circulated on the Web, "Instant Future" is especially charming. It brings a woman's autobiographical segments to a very male oriented environment.

Summary

Martin strongly believes that the Internet is not only a brave new medium, but also a platform, an exhibition space for both artists and audiences. Possessing a background in traditional art media and familiarity with contemporary American art languages combined with the skills of Internet technology and computer languages, she projects a female voice on the Internet to communicate with Internet audiences. Although she is young, she diffuses an aura of passionate expression through her works. Martin's thematic inspiration of the linear and nonlinear narratives of women's autobiographies, as well as her creative processes which encompasses emotional, intuitive, and technical, mathematical aspects, are the heart of her Internet artworks. Martin believes that her bringing of traditional aesthetic and organic elements to Internet works expresses the larger emotion of women's life experiences rather than the technology itself, although she also believes that the emerging of Internet technology, especially

the web, has offered very different expressive means and communicative structures that traditional media otherwise could not carry. Martin believes that Internet art is a valuable pursuit. As an art educator, she believes that medium is not the message and it is very important to help students to find their own voices to express. As an individual artist working with the Internet, Martin prefers to utilize basic technologies that have been stabilized in computer development in order to insure her effort is viewable and understandable to her audiences.

Shu Lea Cheang

We are building this big bubble, we just don't know when it's going to get needled...but America is built on this bubble. So it's ok, you blow it up again, until next cycle of crash, isn't it?...this is the ability of America. Next generation you will build a different bubble.

--Interview with She Lea Cheang, 2002.

Demographic Information

Shu Lea Cheang is a New York-based artist who was born in Taiwan. She has been a filmmaker, performance artist, and conceptual artist, and a social activist. She now claims to be a "mobilized media migrant worker," because currently she travels from project to project, commission to commission. She once considered herself to be an Internet homesteader (Tomes, 1996). She has been featured in several publications including *ArtForum* (Jana, 2002) and *Digital Delirium* (Kroker, 1997). She has received numerous fellowships and awards including the Civitella Ranieri Fellowship from Italy in 2001 and the Computer Arts Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts in 1997. Her Net installation works were commissioned and permanently collected by Walker Art Center (Bowling Alley, 1995), NTT[ICC], Tokyo (Buy One Get One, 1997) and Guggenheim Museum (Brandon, 1998-1999). Her first feature film "FRESH KILL" was premiered in the Berlin Film Festival in 1994. The second feature "I.K.U.," a Japanese science fiction digital film was produced by Uplink Co. Tokyo and premiered at the Sundance Film Festival 2000. In year 2001, she exhibited a net installation "Baby Play" at NTT[ICC], Tokyo; was part of Shopping Window net art exhibition on Telepolis.de and created interface-installation for "Everyone is an Expert" project in "Make World" festival, Munich. Her gallery exhibitions include Ota Fine Arts in Tokyo, The Project in New York and Julia Friedman Gallery in Chicago. In May, 2002, she joined International Browserday to create a wireless dinner "DRIVE BY DINING" in Amsterdam. In summer 2002, she presented a field harvesting and public Internet activity project, trading garlic using a wireless network both online and

offline in New York City. Shu Lea Cheang is one of the most important contemporary artists investigating the ecosystem of Internet art by making art in various forms as performance, conceptual, images, texts, and actions—a type of Internet art that heavily involved with social activities. Originally trained from cinema studies in New York University, Cheang began working in video in the early 1980s and has produced a major body of single-channel video tapes and video installations that include some of the most significant works regarding issues of multiculturalism, feminism, and currently, technology.

Cheang has created many different types of artworks. Although she has produced several large Internet art projects in several noted museums and galleries in recent years, she does not consider herself particularly engaged in the field of Internet art. However, she does feel that the Internet liberated her. Since the early 1990s, she has learned about the Internet by using BBS, bulletin board system, and “started to know about the power of the transmission of the words and texts of the BBS language,” she said, “and from there, comes the whole Internet browsers.” Through the learning of evolving Internet technology, she saw the Internet as a communication tool and realized that with the possibility of global transmission it could assist her desire of communicating with the public. Her interview took place face-to-face in an organic garlic farm in Grant George, NY, where she was conducting a conceptual Internet art project in the summer of 2002.

Cheang received her B.A. in history from Taiwan University and M.A. in cinema from New York University. When she arrived in the U.S. in the late 1970s to study cinema, she recalled, “...at that time the video, the medium itself was not taking a new movement.” Jumping from video to the Internet for Cheang as she saw it was just another medium. “I was totally self-taught, I mean, I just learned along the way,” she said. “I just turned on the computer and I just learned it. I never learned a software, I’ve never gone to a class, I’ve never read a book about how to do with the software.” However Cheang is knowledgeable in Java programming and database programming. In order to conduct art projects and work with programmers who were employed to assist Cheang’s projects that involved sophisticated advanced technology, she learned “enough to work on the Internet.” “I know enough to know how it functions to read the code, to communicate with the programmers. I always come out with these ideas that drive programmers crazy, but it’s fantastic. They love to work with me and they are always quite interesting,” said Cheang. She later told me that if she did not have enough skill for some certain

type of programming languages, she would find the professionals to implement parts of her project. “I get someone to come in and do it, you know, rather than I go crazy trying to do it by myself. But I think being an artist in this way, you have to know enough languages. You have to know enough to know what you want, to explore this language. Especially, if you don’t know the language, they’d be very angry with you...so you have to know what you are talking about.”

Process of Creating Artworks

Cheang’s creative process precedes her technical process. In her early years, she worked hard on developing concepts and ideas then she would write a proposal to search for funding for her art projects. In later years, she has been invited or given grants to many projects from many art festivals, foundations, museums and galleries. She told me she was usually given a theme with which to bounce around concepts and ideas in her mind. Then she would write a plan or proposal and utilize the funding provided by the sponsors to hire a third party to achieve the technical aspects of her large projects, such as “Bowling Alley” in Walker Art Center, “Brandon” in Guggenheim Museum, and very recently, “Garlic=Rich Air” from the Lyn Blumenthal Foundation. From these projects, she usually took credit for “conception” or as “director.”

Creative process. As Cheang framed herself as a conceptual artist, with the ideas always coming before the technical process, she did mention that sometimes she would change her mind while technically processing her works. She said, “Ultimately, I would say that my concern of my work is about social political involvement, and then, I guess, in terms of the manner of how you make art, it becomes how abstract you would make it, how conceptual you would make the art. For me, it’s the desire to communicate with the public to have the interact possibility.”

She gave me an example of her processing of the idea of the project she was at the moment working on, “Garlic=Rich Air,” which is a project based on a proposal she wrote for a grant called “Challenge to the Field” set by the Lyn Blumenthal memorial fund. She explained to me in detail how she processed the ideas and concepts from the beginning:

The theme is challenge to the field, ...I think previously people would say, ‘oh me as an artist make a video work’, but I was really not interested in making a video work. So the idea was ...the first thing that I wanted to do was actually try to challenge to the field, “field” which field we are talking about, the green field? ...or media field? The Internet field? There are so many fields we are talking. ... I want to merge these fields, and that

was the first intent. I think a lot of things in this project is great to do right now, all this time I've being on the Internet, been traveling, and at a certain point, field, you know, like this whole virtual being is taking over you, which is fine, you know, I am very comfortable with my computer, and everything. I think the desire to kind of reconnect with the earth is also very important... At the end the project got develop into, kind of activate the post economy questions, because when I wrote this proposal, [it was] last year before 9/11, also before the Argentina economic cracked down ...when I wrote that at the time I was just really thinking about this field, you know, and this how the way the garlic is such of like generational thing ,is like, um, multiply, ... how you can multiply from one clove. [It's] so beautiful if you think about it. If the generation to generation keep going, ... so, I kind of like that metaphor...[if] you have garlic...you eat them, and if you don't finish eating [them], the whole clove of garlic, ..each bulb of the garlic... can become the seeds, ...it's a very beautiful metaphor. ... I would say that ... there maybe two reasons to do the project, one is to think about the field... the media field, the green field, how to reconnect with different... is not only about reconnect with earth but it also about among the media makers, how do we talk to each other ...everybody was so occupied with oneself, ... people don't communicate, so that was one of the purpose for me to do this project. And second is ... about the after crash scenario, ...the economic system failed, maybe this is also the after dot com syndrome. So if the whole economy failed, what would happen ... I think our life has been doing a lot with the so called barter system, we always trading, ... you give me a chicken and I give you a sack of potatoes or you give me a book and I give you something. Of course it's a very old tradition, but to bring up this idea again in this digital age is very interesting. That is the main part of doing this project, to consider that things can be shared, can be traded, rather than relying on the whole monetary system. ..., maybe this is after I have doing so many years traveling ... I traded everything, ... I don't like to own any physical thing (laughing), but I must have done something to people so people gave me everything too... like I have studio in New York. I have studio in Holland. I have studio in Tokyo that I can work, you know, and part of that is because that I am trading some of my work or whatever so it's about the trading system.

She also talked about how she changed her mind in planning this art project. “I think this project is so interesting, actually at the beginning I did not want to do anything with Internet at all,” she laughed. She initially planned to have a garlic harvesting and trade the garlic with people face to face in the streets of New York. “Very old style,” she said, it was almost a performance of trading in a nostalgia sense. And she bounced around the ideas by having conversations with friends. “What if people give me old pans,...pots, baseball cards...for me it will be everything they want to trade for me is meaningless, nothing...What if people give me a truck load of whatever garbage, for whatever I trade for then I trade and I take a picture?...Something is wrong here...” She then spent two or three weeks to figure a way out to deal with the problems, since she was worried about being given too much meaningless physical things. “So I developed into this idea of Internet trading...from the virtual garlic to trade a real garlic....so it’s really good to have this idea to have this real life [garlic harvesting in the farm] and the Internet [trading of virtual garlic].”

Technical process. At the time of Cheang’s interview, she was conducting the first phase of the “Garlic=Rich Air” project, gathering people offline to hand harvest garlic at an organic farm in upstate New York. I asked Cheang how she was able to achieve the technical details of the four phases of this project, especially the online trading system, which heavily involved complicated programming and database systems, while staying in a farm house in the middle of nowhere in upstate New York. Cheang had her laptop connected to a phone line and with that was able to have access to communicate with her programming crew in Germany. She and her German programmers were working on building an online trading system for audiences to participate in the trading activity. Audiences would be able to upload their digital files to the database, exchange the files with each other by using the “virtual garlic” as currency. Cheang explained, “It’s like a stock market and you will have your own portfolio for the trading.” She was programming the system with two programmers who were physically located in Germany. “We always communicate through email, and they just do it.” Cheang felt that they were the best team to work with even though she had never spoke to them, always communicating via online means. “Only one time we had a little chat [through] ICQ because the programming became very tricky...we had to back and forth tuning...I don’t know how they looked like, I am not curious,...But really, we’ve got the best team. So now they are working on this project...maybe they are not political or they don’t care about what I am doing anyway, but it’s

just fantastic.” She enjoyed their working relationship, because it has saved her energy to research on what can be achieved technically. She described herself as being a very “nomadic” and “mobile” person, but also well “connected with different organizations, different media labs, different people,” she said, “...so I am not this kind of so-called individual artist...I really enjoy collaboration.”

Process of outreaching audiences. The outreach to the general public is especially challenging to Cheang, since most of her works are communicative. In the case of “Garlic=Rich Air,” Cheang’s first task was to generate people’s participation. “I have to send many lists to different people and it takes a lot of work to reach out to different people to participate on the Internet with a project...if I don’t have any people participate in, then the project will fail terribly.” Cheang has posted messages on several Internet communities and sent out invitations through mailing lists. How to get people involved was one of her major concerns. She expressed her feeling of uncontrollability and uncertainty over the process, “It is so factor unknown. Maybe there will be problems with programming, maybe problems with concept, maybe problems of outreach. I don’t know, but I am trying. I would try to do every aspect, but I still may fail...But yes, I am going to, I am trying my best to carry it out...I am not doing a safe project per se.”

Frustrations and obstacles. When asked whether she had encountered any frustrations in making art, Cheang expressed that communicating with social institutions and audiences took away her energies. Most of Cheang’s frustrations are from censorship related to social issues. She remembered one of the difficulties she encountered, which occurred in 1996 when she was invited to participate in an exhibition in Japan. “I did the Okinawa project that kind of involved with U.S. base in Okinawa and the Japanese government became very sensitive and they wanted to stop my exhibition...so for a week, I was in Tokyo having meeting with these government personnel to discuss art and politics...and then right before the show, like half an hour before the press conference, they wanted to negotiate with me not to show my work, because they wanted me to do some changes and I refused...after a week of negotiation and thirty minutes before the show, they wanted to shut it down...I just cried,” Cheang recalled and laughed. “I cried, and I say no, I want to show, you know....you don’t give up easily, you just don’t, people say no and you say ok. You keep trying and figure out a way to work around it and keep fighting...I think I have the fighting spirit on me, I am not taking no for an answer. I know what I want and I am going to do it, I am going to get there. It doesn’t matter how I do it.” Cheang then mentioned

another ongoing Internet art project “Kingdom of Piracy,” in which she was asked to change the title, because of Taiwan’s sensitivity to the intellectual properties issues. She ended up moving the show from Taiwan to Europe because of the controversy.

Not being able to be understood by audiences is especially frustrating to Cheang, too. The difficult task of communicating with audiences comes with two different ways. One is not being understood by audiences. “I think I create some works thinking that I am communicating with people [but] people cannot understand my thinking.” The other is that of distributing her works. “I have had many people to talk about my works as if they were ‘ahead of time’,” she said and gave one of experience she encountered:

I showed my film in 2000 IKU and I showed in Sundance and the remarks I got from the distributors of America would say “this film is so ahead of time... we cannot distribute this film, we cannot find audience for the film, which is totally not true, ... I believe my film have its audience. But at the same time, when I produce this work, I am working with a production, a producing system, I have a producer, I have a distributor.. I have to work with a director I know, at the certain point I stopped in the part of the project...I cannot continue to explain my work for the distribution...your work become part of distribution system and a lot of time an artist does have to do a lot of interpretation, talk about your work for people to understand, to communicate, and that again, it takes a lot of energy. ... that’s like a whole different job after you create your work, ... most of people after [finishing] a project, you just go on to another project, you don’t keep wanting to explain it. But if you don’t, your last work may not being seen.

The Medium and the Expressive Means

Conceptual content. What Cheang has been trying to do with many of her Internet art pieces is “transport the local community to the Internet.” In the case of the “Garlic=Rich Air” project, in which people traded digital files for virtual garlic in exchange for the actual garlic from the organic farm, she attempted to create a community, which she called “a club of exchange.” She said, “I’ve [been] actually working on the Internet for quite sometime, but I think it’s really difficult to build a so called community...I think people have to work locally, locally you have to have that community in order to be able to create a community globally on the Internet. So if I am building the exchange club of garlic in New York first, maybe there could be a different exchange club in different countries.” She was inspired by Argentina’s “El club

Trueque”(Club of Exchange). After the economy failed in Argentina, people there have created different local clubs that are similar to the free market, she explained: “People bring things and do exchange...and you don’t have to exchange right away...it is not so much like I bring a piece of wood, you bring a piece of chicken and then we can quickly exchange...so they created this kind of local currency call ‘credito’, and that’s how it became an alternative money value...but ‘El club Trueque’ is not like a national practice...it is more of that every country, every city, every town has it.” To make a parallel metaphor of the clubs, Cheang utilized the Internet to create the club of exchange. “But it’s a big difference from eBay because eBay is a commercial type,” as she made a distinction between her work and eBay commerce. What she has tried to incorporate in her work is “building communities, building bases, and building connecting points.”

Internet as medium. For Cheang, the Internet is not only a communication tool but also an artistic medium. Comparing her utilizing of Internet as a medium to other traditional mediums, she said,

I think every artist in a certain way does have a desire to communicate with each viewer...I think every work, let’s consider it’s a stroke, it’s a splash of paint or something....it’s a communication between you and the canvas, between you and the media, between you and the viewers, and between you and the public if you get to show. So I think there is always a desire. How successful is another question...I have done a lot of my works with all the desire to communicate, to interact, to communicate with the public.

Aesthetic consideration. Cheang, however, also considered her works very “formalistic,” she said, “...in a certain way, I also considered my work very formalistic, you know, that kind of installation, that kind of design, that kind of very clean, formalistic thing I’d like to do.” In terms of her Internet art projects, she considered herself a formalist Internet artist in a conceptual sense. “I think my work is about building up forms and structures, conceptually.” She further explained,

I think pretty much all my work in terms of like installation work, you know, its about building up forms and structures, a system. However, instead of proclaiming that this system is um indestructible, I actually allowed people to break into my work. So in a certain way if you consider the Bowling Alley piece, is that I have a whole Internet the structure, the system, the server, the sensors, is all set up, its like technical is totally set

up... through the audience's interaction that will break that system, they would scramble the texts, you know, do different things... I think that's part of that kind of practice I do, is about infiltration into a system that would break the system, ... I guess in a way, "Streaming the Field"[Garlic=Rich Air], if you think about the whole economic system, or whole country, is quite faltering, its failing... So it's about trying to reconsider the system. Or, setting up a system so people can break in. ... I'll never be a hacker, I don't have the knowledge, but in a certain way I think I am hacking the system.

Writers/ Philosophers/Theory. Cheang named several writers when asked if any writers, philosophers, or theories influenced her. "The cyborg theory of Donna Haraway, Sadit Planet, or Jennifer Terry." These people, these human theorists' works I was particularly in touch with in terms of making Internet work." However, she didn't consciously try to create works that followed a set theory. "I didn't quite articulate the theory, but I became a practice practitioner." Although she felt she did not create works as theory-based initially, "But, maybe, at some certain point I will have to reread my works with a theory...So let's say, if I reread my work with Nomads or French theorists' works, you then kind of catch up a bit of theory and realize it."

The Environment of Internet

Online environment. Cheang expressed her opinion of installing works on the Internet and the reaching out to Internet audiences. "People said 'oh your work is on the Internet, millions of people watch it', supposedly, right? But it is not true. Because you know the audience is like one by one, looking at your work...especially on the Internet, people are so lonely when watching the work...it is not really such thing as the millions, [not like] your work is [being presented] to the millions...because it is between click, and link, and luck—one person decides to study your work, you know."

The dependency of Internet communities. "I do not consider virtual community can exist on its own. My consideration is that it needs a grounding support," she said. "I think a lot of people are struggling." She gave me an example from the crash of the Dotcoms. Many people believed that they were building empires on the Internet and "thinking it's lasting forever." Even seeing the stock market crash, Cheang nevertheless was not pessimistic. "We are building this big bubble, we just don't know when it's going to get needled...but America is built on this bubble. So it's ok, you blow it up again, until next cycle of crash, isn't it?...this is the ability of America."

Conceptualization of Internet art

The concept of “interactivity” does play a very important role in Cheang’s Internet artworks. Yet, she emphasized that the concept of interactivity is not what it is commonly thought of as the users “pushing the buttons” on the web pages; rather, it is “the way how people appreciate each other, how people reach to each other.” It is this notion of interactivity, which is centered in Cheang’s conception of her Internet art pieces.

For Cheang, a desire for communication to the public has been the driving force that kept her going as an artist, in combination with her being involved in various Internet art communities. “Maybe we all get in there in terms for different art practices,...you [maybe] sort of formalistic, ...more subject matter, more content...[and] different genre of practice,, but I think, ...either artists are frustrated in communicating or wanting to communicate, but there is always the desire to do so,” she said. She considers all of her works are always in response to her social and political environment. She talked about her first piece that brought her to the attention of the New York artworld. The video art piece “Color Scheme” was a reaction to the social politics in America in 1985. “And I decided to make a more sort of art form...it was presented as an installation piece in Whitney Museum.” It was a piece directly in response to the racial issues back to that time.

While processing the “Garlic=Rich Air” project in New York, Cheang has started to consider bringing this concept and project to practice in other different locations to form different communities. “This kind of project has to be very locally promoted in real life...So we can take this project to go, let’s say, Vermont, from the Vermont small institution of small local space...we can build a one month trading on the Internet, we collaborate with local farmers market...it doesn’t need to be garlic, it could be zucchini as the currency.” The idea that the project could be adapted in different ways in different locations excited Cheang, yet she pointed out that it needs local press and organizations involvement. She described her enthusiasm in being an artist:

I committed myself, I am a American citizen ... now I say I am a drifter, I am a nomad, but if I really want to claim a nationality, I say yes okay I’m an American, I’ll say ok, I am a part of, this kind of like, you know, I created almost all my work in New York, New York is my kind of ultimate resource, energy. You worked in New York; you worked in America, in New York particular maybe. It’s just like, you always try something, and you

always have to do something (laughing). This one fail, you try another one, (laughing). It's like Tovey [the farmer/owner of the organic garlic farm who provided the harvesting] growing vegetables...this year he grows string beans, or this year he grows one kind of potato, but these were all bitten by bugs, next year he'll try some other kind of potato... So it's always experiment, and never give up, ...and I think, refer to back what you said about this energy, is like, if you consider everything you do, is not so safe, and you are always nervous, you are always worried, you are always like, experimenting, you always think, "maybe this one will give me million dollars," for example. I don't think any of us is expecting for that. But you know, in a certain way, we say, "maybe this one I will get everyone to like the film," you know, that way. And, that challenges you, and that keeps you going. You are trying to think, you know, and because also all my works, in a certain way like every work is so different. So for me, is like, well, how do I make this one work. So that keeps you going. You know, it's like Tovey, we talked about it, he was like, (mimicking Tovey's tone) "I don't want to be too rich, you know, like if I am too rich I would not feel I want to work!" so you become the struggling artist that so that can keep working (laughing).

Interpretation of Cheang's Artwork

In response to the Lyn Blumenthal memorial grant, Cheang created an Internet artwork that reflects a segmental scenario of Internets' "webscape" ecosystem. She calls media artists and Internet users to participate in her conceptual art in the year of 2002, where the contemporary American artworld has been covered by the veil of depression from several scenarios of crashes nationally and internationally—the illusory dreams of dotcoms with the descending economy, and most of America still carrying the unforgettable wounds from the September 11 tragedy. "Rich air =garlic" is an Internet artwork combining offline actions, performances, and online activities that expresses a sense of nostalgia where ironically both digital delirium and earthy humanities are seemingly fading away. In Cheang's original proposal for this project, she wrote (Cheang, 2002):

The green field in Andes, New York will be harvesting 3000 garlic plants by the end of July this summer. The garlic crops cultivated by organic farmer Tovey Halleck have gone through generations of growth. Each year, Tovey harvests the garlic field, sells some and plants the rest. One plant of garlic can yield up to 10 bulbs, each bulb made up of 10 cloves. Each clove

can be re-seeded. Over the years, Tovey's garlic has fertilized the land and multiplied. Generations of independent media makers have collectively developed a vibrant media field. As we speculate on a post-capitalist, post-arts funding, "after the crash" scenario, "St(r)eamming the fields" calls for the media field to converge at the green field for trans-generational recharging affairs. Borrowing from Argentina's "El club del Trueque" (Club of Exchange) that advocates parallel economy reciprocity practices, we hope to realize a media exchange network using organic garlic as alternative social currency, the 'credito'. Using garlic credito to exchange material goods and immaterial digital bytes, we hope to stimulate media trafficking on the net and sponsor green marketing on the streets.

I was able to participate in this artwork for two phases, the garlic harvesting in the farm and digital bites trading on the Internet. The impact, the excitement and the aftermath of the wave of my life space has gradually gone back to the obdurate reality since my first participation of the first phase in the farm, yet I have gained significantly changed insights.

This project consisted of four phases and had been processed and proceeded from August to October 2002. Those events and activities have taken place in different locations—the organic farm in Grand George and the farmers market of Andes, New York, the trading website on the Internet, the performance of trading virtual garlic to real garlic in the streets of New York Manhattan, the documentary report and reseeded in National Alliance of Media Arts and Culture Conference in Seattle, Washington, and mostly, the cyberspace in many Internet users' mind. Cheang initially sent out the announcement of her work by emails and posting messages in several important Internet communities, such as Indymedia.org, Rhizome.org, and things.net to call for participation. As her description from her proposal details, the four phases of the artwork were: 1) First phase, calling for friends of the media and media artists to hand harvest garlic from an organic farm in upstate New York for a week; 2) Creating a online trading system called "Tueque Club," any Internet users can join and trade digital files with each other by using "virtual garlic" as currency; 3) members of the club will trade the virtual garlic for real garlic harvested from the first phase on the streets of New York Manhattan; 4) the filmed events were streamed online and reported in National Alliance of Media Arts and Cultural Conference in Seattle Washington to reseed the garlic and redistribute the digital bites. By complementing the four phases, the garlic had been virtually and symbolically redistributed from the earth to the world.

I participated in Cheang's work both offline and online. I went to the organic farm to hand harvest garlic directly from the earth, and I went online to trade my digital paintings and photos with others by using virtual garlic as currency. During the first phase, many Internet art professions, artists, filmmakers, graphic designers, media activists, and art educators, traveled from different locations around the world to meet with each other to dig out garlic from the farm next to a mountain in upstate New York. Two weeks of harvesting without modern life technologies and laboriously working on the farm made these people reconnect to the earth from their high tech lives. Afterwards in the second phase of online trading, people went back to their real life physically, yet we met, traded, and communicated with each other through sharing in the cyber trading club. We traded digital images we made, articles we wrote, messages from our personal life experiences, and of course, we traded "credito," the virtual garlic.

Cheang's work offers a life space for participants to travel between the landscape and webscape. I met with Shu Lea on the Internet. Shu Lea, who claimed to be a "mobilized media worker and drifter" has traveled from project to project, commission to commission, and in recent years has conducted several conceptual, large art projects involved in the webscape and the physical landscape. This project as well, has broken the borderlands of Internet art professions and relocated participants to a new life space with changed insights and new thoughts. Her congregating people to interact with each other through the Internet technology in an earthy farm, and creating a cyberspace to encourage people making actions of exchange can be viewed as her upspring energies. Seeing the Internet technology bursting and being needed, she hacks into the Internet users' cyberspace, seeds the opportunities for people to burst another bubbles and to continue the American dream.

Summary

Shu Lea Cheang is a conceptual artist who has considered herself as a "homesteader" in the cyberspace. Deeply influenced by Donna Haraway's human cyborg theory, her Internet artworks deals with the diffusing of public space and private space, the technologized human body and the humanized cyborg, and challenges the common concepts of the Internet ecosystem. Although her works have been buttressed by strong social and political content, Cheang has been concerned with the formal elements of her works in terms of the visual composition of her camera works, and the abstraction of her concepts. She is an intellectually sophisticated artist and had grounded her views of Internet art in conceptual art. Cheang has a strong desire to

communicate with the public and challenge her audiences; it is the driving power that keeps her creating artworks with different art institutions to reach people from different local communities. Yet the same reason has made her experiences of dealing with censorship and distribution very difficult. Cheang expressed that she wasn't an individual artist, instead, she worked cooperatively. Many of Cheang's large art projects have been completed by the third parties. Understanding that each computer language or web application carries very different aspects of functions and requires long term training, she believes that the ability of knowing how different computer technologies and languages function is very important in order to utilize these tools to achieve her goal. Nonetheless, it is not necessary to master all sets of skills.

Michael Oliveri

Demographic Information

Michael Oliveri is a mid-career artist who now lives and works in Athens, Georgia. He is also an art educator and chairperson of the digital media department in the University of Georgia. Oliveri received his M.F.A. degree in New Genre from the University of California, Los Angeles and his B.F.A. degree in Sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute. He has a wide range of experiences in different fields of fine art and design, such as design of furniture, web design, commercial film, and fashion design. He has also exhibited extensively nationally and internationally, including the Havana Biennial, UCLA in Santa Monica, Ca., Project Box in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Art Institute, and Brea Municipal Gallery.

Oliveri has been utilizing electronic and computer technology to create artworks in many different forms. Although his works are not primarily for the Internet environment, he has created an art portfolio web site streaming his video clips in the Internet. He has taught digital art courses to undergraduate and graduate students in the Florida State University and University of Georgia. His experiences of being a commercial artist, conceptual artist, art educator, and chairperson of a digital media department have given him a very thorough overview and insight of the Internet art environment. The interview took place face to face in Athens, Georgia.

Process of Creating Artworks

Creative process. Oliveri described an artwork he is currently processing based on his concept of "raising a question." For Oliveri, the creative process comes before the technical process. As he mentions in his interview, no art exists outside of concept. His art pieces are always conceptual and the material or medium itself, is always minor. He did not specifically

give an example of how he processes the idea for particular artworks he has done, but he mentioned that many of his works contain the concept of “cause and effect.” He explained the connection between the concept of “cause and effect” and “raising a question:”

... So I think that the same concepts of, of cause and effect, something, because you have this sort of like organism that's functioning and people are activating it, but they don't really don't know what's going on at the other end of where they are. They know they are in front of their computer, but they don't know what's on the other end. So if uh, if um, that thing that interests me is using those kinds of ideas where, where we use the system and we you know, having somebody in Iowa on their computer, I don't even know who they are. But they're activating something where I am, so there's sort of this cause and effect, where if I do something here something over there will occur, even though I don't know that it will occur, it's kind of I think along the same lines like, if I go to Borders like here we are and we buy coffee right? I just bought a cup of coffee, well what does that really mean? When you buy a cup of coffee. Like how much, what do you think that cup of coffee has affected, who do you think that affected when you bought that cup of coffee? I mean I have no idea, but let's say it's uh, you just, because you bought that cup of coffee, Borders had to buy so many pounds of coffee from Africa which employed some man to um, to work at the coffee plantation to feed his kids. I have no idea or vice versa, there because you got that coffee some, they're using child labor to pick the beans, I have no idea, but neither do you. But we just buy the cup of coffee. I think it's the same sort of thing, this cause and effect where something is happening somewhere.

For him, artists creating artwork should pose a question rather than answer a question. Answers, or fact, are always temporary. Thus, he believes that “it's better off raising questions.”

Technical process. For Oliveri, the technical aspect of an artwork is not his major concern. Given an example of his current idea of developing an Internet artwork, which is to develop a web site that would display a person's vital signs and their whereabouts, he was seeking a third party, a company that produced Global Position System technology to offer the medium he needed. In order to do accomplish this artwork, he would need to communicate and negotiate with the company that had a device that people could wear and for the device to have the ability to cooperate with Internet technology in tracking people's physical status in the physical world. He explained his idea of utilizing GPS technology as part of the medium:

...GPS, you know GPS, global positioning system...it finds your longitude and latitude coordinates. So you wear this device so wherever you go it knows where you are, it tracks you through satellite. But there's this company who puts the information on a webpage. So you can log on and it will tell you where you are. So I'm working on a piece where, and it measures your temperature and your pulse and location... so I'm doing some work where I would wear this thing, the information would go through satellite, go through the internet come out the internet go through midi functions on the computer and come out and run analog sound making machines base on the information from the chip. So the piece will only function as long as I'm alive too. So that's the kind of internet art that I would think of.

The Medium and the Expressive means

Conceptual content. Oliveri considered himself deeply influenced by French post-structuralist theorists. The writing of Baudrillard and Lyotard influenced his thinking to create artworks with the concept of "circulating redundancy." He said, "It was the theme of cause and effect redundancy of life,...like cycle redundancy, um, these probably were the major themes, and the action of , the hierarchy, ...and the colonization...colonize your participants."

Communicative structure. Oliveri expressed that he had "complete control" over the audiences. "I know exactly, I know with what parameter I am allowing my viewers to have; I give my viewers what I want to give them." He mentioned the often mentioned buzzword regarding Internet art, "interactive," "There is an interactive work on the Internet, I mean, that people, you know that, they are having interactive by if you push a button, this will happen ...I don't want them. I don't like that kind of work at all, I want complete control of my work. I want to make sure that I know exactly what is going on. And I don't want the person to know that they are interacting with my work. I don't want them to feel that they are participants of a piece of the work."

Effect of media. For him, the use of technology does not change his expression of idea. Oliveri said, "We are already in a digital environment; it is not possible not to be in digital environment, so the term doesn't need to be spoken about, it doesn't need to be segregated."

Aesthetic consideration, transcendent experiences, and spirituality. As he defined his art as poetic and that this was his concern when creating artworks, he further defined what he meant by "poetic" to explain how he took it into consideration. "Poetic is the rhythm in where aesthetic

consideration, transcendent experiences, or spirituality, all of those play with each other.” And he stated that “aesthetic runs through into a lot of different scenarios...but I do take aesthetic consideration, highly detailed aesthetic consideration, but it may not be a formula that everybody would follow, but I do personally take that.” He considered transcendent experience as his goal of creating artwork, “I guess it is to be able to project that [transcendent experience] so that your work does have transcendent experiences upon the viewers. The viewers actually somewhat experience what you are trying to convey them,” said Oliveri. He placed further emphasis on how he took spirituality into account. “I don’t think I would waste my time making artworks if I didn’t think of it...the idea of the pieces, for instance, a lot of work you saw on the Internet had to do with cause and effect scenario, but, conceptual part of the work, the idea is also part of all things you have there [aesthetic consideration, transcendent experiences, and spirituality].

Conceptualization of Internet Art

Oliveri first pointed out that Internet art has been viewed from different perspectives and most commonly was misunderstood. “Think of web design and things like that, we have different perspectives of what art on the Internet is, and most people look at it like it is art being put on the Internet versus having Internet art as a category.” During the interview, he initially dismissed the existence of Internet art and then later on changed his mind. He first talked about what he considered shouldn’t been viewed as Internet art. Oliveri does not consider web pages, web design, and visual elements displayed on the Internet as Internet art. If so, “That’s a very narrow perspective.” He said:

I don’t think anybody is doing that with like a webpage, a website. There are some that are beautiful websites and very elegant websites, um, I would think of that more as design. I wouldn’t think of that as art. I don’t know how to uh, I don’t think that it stretches the boundaries of what can actually, it’s not pushing the boundaries of the internet at all. It’s creating a design a next design, but it doesn’t push the boundaries of what is actually, it doesn’t critically um, evaluate what the internet is at the same time that it is producing the work. And for me that’s important, like the work needs to criticize itself.

However, Oliveri didn’t deny a webpage’s possibly being an artwork. In his view, an Internet artist has to be more controlling over how intended viewers are interacting with the artwork and its effect on viewers over a period of time. He cautions about the misconception of

the nature of the Internet, “First you need to understand what the Internet is and it’s not what we see.” So the Internet is not logging on into a web page. That’s not the Internet,” said him, “Because of all of its connection to everybody’s life—so if you use it like as it like a vascular system to a person like all this connection, all these things happening, the connections inside...I think really where the art of the Internet is...is in hacking.”

Based on his tenet that art is conceptual and is the self critique of its function, Oliveri considered that the activity of “hacking” could be Internet art because hackers function as a self-critique to the technological system of the Internet. He said:

I think that the true art of Internet is done by hackers. It’s done by people writing viruses, developing code. So someday eventually people will look at code, and look at the simplicity how it is written and one hacker look at some other hacker’s codes and say that “that’s beautiful.” They use the term ‘beautiful’; terms which we would normally use to describe a painting they use to describe code. So that’s what I think Internet art is. Internet art actually is exactly happening in programmers or hackers where they have groups so that function is very similar to when artists used to put together groups years ago, the blue rider group, movements, the dada group, hackers form groups just the same way, they function just the same way the way art did a 100 years ago.

After considering “hacking” as art, Oliveri then changed his mind about the existence of Internet art. He described what he considered as Internet art, “ people coming writing codes, getting inside your computer at your house, making your screen change different colors go crazy, um, and this, the tricky part is, how do you create a nonviolent act violently? So like, in art, the hacker will get in and they hack and maybe they destroy your hard drive.” However, Oliveri believed that one of the difficulties of an Internet art piece was that it was very difficult to create a piece as “poetic.” He expressed that his own definition of art was being poetic. He explained that “poetics” was “contained contradiction” and he further explained:

Where there are two messages being told simultaneously, two opposite messages being told simultaneously which creates a sense a movement, which it’s non-linear, ... there is a sense of timing to the piece, a sense of, similar to how you would think about music, like you would have a note, in a note you have amplitude, ... how it’s spaced by time, and there’s other things you have to consider when you are thinking about what’s happening as far as art on the Internet.

The Environment of the Internet

Oliveri did not describe his perception of the Internet environment during the interview. Instead, he talked about his point of view in terms of educating student artists to deal with the internet environment.

He believed that it was difficult to teach students regarding the poetic sense of art. “I think you teach around it by showing them what has that, identifying it.” He then compared the ability of experiencing the “poetic” to the sense as humor. “...humor, for instance, to just analyze what humor is, break it down, look at the hierarchy of humor, look at what happening with that, what it is causing, I think people can start to think what poetic is, what poetic rhythm is.” However, to be able to grab the sense of poetic rhythm as Oliveri defined would take a lot of effort. He explained that the possible obstacles lay in two aspects. Technical-wise, the inefficiency of understanding the medium limits students’ ability. Creative-wise, the lack of understanding of art language makes an art piece less attractive. He said:

But I think it is just difficult to teach...you can talk about it. But to actually teach it, you know. I think this comes with experiencing it, understanding, like, like understanding your material completely, like, where, you understand the plastic that coats the electronic wires that’s in here, the material, that this is made out of, the weight of your recorder, to really understand the all of the elements, that’s when you can start to arrange it and to where you end up with sort of, off-balance. It’s kind of balanced but off-balance, but it just keeps moving...where you can actually create a piece of art, you know, and that’s a hard thing to teach. Most of people just want to learn software, they want to know how technical problems do, and they want to know how to do something.....so it is not an easy thing to teach. I mean, you cannot even teach of it through critiques, trial and error, that’s where people start to learn the boundaries of the medium. They try. They mess up. They learn their own limitations, what their own personal limitations are, within the medium that they are actually trying to work with. Whether if it’s the Internet, some people want to try all kinds of things and have great ideas for the Internet, but they don’t have the skills to do it. So they can’t make it happen so they need to learn the skill, or vice versa, they have the skill but they don’t have the ideas, you know, things like that. But, and it’s always because of the Internet, because of people are able to self-teach themselves at home and everything else, there’s a multitude of different levels of the students, like you

could, how a class of 15 students and have somebody who doesn't know anything and somebody who knows everything, technically, it's hard.

Oliveri's tenet is that art relies on the concept and it is the concept he emphasizes. In terms of teaching art, he said "I want to have people thinking about and being an artist and they go find the person that can do the programming." The technical aspect of creation is not his concern. "I am not teaching the software at all...I don't think I am teaching art just by teaching software, people making websites."

Contemporary art history. Oliveri believed that an art studio program in a technologically based environment should offer the knowledge of what has happened from the past. This should include artists' history of making conceptual art with the medium of technology, but not traditional art history, "because the history department doesn't deal with contemporary art history," he said. "So we teach our own history. In contemporary art and along with studio projects...there is a lot of that because to even have a student function in this area, they have to know where they coming from, they have to know what's been done before, they have to know the thought process why, what's happening in this area."

Other than offering contemporary artists' history, Oliveri mentioned that it was very important to eliminate students' fear toward an unfamiliar technology. He stated, "Whether it be the Internet or with the computer, or computer operated machines, or things like that, robotic, whatever, it's all about eliminating their fear where those environments are completely normal, completely nature, completely part of their life. Just as you sitting in that chair, you are not afraid to sit in a chair, it's that, it's to eliminate the mystery behind it all so that they could actually use it. I think, you know, that's pretty much the goal."

However, he believed the elimination of the fear couldn't be equated with "teaching technology." He reiterated, "It is not about teaching technology, we don't teach them technology. They have to learn by themselves, and we need to teach them how to learn." To teach students how to learn technology by themselves, firstly is to eliminate the fear of technology. "To teach them not to be afraid of it, then teach them to learn, so that they go, because if you are involved in this area, then you will never stop. It never stops...but that doesn't change premise. That doesn't change the promise of what you are doing and why you are doing it. Even though the technology changes, I find it doesn't matter of the technology is changed."

In terms of how to appreciate Internet art, Oliveri compared it to appreciating any type of contemporary art, that required the understanding of the references and the hierarchies of the field. He said: “If you were to see certain types of art, somehow you need to be educated to understand it anyway, so that falls on all kinds of different levels where if somebody goes to a museum it is contemporary art but has no reference to that piece, it can be ugly, it can be meaningless, it can be stupid, so I think it’s the same thing with hackers, if we, we want to appreciate it, with what they are doing, we need to learn about it, to have empathy to it, and then you will find the beauty in it.” When being asked how “hacking” could be taught in school, Oliveri laughed. He thought that “hacking” should be taught yet shouldn’t be titled. “ I think they should figure a way to...” He laughed, paused, and said that he gave the *Hacker Manifesto*, and personal statement written by an anonymous high school student hacker that had been forwarded and well discussed on the Internet, to his students to set a perspective in his class.

Description of Michael Oliveri’s web site

When visiting Oliveri’s web site, a flash generated window pops up in the center of my computer screen. The web site has a very clean design layout with flash action scripted interface that allows users to explore the links and hidden contents. Elegant and playful, the web site encouraged me to move my mouse all over the interface to navigate without being prompted with any textual instruction. Navigating the site, I realized that textual instruction was not necessary, since the content has been well organized and structured.

Oliveri has shown many of his artworks and installed video documentation on this site, as well as his vita and contact information. The dynamic elements arranged on the site are smooth, as a result of being highly technically crafted by using a web animation application. Also from each of the video clips of his artworks, I can see a very detailed consideration of usability and aesthetic thought in their construction. The semi-transparent blue colored rectangular shapes overlapping with gray lines and white movie stage, the swimming-like selection bar moving horizontally fast and slow according to the action from my mouse cursor along with the little rectangles dynamically waving are combined to give a very aesthetically pleasant feeling—senses from the interaction of colors, forms, and timing are well presented though the Internet browser.

Although Oliveri has expressed that he did not consider the design of his web site as his art work, nevertheless his portfolio web site explicitly carries the function of communication

with users, especially when the target audiences are familiar with the languages of art and design. It shows that the sense of significant form hasn't been absent in our contemporary artworld, while concepts and contents are well emphasized for many conceptual art practices.

Summary

Michael Oliveri argued wholeheartedly, if somewhat inconsistently, for what Internet art should be and should not be. Although he is very skillful and very familiar with Internet technology, he holds a very spiritual view of art. Oliveri's thematic inspiration of the cause and affect of various life situations, the redundancy of circulation, as well as his conceptual practice, are at the heart of his art. In terms of being an art educator, he believes that he does not teach "technology" itself, yet he attempts to deliver a sense of the poetic to be grasped. Oliveri grounded his view of the Internet art as conceptual art and he believed that contemporary art history and the spirit of "hacking" need to be taught in the art programs related to technology setting.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of Chapter Four is to be an examination of data collected from interviews of the three artists selected for this study according to the following points of inquiry: demographic information, process of creating artwork, the medium and the expressive means, conceptualization of Internet art, perception of the Internet environment, and description/interpretation of artist's work.

This chapter is divided into three sections, one for each artist. Each section consists of demographical information, a discussion of each artist's remarks as they relate to the five prescribed points of inquiry, a description/interpretation of each artist's recent work, and a summary highlighting major issues relevant to the practice of that artist in 2002. Additionally, data gathered from interviewing artist/art educator Michael Oliveri have extra information emerging from his experiences of teaching and developing digital art program in university setting. I use information coded in this chapter to answer the primary research question in Chapter Five: "What is the nature and quality of the Internet as a creative environment and artistic medium for selected contemporary artists?"

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of Chapter Five is to answer the primary formal research question: “What is the nature and quality of the Internet as a creative environment and artistic medium for selected contemporary artists?”

In Chapter Five, I present the findings of the investigation of three selected contemporary artists with different art educational backgrounds, according to the data which emerged and was coded in Chapter Four, to answer my research question. The findings are discussed in the following categories: artists’ educational/learning experiences, processes of making art, expressive means, conceptualizations of Internet art, perceptions of the Internet environment, and interpretations of three selected artists’ artworks. The significance and meaning of each category are illustrated by direct quotations from the artists, and synthesized as they pertain to the collective practices. The information gathered answers the first part of my primary research question: “What is the nature and quality of the Internet as a creative environment and artistic medium for selected contemporary artists?”

This chapter also draws implications from the findings in regards to post-secondary art education. These implications are drawn in hopes of providing meaningful insights for development of studio art programs in technologically based environments. Each implication was directly related to a finding pertaining to the data gathered from the inquiry into the internalization of three selected artists presented in Chapter Four, along with the literature review in Chapter Two. These implications were discussed and titled as the practice of Internet art (interactivity, Happening as Internet art, techniques and the message, artistic ability), expression of Internet art (reloading of human feelings, tacit knowledge of civil disobedience), and the

nature of Internet art and art programs in post-secondary school. These implications referred back to and reflect the concept of the system model of creativity discussed in the review of philosophical foundation in Chapter Two.

Suggestions for further study also are addressed. This chapter contains four parts: Findings, Implications for technologically based art education, Suggestions for Further Studies, and a Chapter Summary.

Findings

Educational/Learning Experiences

Holding a B.A. degree in visual art and an M.F.A degree in computer art, Martin has art techniques in traditional material, skills of computer technology, knowledge of the liberal art tradition and issues of postmodern art practice. She believed that having an art educational background in painting, sculpture, and ceramics has benefited her in creating Internet art in three dimensions: the aesthetic dimension, the communicative dimension, and the familiarity of art language dimension. Focusing on issues of feminist autobiography and aesthetic structure of hyperlinks, Martin mentioned that writer Shelly Jackson played an influential role in her creation of hyperlinked Internet art pieces.

Cheang holds a B.A. degree in history and an M.A. in cinema. Her concept of abstract art has benefited her in casting her conceptual art when creating Internet art pieces. She also believes that due to her training in cinema, she is able to bring her knowledge of form, color, composition, and clear design elements into consideration. In terms of creating conceptual Internet art pieces, her art relies on “how to make the concept more abstract.” Cheang did not express that having a background in history benefited her in any creating of art. She wrote, “...I have always wanted to study cinema, and be a cinema director from high school. I got into a history department because of Taiwan’s exam system. But I think humanities study is always good.” Concerning the issues of sexuality and technology, she mentioned several contemporary writers and women scholars who influenced her creating of artworks: Donna Haraway, Jennifer Terry, and Sadie Plant.

Having an M.F.A. degree in new genre and B.A. in sculpture, Oliveri has practiced art in a variety of forms and media, including installation, performance art, video, and computer technology. His early exposure to computer technology was from his childhood with his father, who worked for an aerospace technology corporation and brought home a calculator, which at the time was the cutting edge of high tech gadgetry. Recollecting his childhood, he believed that the early exposure to high tech gadgetry has encouraged him to explore the evolving computer technology since then and now he felt comfortable to utilize it for his art practice. Albeit, Oliveri did not view that his art lies on the medium of computer technology. He considered that concept is prior to anything in art. He mentioned that French post-structuralists Lyotard and Baudrillard, had influenced his thinking significantly.

Process

“Process” involves the act of making artworks. In this study, the act is considered in terms of (a) the creative process, which is a set of actions that make up the state that selected artists feel and their creative decision-making as they are making works of art, (b) the technical process, which incorporates the use of various media that can be both digital and non-digital, as installed and manipulated on the Internet, and (c) frustrations and obstacles that selected artists encountered during their processing of artworks. Although the proportion of involving of technical and creative processes among the three selected artists varies by their very different types of practice on the Internet, process plays an extremely important role to each of the three selected artists.

Creative process

Each of the artists studied has different creative processes. Martin’s creative process is the most spontaneous and intuitive among the three selected artists. She believed that the creative process cannot be separated from the technical process, and is very reliant on the capabilities of her choice of artistic and computer media. Her creative process has gone through a transition from expressive imagery-making and hypertext writing to stricter computer programming, yet she would work back and forth between the emotional expression and rational configuration. Cheang’s creative process varies from works to works. She would spend one or two months to ponder and muse over ideas and concepts and to develop a rough conceptual framework of her works. For instance, most of Cheang’s works involve both large groups and teamwork, along with month-long time frames, so during the months of processing her work, she would have

multiple opportunities to change her mind and ideas. Many different factors in terms of political, technical, mass communication, and management between her teams, participants, and organizations who sponsored her works could significantly change her creative process. Oliveri did not give a specific description of his creative process, yet he mentioned that he processed artworks based on the concept of “cause and effect.” He maintained that different uses of media would not change his creative process. He sees his creative process as “raising a question” and his art lies on nothing but concepts.

Technical process

Each of the three selected artists has works that require different skills in creating the works, which present opportunities for collaboration, especially in the technical arena. Martin is the only artist interviewed who creates her works without collaborators, since she is skilled enough in all the technical aspects required to complete her works. In contrast, most of Cheang’s Internet artworks which require computer programming and other technical manipulation have been produced and implemented in collaboration with a third party. Cheang’s works usually involve a myriad of complicated computer skills. In the case of “Garlic=Rich Air,” Cheang filmed several events that required integration into a website, which itself required an online trading system, that involved not only computer graphic artists, but web developers, database and Java programmers to produce. As she took credit for “conception” and cooperated with technical teams, Cheang acted as a manager or director of several teams. Although Cheang did not accomplish every technical detail by herself, she needed to know different types of computer languages, know how to utilize different skills to achieve her goals, and know who to hire and how to communicate with technical experts, as well as being able to communicate with the production group on a conceptual level. Oliveri has created projects alone in which he used his own skills in video, installation, web animation and HTML to install his works on the Internet. However, he has also created works in collaboration, for example in a work that required a Global Position System to track participants’ physical status, he relied on other high tech cooperation to produce the complicated website with such tracking functions.

Frustrations and Obstacles

Martin mentioned one of her biggest frustrations came from the updating of technology. As a result of commercial competition, many computer programming languages and technologies update in a very short period, and users and artists probably are the victims as a

result. After a year hard work her artwork ended up invisible on the web because of outdated technology. Most of Cheang's frustration and obstacles lie with communication and social issues. Since Cheang's works usually tickled many sensitive issues such as sexuality, technology, and intellectual properties, she has encountered problems of being unable to reach mass public and has to deal with governmental censorship. Although Oliveri did not express very clearly his frustrations, he stated "Money changed my works."

Expressive Means

"Expressive means" refers to any ideas expressed and embodied in the artworks installed on the Internet. The (a) particular subject matter and conceptual content that the artworks address are of import; (b) as is the artists' consideration of aesthetic, spirituality, and transcendent experiences, if any; and (c) any outside influences that may affect the content or provide inspirations to selected artists, are sought to lend insights into their reasoning for working in the environment of the Internet.

Subject matter and conceptual content

Although each of the three artists has different subject matters and conceptual content in their works, the three artists were all concerned with endowing their works with potent conceptual content. The meanings embodied in their works can be interpreted from different perspectives, yet the concern for communication pervades all of the three artists' practices. Martin and Oliveri have been working on many works with different subject matters with a consistent conceptual content, and Cheang's subject matter and conceptual content varied from project to project, dependent on with which sponsors and organizations she worked. Martin expressed that she had a longitudinal concern of feminist issues as her subject matter. By using the specific functions that hypertext and web browsers carry, she intended to create works that reflect the structure and the setting of human minds, as well as challenging the concepts of first person autobiography. Oliveri has been creating works in different forms and media with the same subject matter, "cause and effect," as he explained. By showing the looping of various scenarios, for instance, wherein a video clip shows rats circulating in exercising wheels, he intended to convey a sense of the imbecility of life. The conceptual content in most of his works is about the "hierarchy" and "colonization of participants." He created works as posing questions, and generates various scales of hierarchy by making events happen. He explained this concept by giving an example of thinking about what "humor" meant. "You laugh because you

understand. Usually you are laughing at something or someone. The humor is a very dangerous thing. You always laugh 'at' something, to somebody who is less hierarchy scale than you because you are able to laugh at that." He connects his concept of evoking a hierarchy scale with colonization. When creating a work, he "colonizes" participants instead of "inviting" them. For Oliveri, the Internet is a tool for him to evoke events to happen, and the participants of the event composing a set of actions are his media. The subject matter of Cheang's recent Internet art project "Garlic=Rich Air" was from a grant proposal "Challenge to the Field" set by the Lyn Blumenthal memorial foundation. Being given a project sponsored by a memorial for video artist Lyn Blumenthal, she considered the subject matter would deal with her desire to reconnect with the earth and her local friends. "All this time I have been on the Internet, been traveling, and at a certain point this whole virtual being is taking over you," she said. By conducting a project that called for friends of media art to be involved in a garlic harvesting in a farm physically and online trading virtually, and trade the digital bytes with real garlic in the street of New York city, the conceptual content of this project was to hack into the Internet ecological system to reform a community that connected people together.

Aesthetic consideration, spirituality, and transcendent experiences

Although all three of the selected artists could not express their aesthetic consideration, spirituality, and transcendent experiences in a very explicit manner, they all took these elements into account when creating artworks. Martin took aesthetic consideration into two accounts, one the visual and the other metaphorical, and both play extremely important roles in her making of art. At the visual level, aesthetic consideration carried her expression throughout the work. In a metaphorical sense, she intended to convey intimate feelings and emotions of unease of human's daily life, to communicate with viewers in order to pursue a level of inner peace and comfort. Cheang viewed her art as carrying formalist aesthetics in a conceptual way. In the level of visual presentation, she cared about the camera work and the web sites to be presented in a clean, simply formed, balanced composition design. At the conceptual level, she was concerned about the abstract nature of her concepts. "My work is about building up forms and structures, conceptually." Oliveri expressed that all of his works were conceptual. In the level of visual presentation, he cared about the details very much, as much detail as how he wrapped the electronic cords and how he designed his personal web site. At a conceptual level, he stressed that the combination of aesthetic, spirituality, and transcendent experience was his major

concern, and he defined the combination of the three considerations as “poetic,” and it was equal to his definition of art.

Outside influences and inspirations

All three artists have named outside influences and inspirations in their making of art, and these thinkers, writers, artists were named are very important to each artist. According to Martin, feminist thoughts and Shelly Jackson, a feminist cyber fiction writer, had great impact on her creating art. Martin felt that gender inequality from the offline world had been brought into the Internet environment. Although she did not delve deeply into the reasons why the Internet was male oriented, she said, “I think a certain degree of men will work to keep women out, again, not overtly. I don’t think it’s a conscious thing.” With the same agenda from feminist writer Shelly Jackson, Martin has created many nonlinear, tree-like structures of works with intimate female voices.

Cheang’s cultural influences are numerous and varied. They include abstract expressionism, formalism, and feminist thoughts. The cultural and political climate in and around the late 1970s and 1980s, the heyday of multiculturalism and New Left in New York City, has cast her thoughts. She expressed that media activist Dee Dee Halleck and feminist writers concerned with technology such as Donna Haraway, Sadie Plant, Jennifer Terry, artists such as Bill Viola, art communities and others who had been leading the field, are all importantly tied to her creating artworks. Oliveri mentioned that French theorists Baudrillard and Lyotard, were writers he admired.

Conceptualization of Internet Art

Among the three selected artists, two tended to leave the concept of what Internet art is open. Cheang stated, “In the field right now, it’s not so much like someone should particular stand out, because everybody is trying to get a hold of the medium still.” Martin held a belief that having an open mind to accept and discuss various types of works is the best way to enable Internet art to be fruitful. “You have to take it for what the artist says it is,” said Martin. She considered the “passionate part” of a work the most important to bring audiences toward to an artwork, with the same holding for an Internet art piece. She described what she considered an optimal external condition for experiencing Internet art as an encounter with it by an unpremeditated mindset within a personal space defined by curiosity. Yet it is here wherein lies the difficulties in creating an Internet art piece that stands out. Because of the anonymous nature of Internet art, more “passion” and “concepts” are required to survive without artists or gallery

owners standing next to pieces to explain them to audiences. Michael Oliveri offered a very thorough description to delineate what he holds that Internet art should be, along with his definition of art. For Oliveri, Internet art falls into the category of conceptual art. An audience member does not necessarily need to be on the Internet to encounter the art piece. He gave an instance of a hacker's creation which causes some events to happen. People could appreciate the event not by participating in the event, but by reading or hearing about it in the mass media. By recalling or knowing the event, the audience could feel what he calls its "poetics." Oliveri held a tenet for himself that art is about "being poetic," and he interpreted poetic as "a contained contradiction" and a hierarchical sense of self-critique.

Perceptions of Internet Environment

The Effects of Internet Technology

Martin believes that Internet art carries certain functions and expressions that other traditional art media could not carry. Cheang and Oliveri believed otherwise, that the use of medium and technology would not change their expressions through their works of art. Although Cheang did not state definitively whether the medium changed her expression or not, her utilization of the Internet as a tool to depict the "web-scape" as Internet ecology, can be compared to her use of a camcorder to film the ecology of landscape. Among the three selected artists, Oliveri was the most sure that the use of Internet technology would not change his ideals, concepts, or expressions through his artworks. His reason was that his idea of art was purely conceptual and poetic, and that he can convey his expression through different types of technologies. He said that the use of Internet did not change his mind; nevertheless, he admitted that "the Internet will come handy in making art" because his conceptual theme of making artworks lies with the idea of cause and effect.

Interactivity with Audience

Although Martin's artworks are installed on the web and require audiences to "click" on the hypertexts, links, and imageries, she did not have much experience of directly interacting with her audiences; therefore she did not know the differences between the effects she intended to create and what Internet audiences received. Cheang believed that she totally had no control over the audiences' response and she could not predict the result of her work. Oliveri stated that he had "total control" of his intended audiences, "I know exactly; I know what parameter I am allowing my viewers to have; I give my viewers what I want to give them." He held that his

works are about “colonizing” the participants, and his art does not require the audience’s activation. Regardless, he admitted that hosting video clips artworks and website on the Internet did give him an unexpected effect, which was that he obtained a career as a chairperson of digital art program in University of Georgia. “I did not even consider I would take this job because I wasn’t in the digital art arena...to teach technical things weren’t (*sic*) my goal.”

Interpretations of Three Artists’ Artworks

Certain currently meaningful inferences can be drawn from my interpretations of recent artworks by the selected artists. Certain issues arose consistently and collectively about the character and content embodied in the works installed on the Internet by the three selected artists practicing in the United States in 2002. The following findings emerged from the combined analyses of these works: conceptual abstraction, pragmatic concerns, queries of interactivity, and intermingled practices of modern and postmodern aesthetics.

Conceptual Abstraction

In my interpretations, each artist’s work is conceptually abstract. Among these three artists, Oliveri alone did not describe details about his work (in progress) which utilizes technologies of the Internet and the Global Positioning System to achieve his ideas, and neither did I interpret this work due to the insufficiency of the description from the interview with him. According to the interview, Oliveri said that his art lies in concepts and for him, the Internet was merely a tool to achieve his ideas. His conceptual content was to build the hierarchy of the art, and to express a sense of the redundancy of circulated scenarios of life. Cheang’s work “Garlic=Rich Air” has conceptually challenged the system of the Internet infrastructure by creating a network locally followed by a virtual trading club. By trading the physical and virtual garlic, the work has brought audiences to ponder what the exchange value is about and what the Internet is. Martin’s artwork “Instant Future” has made audiences confront several issues by expressing intimate messages from women—when viewing the work, it is very likely to evoke questions in the viewer’s mind, such as who is telling the story, and why are these secret images and diary presented in a such capricious way. All of these works are interpreted as having conceptual abstraction in terms of the self-critique of Internet technologies and Internet communication.

Pragmatic expression

The concepts, ideas, performances, actions, and web sites with images, video clips, and texts of the three artists translate into content relevant to contemporary life. Of the artists studied, Cheang concentrates most on the social ramification of her work. Although she considered herself a conceptual formalist as evidenced in some of her camera works that were very formalistically designed, the theme and subject matters of her works change over time. Cheang's works have consistently been grounded in social and political concerns, very recently concerning the consequences of several crash scenarios and sexuality issues. By creating events, her works raise questions for participants to ponder, such as the ecosystem of the Internet, the redistribution of human energies in different aspects, and the rearrangement of value judgments.

Martin's concerns in most of her works fall under the umbrella of feminist issues. The styles and techniques of her works range from linear to nonlinear narratives, hypertexts to web animations, yet all the works have been voiced from a woman to express the uneasiness of the contemporary life. Oliveri has described his conceptualization of Internet art as very poetic. Nevertheless, it is a fact that a web site he does not consider as an artwork communicates explicit concerns and has brought the artist powerful responses from his audience. A well constructed and designed web site that documents the artist's works and shows the artist's technical ability has brought him an unexpected position as a chairperson of a digital art program.

Concerns with Interactivity

The three artists all have concerns about the seemingly unique characteristic of the Internet, that of interactivity. For Martin, the users' clicking of her linear narrative will activate animations and a Java scripted window, which play parts in the composition of this work. The unusual part of this work is that Martin did not utilize the nonlinear ability of hypertext, which she has utilized in many of her other hypertext pieces. The unusual piece has challenged me, as a member of her audience, to think about the differences and the necessity of interactivity from a linear work and non-linear work.

Cheang's call for participants gathering in a physical location has reflected what she said in the interview. Although many people may think of the Internet as a public sphere and a mass communication venue, "...people are so lonely when on the Internet," said Cheang. With the belief that an Internet community cannot exist without locally existing, her work brought Internet

users to interact with each other in a physical location and then transform the group to the virtual space.

The concept of interactivity has been well discussed among Internet artists and theorists as presented in Chapter Two and the findings in particular reflect Manovich's view of interactivity (2001). Characterizing computer media as interactive is meaningless because it simply states a basic fact about the computer. The artists studied investigated interactivity at a conceptual level, instead of the visible buttons shown on the interface of a web page.

Intermingled Practices of Modern and Postmodern Aesthetics

As the practice of dealing with concepts and contents was well emphasized by the three selected artists, the consideration of traditional aesthetic discourse is visible through selected works from each artist studied. Form, colors, and the visible properties are well exhibited through their works by carefully arranged compositions and the structures of files. Even for the most social/political artist in this study, Cheang, the idea of self critique in terms of concept of the Internet has been practiced in "Garlic = Rich Air" using formal means as well as conceptual content. In terms of traditional aesthetic discourse in the visual properties of Martin's work, the Jean Dubuffet-like drawing is a major component in the expressive nature of her work as she focuses on issues of feminism. From examining Cheang and Martin's works, it becomes clear that even though the modernist ideas of art are presented, nonetheless these works require being "talked" into existence via the linguistic conventions of the institutional theory of art. In other words, they become art through the linguistic process of definition that exemplifies postmodern aesthetics without denying the presence of more visually modernist explorations of form.

Summary of Findings

Analyses of interviews with three selected artists and interpretations of their works installed on the Internet yielded the findings discussed in the preceding session. Each category of coding, i.e., process, expressive means, conceptualization of Internet art, educational experiences, and social/cultural ramification, aesthetic experiences, and interpretation of artworks, has been summarized as it relates to the quality of three selected artists' practices in the environment of the Internet. Through these analyses and related discussion, I attempted to answer my primary research question: "What are the nature and quality of three selected artists' experiences in using the Internet as an artistic medium?"

Implications for Studio Art Education in Technologically Based Environment

In the following section I discuss implications relevant to the findings of this study for post-secondary studio art education in technologically based environments. These implications begin to answer the second part of the primary research question in terms of discussing how the work installed on the Internet as well as the remarks of three selected artists, are relevant to contemporary post-secondary art education in technologically based environments.

The Practice of Internet Art

Interactivity

A characteristic of HTML is that it allows artists to create art pieces with unlimited links. Yet whether the hypertext works are linear or nonlinear, the fact is that the text exhibited is not unstructured; a text with multiple links is nonetheless organized by the artist with his or her structured mind. The physical level of interactivity merely embodies a function of computer media. However, in terms of interactivity, the three artists studied here do take the design of interface into consideration. The function of interface to an Internet artwork, can be seen as the function of a frame to a painting. The design of interface may benefit the presentation of an artwork. Interactivity at a conceptual level nevertheless is not a new concept in art either. Any piece of artwork demands audience attention, observation, response and re-attention. However, the three selected artists in this study are concerned with the interaction between audiences and with audiences, since Internet technology is not only a choice of artistic media but also a communication tool. A self critique of Internet infrastructure in terms of interactivity thus becomes a theme, as well as a reflection of the need for interaction between people to people, not users to machines.

In terms of technologically based art education, an emphasis on human communication needs to be drawn. As each student artist sits in front of a computer to process artwork or to dwell on the Internet, their experience can be solitary. Although solitude is necessary for humans in some parts of our lives, spending too much time alone with machines can cause one to be alienated from the human world. This clearly is not the rationale for technology, nor does it forward the purpose of constructing one's well being. To be overwhelmed or obsessed with the medium is truly a misuse of technology.

Concept of Happening as Aesthetic Experiencing of Internet Art

According to Atkins (1997), artist Allan Kaprow championed conceptual art as an interactive form of communication. What the viewer of conceptual art saw in the gallery was simply a document of the artist's thinking (p. 74). Bringing this concept forward as one views Cheang's and Oliveri's works, the web sites with images and texts installed on the Internet are merely documentation of their thoughts. Their art lies in the events happening between the interactions of participants and the artists, albeit through the work installed on the Internet. Martin also described her optimal way of experiencing Internet art as a curious person surfing on the Internet in a private space. As the user encountering a work of Internet art, "the experience becomes part of it,...you are on the net, you are having this personal connection, and it happens. And if you feel something for the work, you do; and if you don't, it's ok...You aren't being told what to experience," Martin explained. A conceptual artist's job, Oliveri expressed, is to raise a question and "it's done." In terms of Internet art, the artist raises a question to a giant system. Three artists' concepts as revealed from the data depict a scenario of Singerman's view of the practice of postmodernism (Singerman, 1999). Singerman compares the theorizing of postmodernism to Michael Fried's writing of viewing minimal art: it is the "the viewer's sense of temporal duration" and the "experiential nature" that fall into the account of art... 'it depends on the beholder, is incomplete without him, it has been waiting for him', the viewers being there, self consciously experiencing his own presence with the work, completes the work and provided it experience: the time and the experience becomes the work of art" (Singerman, 1999, p. 175). As when John Dewey (1938) defines art as experience, the experiences of Internet art vary depending upon the location and temporal duration of the beholders.

As the findings from the inquiry of three selected artists show, all three artists' works require space, physical space or cyber space, computer technologies, and community audiences. Without these components, an Internet artwork cannot be formed into its being. In this regard, art institutions play crucial roles. As part of art institutions, a university art department plays a role, as a link that offers the technologies, the space, and the funding to form the network and politics of Internet art. In teaching and learning of art, criticism needs to be done. Although the studio critique activity is commonly practiced, it usually focuses on technical aspects due to the fact that the issue "how to use the tool" is more easily discussed because the tools are visible, where

as the human feelings embodied in artworks take caring minds, more time, more consideration, and more linguistic practice to find and discuss with words.

Techniques, Medium, and the Message

Although artists are not computer scientists, these three artists all reached the consensus that technique is not the major aspect of creating artworks, yet it is necessary to have a foundation of technical knowledge in order to know the functions of different computer technologies. Martin and Oliveri both possess traditional art techniques and an ability to work with computer technologies. From the interviews, it became clear that it is necessary to: 1) eliminate the fear of computer technology; 2) have basic skills in web technology; 3) have the ability to learn new technology by the artists themselves; 4) understand how different technologies function; and 5) have the ability to utilize technologies that have been stabilized and standardized. These are the required strategies of learning techniques in Internet art. Oliveri expressed that the technology itself shouldn't be what is taught, "we don't teach technology", yet he felt that in order to utilize the tools to create art, one needs to be comfortable enough to use the tools. It verified what Singerman (1999) pointed out regarding American art education in universities: artists are not technically trained on campus, yet they need to be in the art programs. The paradoxical nature of art programs is seen here: how, if the computer techniques are not what should be taught, can one get comfortable enough to use the tool? I would like to suggest that in order to utilize a tool and to be comfortable enough with the tool, one needs to learn how to use it well first. The step of 'de-skillizing' should come after being skillized. Yet, it needs to be emphasized that the process of skillizing in computer technology is not to foster an alienated being, it is to achieve the activity of creating art.

Artistic Ability, Traditional Art Media Training

With different art education backgrounds, the three selected artists practice Internet art with different concepts. Cheang brought concepts from cinema. As a video artist, she used to film people's activities in the landscape. With the Internet sphere, she intended to depict the Internet users' "nativities" on the "webscape," as she phrased it. Trained as a visual artist with skills in paintings, drawing, and digital technology, Martin felt that to bring the "organic," humanistic, and earthy feelings to the online environment was very important. Seeing that the online environment was mostly male oriented, she wished to project a woman's voice to communicate with the female audience. Utilizing her training as a painter, she created many

Internet artworks that carry very intimate feelings rather than the cookie cutter, readymade images from machines. Oliveri, with his familiarity of different electronic technologies and languages of conceptual art, has built a Bauhaus-style web site to communicate with people in the art world as well as presenting a Happening piece to bring an event forward between participants and technology. These are all evidence of how artists incorporate their formal training in different types of art, and it is this training that makes Internet art fruitful and multilayered. It would appear to be beneficial that a technologically based art program also includes the more traditional studio art courses in order to foster creative production and conceptualization of Internet art.

The Expression of Internet Art

Reloading of Human Feelings

The three selected artists studied have produced many types of art with different subject matters. Yet there is a commonality in their works other than being installed on the Internet, which is the expression of organic, earthy feelings in terms of the concern of human lives in relation to technology. Whether it is Martin scanning her body images and sketches of trees in the park to incorporate into a hypertext art piece or Cheang calling for artists through the Internet to participate in a garlic farm harvesting or Oliveri talking about his in-progress work to make a person's physical status visible on the Internet, they represent the artists' desire to make a reconnection between the earthy feelings of human beings' lives. Their expressions have challenged some common perceptions that digital and media based artworks created with a commercial web applications package, or composed by complicated, cold, scientific codes, could only be appreciated by a limited group of people. In terms of art education, it is suggested that the message of computer technology is merely a type of human production instead of being an end in itself, and this understanding needs to be delivered to students. How to make the practice of technology assist the real need of human daily life in its many different aspects must be addressed as well as the limitations of Internet technology.

Tacit Knowledge of Civil Disobedience

Cheang considered herself "conceptually hacked into the Internet infrastructure," and Oliveri considered the works of hackers' codes as Internet art. He also mentioned that "the hacker manifesto," which is an anonymous personal statement published to the Internet that has been well discussed among the communities of digital culture, was delivered to his classroom.

Both Cheang and Oliveri thus brought up a point of view from the perspective of “cyberpunks”(Schneider, 1994; Wu, 1999). In general, cyberpunk deals with marginalized people in a technologically-enhanced cultural system. The system usually refers to one or that which dominates the lives of ordinary people, be it an oppressive government, a group of large, paternalistic corporations, or a fundamentalist religion. These systems are enhanced by certain technologies, particularly information technology. The technological system extends into the human body as well, through such means as biochips, brain implants, or gene engineering (Schneider, 1994). According to Zou Le Wu’s summarization (1999), the cyberpunks’ strategy is to utilize civil disobedience to go against some selected groups of those who oppress and exploit people through the Internet. Usually those who are considered cyberpunks include avant garde artists, new age groups, computer players, and environmental groups. They have two characteristics in common:

- 1) Extreme distrust of the mass media;
- 2) Use of technology to go against the “immoral” systems (usually refers to large international corporations) by congregating ordinary individuals (Wu. 1999. p. 52).

Similar to the characteristics of cyberpunk, Cheang’s congregating the “friends of the media and media artists” through Internet technology in an earthy farm to discuss the giant systems of media art, and Oliveri’s delivering the spirit of the hacker “to create something nonviolent but act violently,” correspond with a critical metaphor for educational purpose pointed out by Garoian and Gaudelius (2001). Garoian and Gaudelius conceptualize these attributes of “Hacking” from Andrews Ross (1991) and apply them to the realm of digital art education. As they summarized, the act of hacking:

- 1) performs a benign industrial service of uncovering security deficiencies and design flaws;
- 2) as an experimental, free-form research activity, has been responsible for many of the most progressive developments in software development;
- 3) when not being purely recreation, is an elite educational practices that reflects the ways in which the development of high technology has outpaced orthodox forms of institutional education;

- 4) is an important form of watchdog counter response to the use of surveillance technology and data gathering by the state, and to the increasing monolithic communications power of giant corporations;
- 5) as a guerrilla act, is essential to the task of maintaining fronts of cultural resistance and stocks of oppositional knowledge as a hedge against a technofascist future. (Garoian and Gaudelius, 2001, pp 344-345; Ross, 1991, pp. 113-114)

The perspective of “hacking” as identified above and the related expression of civil disobedience may serve as a tactic for art education in the technologically based environment. In this regard, a sense of curiosity to explore technological aspects and social aspects of the current world should be highly encouraged while ethical consideration is extremely important as well. With the advancing of technology, deciding how to utilize this technology to improve human society should become an educational priority.

The Nature of Internet Art and Art Program in Post-Secondary School

The three selected artists all referred to their Internet artworks as conceptual art. Oliveri especially noted that “no art exists outside of concepts;” therefore, he was not very sure if there was such a category as “Internet art,” since for him every type of art fell into the category of “conceptual art.” Cheang considered herself as a ‘certified’ conceptual artist who utilizes different media as tools to express her ideas, yet she acknowledged that there were diverse genres of Internet art. In this regard, she held a similar conception of Internet art with Martin. Martin believes that an artist intermediated whether a work is an Internet art or not, therefore it would allow the category of “Internet art” to be an open concept for evolving. Yet, combining data gathered from interviews and examinations of three artists works, it is found that not only the physical properties have been absent since the digital byte is virtual, but the visual properties of artworks also have not been the major body. The aesthetics lie on the meta-narrative of digital culture, which relies on the self critique of the ecosystem of the Internet art, including the artworld, the Internet users, the computer technology industrials, and the new emerging field (i.e., universities that offer studio art programs in technologically based environment, named as programs of “digital art,” “computer art,” “interactive art,” “media art,”...etc.). Different art programs with different names might hold different philosophies toward what art should be, however, all of these art programs play the same role as gatekeepers to this field. The anonymous nature of Internet art as Martin mentioned thus would not be anonymous anymore; the utopian

version of disintermediation of the artworld ecosystem of Internet art might not be disintermediated anymore. The self published feature of Internet technology has encouraged an assumption that the emerging of Internet art would be a disintermediation of the artworld system, if we see the Internet as a public sphere in which any one with basic knowledge of the Internet technology would be able to publish or perform their work of art online. That might be a reasonable assumption if Internet art were presented as one type, the type of web piece that only visually exists on the World Wide Web. Yet, from the review of literature and data gathered from the three selected artists, the findings have shown that Internet art does not only exist online, but has been conceptually practiced and presented in different forms and techniques.

Even if the term Internet art only refers to a simple hypertext piece hosted by a server, as Cheang pointed out in her interview, publishing a work online does not mean everyone will see it. The choice of where to surf, to link, to click, which URL to locate, needs to be advertised, and it is the institutions and the gatekeepers of the artworld who talk a piece of Internet artwork into existence. Furthermore, as more and more universities start to include the Internet as an artists platform and incorporate Internet technology as part of their studio art programs, Internet art would never be disintermediated.

When Oliveri stated that a program of studio art in the technologically based environment would need “its own history,” the gatekeepers again would build a hierarchical system in the field . With the nature of Internet art being conceptual and without physical properties, it exists in a sphere called “cyberspace” that only exists in the Internet users’ minds. The degree of subjectivity and abstraction can be more than we can imagine as compared to other types of art with perceptual properties. In comparison with the “aura” of what Walter Benjamin (1968) has described in his article "*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, such an “aura” might have evaporated from the perceptual properties of mechanically reproduced art without yet disappearing. However, Benjamin’s assumption that the aura in printed images and films lies in the audiences’ “absent mind” cannot be applied in the appreciation of Internet art. The aura of Internet art thus would be produced by the university that holds the dialectic practice of postmodernism in art, and it requires the audiences’ and artists’ presence of minds to generate the languages and texts it creates and is created by.

Postsecondary students thus need to understand not only the techniques and processes of creating Internet art, but also the similarly evolving nature of the Internet itself. Both technique

and environment continuously change, and are even more fluid than the more traditional art world, no matter how avant garde it may be considered. Students, and the persons who teach them, must draw upon that fluidity to develop their own fluid approach to making and critiquing Internet art, and to finding its places in their lives and the larger environment. Ethical issues, including those raised through feminist inquiry into the apparently gendered nature of the Internet, are as important as aesthetic ones in this regard, and must be dealt with in the postsecondary classroom as readily as are technical and conceptual issues.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Further studies of more contemporary artists' experiences with Internet technology and their related works would be useful in expanding the scope of this study. How do other artists and art educators view the Internet as an environment for art? What are the implications for art education of knowing difficult technological techniques as opposed to having others do one's programming and related tasks? How much is the minimal amount that one should know in terms of technology in order to consider oneself an Internet artist? Is, as Oliveri contended, real art only the conceptual part of the process or is the nature and quality of the visual product on the Internet, however virtual, the crux of the matter?

Further findings and implications could be made toward discovering women artists' perceptions of the Internet in particular, and whether there is a predominantly male Internet influence. If so, what are the factors that cause and maintain this off-balance between genders in this environment? Research focused on feminist art and technology, before it is categorized and historicalized, may help to generate some information which can be translated toward educational relevance, and implemented while it is of current feminist concern.

The practices of working women artists will continue to be rich as a source of research data. For example, Juliet Martin used humor as a way to express the feminist issues with which she was concerned. Her humorous styles of creating artworks are odd, yet express a sense of disturbance that challenges the audiences. Her skillful formal training in visual art and obvious caring for human feelings has created an easy atmosphere, yet reaches toward the effect of demystification. On the surface of her artworks, the feminine narrators of her pieces seem

somehow sensitive and intellectual. When reaching some essential issues of unease, they show us an attitude of avoidance; they live in a usual urban life, not satisfied yet with no complaints. On the surface it seems that the voice in her works has no specific faith yet it might be the most free and radical. When being impacted by the outside environment, it might express some unexpected voices, such as the voice of “Instant Future,” which seemed a weak woman in a temporarily circulating mood. Yet as a viewer, it is impossible to draw a conclusion of the story. Through her works depicting the events of love, pressure, and sexuality, she reveals intimate personal issues in a public sphere as an expression of a self-confident, contemporary woman. The love story is a complicated, interwoven referential text in her works.

Shu Lea Cheang’s creation of art in various types and themes in different times, in various physical space, and from online to the cyberspace of audiences’ minds, does not mean she enjoys the postmodern condition. Contradictorily, the interweaving of time and space may be an expression of the nomad, a self-exile’s strategy of adventure or escape. Her reflection of anxiety may be more than other women artists have expressed. Taking off the veil of the romantic view of the nomadic, the featured works of Cheang’s are worthy of observation. The appearance of women artists in terms of cyberpunks reveals the framing of women’s voices in the artworld of the Internet.

Through this study, I only scratched the surface of inquiry into contemporary practices of Internet art and the nature of the Internet as an environment for and medium of contemporary art. New studies with more in-depth case studies, particularly with women artists, are suggested as fertile ground for continuing research for art education.

Chapter Summary

In the first section of this chapter, I discussed the findings of the investigation of the inquiry of three selected artists’ internalization. These findings were based on a qualitative analysis of the artists’ interviews as they revealed their conceptualization of Internet art, their creative process and technical process of creating art, their perception of the Internet environment, their educational/learning experiences, as well as their teaching experience as art educators. The significance and meaning of the findings as they pertain to the three selected

artists were discussed. In addition, my perceptions concerning the content discussed in the interpretation and description of each artist's work were presented.

From the findings related to the practice of the three selected contemporary artists, implications relevant to post-secondary art education in technologically based environment were drawn. These implications are recommended to post-secondary school technologically based art programs. Each implication was directly related to a finding pertaining to the data gathered from the inquiry of the internalization of three selected artists presented in Chapter Four along with the literature review in Chapter Two. These implications were titled and discussed as the practice of Internet art (interactivity, Happening as Internet art, techniques and the message, artistic ability), expression of Internet art (reloading of human feelings, tacit knowledge of civil disobedience), and the nature of Internet art and art programs in post-secondary school. These implications referred back to and reflect the concept of the system model of creativity discussed in the review of philosophical foundation in Chapter Two.

CONCLUSIONS

With the data gathered from literature review and the inquiry of the internalization of individual artists, this study has collected data from the model of creativity. To sum up the study, the practice of Internet art can be seen as interconnected among 1) Domain, as the diffusion of art and the Internet technology, which intermingled with two very different symbolic systems; 2) Field, as filter of contemporary art and technology, which includes the discussion of various opinions from theorists, art critics, curators, art commentators, and art educators who play the roles of gatekeepers, and 3) Individual internalization, as the data gathered from three selected artists. While viewing Internet art as the link that connects different fields, this study has also found several cracks in post-secondary art education in technological based environment. These cracks can be discussed from several aspects: 1) the descending narrative of traditional aesthetic discourse, 2) the forever present battleground of means and the message, and 3) the misplacement of interactivity between human and machines. To bridge these gaps, art criticism plays a crucial role. The dialectic practice is where one can translate the descending narrative of art into our current world without condemning the paradoxical nature between art and technology, the conflicting interest between the media and the message. However, those who don't realize the interconnectedness between the paradox and conflicts will fall into the cracks of post-secondary art education in the technological based environment. To bridge the gaps, I would like to suggest that one view the new sphere of Internet environment as a part of our life space. The absence of the physical cannot make the terms of "cyberspace" void, instead, it centers upon each Internet user's interaction with one's contemporaneous psychological environment, and the practice of Internet art presents the insights, the sense of, or feelings for, patterns or relationships in a Internet user's life situations to help one to understand oneself or the other better. Internet art plays a role for us to ponder the relationships between human and machines, and the meanings between art and technologies. Ultimately, art and the Internet are both tools for human beings communicating with each other. Combining them together, it

concerns human's life. In terms of Internet art, it is a battle ground between the means and the end, or the means and the message. In terms of art education, the practice of Internet art negotiates between something which remains to be determined and something that cannot be determined.

The challenge for the teachers and developers of post-secondary technologically based art education is to complement technical aspects of Internet technologies as well as traditional artistic mediums, with the practice of art criticism, and, thus to redraw the role of Internet technology. It is also suggested that to emphasize the communication of human feelings, the interactions between human to human, as well as a tacit knowledge of civil disobedience, can be discussed in art programs with substantial and contemporary relevant meaning.

APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER



Office of the Vice President
for Research
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2763
(850) 644-8673 • FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

from the Human Subjects Committee

Date: July 19, 2001

From: David Quadagno, Chair *DQ/ph*

To: Ying-Yi-Chou
1311 Jefferson Circle, South
Chamblee, GA 30341

Dept: Art Education

Re: Use of Human subjects in Research
Project entitled: Internet Art: Culture, Practice, And Its Implications For Art Education

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be exempt per 45 CFR § 46.101(b)2 and has been approved by an accelerated review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals which may be required.

If the project has not been completed by July 18, 2002 you must request renewed approval for continuation of the project.

You are advised that any change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must promptly report, in writing, any unexpected problems causing risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols of such investigations as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Protection from Research Risks. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: S. McRorie
APPLICATION NO. 01.303

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I freely and voluntarily and without element of force or coercion, consent to be a participant in the research project entitled “Internet as Creative Environment: Practice and Explorations with Internet Technology of Three Selected Artists ”. This research is being conducted by Ying- Yi Chou, who is a Ph.D. candidate in Art education at Florida State University. The purpose of collecting data is for the dissertation.

The purpose of her research project is to investigate the experiences and practice of selected artists who use the Internet as primary environment for their artworks. I will be asked about my creative processes and art experience. Also, I will offer my insights to this research that will make suggestions for studio art teaching and learning.

I understand that I will be asked to participate in interviews by electronic mail and instant messaging. I understand my participation is totally voluntary and I may stop participation at any time. I understand that my identity will be published, and therefore I waived confidentiality. I understand that the transcript of my interview will be included as an appendix to this dissertation.

I understand that this consent may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice or penalty. I have been given the right to ask and have answered any inquiry concerning the study. Questions, if any, have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I may contact Dr. Sally McRorie, professor and chair of the department of Art Education at Florida State University, 126 MCH, (850) 644-1915, Email smcrorie@ mailer.fsu.edu for answers to questions about this research or my rights.

I have read and understand this consent form.

Participant _____ **Date** _____

(print)

(signature)

Researcher _____ **Date** _____

(print)

(signature)

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

- Background and demographic information
 - a. What is your social/cultural/study background?
 - b. Does any of your background enter in your creating Internet art?
 - c. How was it that you first became interested or involved in this field?
 - d. Would you please talk about your educational/learning experiences related to digital art?
 - e. How did you come to be involved with particular types of Internet art that you deal with in your position?
- What is the nature of Internet art as compared to other art forms and techniques?
 - f. Would you please illustrate something you have created recently and describe your process in creating the artwork?
 - g. Would you please explain your creative process and technical process?
 - h. Would you please talk about the employment of media in your artwork?
 - i. What aspects of your utilizing of Internet art do you find most rewarding and satisfying?
 - j. Based on your experience, do you think that Internet artworks carry any quality/function that conventional artworks cannot?
- What are the expressive means used by the artists in producing digitally based art that is intended for Internet audiences?
 - k. What are the subject matters or themes that you convey in your artwork?
 - l. What are your notions, concepts, and emotional expressions toward the artwork?
 - m. Do you associate any aesthetic consideration, transcendent experience or spirituality with your artworks?
 - n. Do the use of Internet and digital technology affect your creating and expressing through works of art? Explain.
- What are the effect of artists' perceptions of intended Internet audiences upon the works?
 - o. Do you have any intended audience that you wish to communicate with? Explain.
 - p. What would be the specific functions that your works of Internet art carry?
 - q. What are the effects that you expect the audiences to perceive?

- What are the effects of interactive audience responses to the Internet artworks?
 - r. In what way do you communicate with your audiences?
 - s. Do you think there are some particular experiences that you have gained from the Internet audiences?
 - t. Do these response affect you in any dimension (technique, point of view, concept, ideas, knowledge...)?
 - u. Do you think any Internet communities will be beneficial for your creative process of art? What would they be and in what respect?
 - v. Do you think any Internet communities will have any negative impacts to your creative process of art? What would they be and in what respect?
 - w. Based on your experience, how should art related to the Internet be taught today?

APPENDIX D

**SELECTED ARTISTS' PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW
TRANSCRIPTS**

Juliet Martin

Selected Professional Information

Lives and works in New York city, NY.

URL of artwork: <http://www.julietmartin.com/future/>

Education

School of Visual Arts, MFA in Computer Art, 1997

Brown University, BA in Visual Arts, 1993.

Selected Experience

1997-present Parson School of Design, Adjunct Professor of Design and Technology program

1998-1999 Parson School of Design, Acting Director of Undergraduate Curricula, Digital Design Department

2000-2001 Plumb Design, Producer, Designer, Writer

Selected exhibition and awards

2002 Unknown/Infinity: Culture and Identity in the Digital Age, Legion Art, Cedar Rapid, Iowa
Digital Thaw 2002, University of Iowa

HOW2, Digital Magazine and Rutgers University archives

2001 International Computer Art forum COMPUTER SPACE 2001. Bulgaria

13th Videobrasil International Electronic Art Festival, Sao Paulo. Brazil

Unknown/Infinity: Culture and Identity in the Digital Age, Chinese Information and Cultural Center at Stephen Gang Gallery, New York, NY

European Media Art Festival, Berlin, Germany

ARTBASE, Rhizome, New York, NK

2000 TownB Digital ArtAward, National Innovation Centre, Australian Technology Park, Sydney, Australia

Festival International de Linguagem Electronica, Museum of Image and Sound, San Paulo, Brazil

1998 Offline@online, New Media Arts Festival

Open Space/Linked Locations, Washington, DC

SIGGRAPH 98 Art Exhibition, TOUCHWARE

International New Media Design Festival, Parson School of Design, New York, NY
L.A. Freewaves Festival, Los Angeles, CA
9th International Symposium on Electronic Art's Revolution

Selected Press

Wands, B. (2001). The artist, culture and identity in the digital age. *NYArts* (6), 6.

Walker, J. (2000). A child's game confused. *Journal of Digital Information*, (1), 7.

Yeo, D. (2000). Juliet Ann Martin. Electronic Puppetry Center. SUNY Buffalo.

Interview transcript

Interview with Juliet A. Martin

New York, New York. July 10, 2002

R: Would you please talk about conceptual content and themes of your works?

J: I...yes, I think I understand what you are asking. I, consider myself as a feminist. Um, although while my works deal with feminists' issues, I'd like to consider myself a person first instead of a "woman artist". You know I don't want this to be a qualifier. So speaking, you know, well, a women artist, compare to an artist, um, although a lot of these issues that I deal with definitely would fall under a feminist's umbrella, trying to confront sexuality, and look at how the perceptions of sexuality can be changed through language and through approach. I also try to look at a more exposed view of experiences women may have, and sort of expose what it may feel like for a women go through an experience that one might not want to talk about normally.

R: Yes...What was the first place you start to deal with these issues?

J: Oh well, in college, when I went to Brown University, and when I was college, I started dealing with these sort of issues and I had a professor who was incredibly influential to me. Her name was Jan Galleon. She was a native American Indian, and she was crazy (Laughing). She was just nuts. She really encouraged us to look inward toward to what we truly believed in, and she really helped me find my voice with regard to women's issues. And you know we also did also crazy pieces and explorations of feminism and it really just seemed like a very natural thing once I was able to find that part of myself, it was a very natural direction to go in.

R: Could you talk about your current job? I knew that you teach...

J: Oh well, It was a class, one of the classes I was teaching last year, was a studio class, more a seminar, where there were ten students and we talked about issues behind interface design and interactive work in general. So it was not specifically dealing with the issue of feminism, it was more dealing trying to help people find their voices and artists related to computer art. They were new students to the graduate program and it was the first class they were taking and so I was helping them trying to find how they wanted to express themselves through art. I would never restrict them to let's say feminism, obviously, but if someone wanted to go in that direction, I was very encouraging. But one of the things I really try to do when I teach, is to really encourage

people to look at their own voice and not what they think they should be doing, but to really find out what they are passionate about and find out with a natural thing for them to do as compared to a constructed voice.

R: So you have been doing visual art since undergraduate?

J: Oh yes I have been doing it since undergraduate, actually since four years old.

R: Can you talk about your educational and learning experiences related to art and digital technology?

J: Oh Yes, yes, I have been my taking art classes forever. My mom enrolled me in a oil painting class when I was four years old, and I remember painting pictures of a circus, the things that I loved, so I painted pictures of the clowns, pictures of elephants, and it was great because, it was really a time for me to experience what I thought was a “grown up” environment, you know, I thought this was the adult environment, I thought “this was very special and this is very exciting”. And one thing I did to sort of to be a part of the environment, what I thought art was , I had a T-shirt so I had to wear to keep the paint off myself, and I decided to be more like a smock it should have to be dirty, so I painted up and painted all over, and so I had my little T-shirt with my paints all over and then I went to the class and everyone was like “oh...she painted all over her T-shirt”(laughing), so I didn't , I didn't look like as mature as I thought I was with my new painted T-shirt. But I had some great art instructors when I was growing up. When I was in high school, I had a very influential art instructor, he was a very rambunctious, very exciting, a very exciting man who really again encouraged me to do what I wanted to do; and you know, he encouraged me to go as far out as crazy as possible. I ended up doing sculptures with feathers all over them and ceramics and it really went all the directions. And I really found what really excited me was this is really a place where I could be myself, you know, I didn't really feel comfortable talking to people in high school; I was very shy. And this was the place I could express myself without criticism.

R: So, um, do you thing your learning of traditional verity of art media benefit your creating art works in the environment of computer technology?

J: Oh, yes, very much so. I think having a background in aesthetics, that I had sort of learning the visual language, really help me to move into a place that I could adopt that language to fit the computer aesthetic itself. And it really allowed me to change things so I could make them into what I want it to be. I already had a voice that I can sort of mold and sculpt within the computer

environment. And one reason why I find it very helpful is I feel there can be a problem with a lot of Internet art where aesthetics aren't really considered. Where it's very conceptual and I find aesthetics to be terribly important to my work, it sort of gives it more of an expression than just a few words per se. And for myself it just enriches my works.

R: I have seen many of your Internet art works installed on your web site. What aspects of your Internet art works do you kind most rewarding and satisfying, and why?

J: (Laughing) Yes, I know, it's a good question. Um, I would say when I am doing the work the most rewarding or satisfying part of it is when I am creating the work, there is a point, there is a specific point when I am creating the work, I'll get really, really excited, and I'll get this surge of energy and it comes from creating the work itself having that moment of passion, and it's a great rush, it's an incredible feeling and it really keeps me going. I mean it so exciting and just mesmerizing. That it is really worth all the work I put into it and it keeps me going.

R: Where does that feeling come from?

J: That's a hard question, sorry (laughing). It's different obviously for different projects since it happens at different times. But I think it's when the ideas start to come together and I start to see what the piece is going to be like at the end. Not in the beginning and not in the end, sort of right when I can start to see the end, when I start to get a vision of what the piece is going to turn out to be like.

R: Would you please talk about your creative processes of an Internet artwork that you have published or created recently that was significantly important to you?

J: Ok, um...I am working on a piece now called "Hyperbody", "h-y-p-e-r-b-o-d-y", and it is a hypertext piece. It's about sensation on the body and it's about body parts, it's dealing with a lot of issues of again, sexuality, and confronting sexuality and really incorporating ideas of sensations with sexuality and have these two things combined into one piece, and with that I also, I have the pieces of text but I also have images that I've made, and the images I made. I made the images first; I went out into the park and drew trees, and then I took my camera at home and scanned my body and I combined the drawing of the trees and the scans of my body and decided that was really dealing with bringing an organic element into computer art which I think sometime is lacking and it's a very little literal translation but I think it's almost necessary at this point. And then I went to a talk given by a writer name Shelly Jackson and she read some of her works, the words just really inspired me because she is an amazing writer, and I thought

well I really have to do something that is related to writing and is related to the images I've been working on. So I started doing a hypertext piece where I would write a piece of text and then write the text that would link to it.

R: yes...

J: So I started writing things that would link together and working with Dreamweaver and using that to link together as I was writing them it was very helpful to be able to use the linking as I was working as compared to writing it and then putting it together. I wrote the text and link them and made the web site at the same time. So being able to sort of collaborate the technical aspect with the conceptual aspect was very important to me. Because that way it doesn't feel like one is forced upon the other. It sort of folded in together. Then I started to incorporate the images which I had made into the hypertext piece, into the web pages so now they have images and text on them. Now I am in a place where I am trying to make the rhythms of the piece more smooth. Because right now it is very repetitive, you go from text to text, it's very literal, basically it's just repetitive. You go from place to place to place and there's no really no real bite or change. So I have been making these changes in rhythm through other better choices of shorter text and more accent with regard to the language.

R: Sounds like making paintings to me...

J: Yes it is! It is very much alike!

R: Which goes first in your process of making this hypertextual piece, the idea, the creative process, or the technical process?

J: I think they work together, I think that the creative process, I really believe if it works on its own, it can very much not be incorporated very well with the technical aspect, and same vice versa, you know, if you do the technical part first and then you do the creative part they end up just looking like they've just been pasted on top of each other. So I like to work both of them together as much as I can.

R: Do you think that um, based on your experience, are there any functions, or quality that Internet artworks would carry which conventional artworks cannot?

J: Yes, yes I do. I'm using the web for its branching capability, being able to have a structure where you know, a place that you are at, and then you have choices of going to other directions but it isn't decided for you, cause you have you many links you can choose and so you can go in one direction or you can go to another direction, and you have all these choices available for you,

and that's the sort of pathway which I don't think you can do the same thing in painting. I think there are other ways to accomplish it, but I think the web has a specific structure which can be taken advantage of. I think you can really, for example, this is supposed to mirror the way the human mind branches, and it has these choices and has these pathways and it would be constructed in a very different way for painting or photography. Again I am not saying that the message can't be there, but I think the structure again is just going to be very different. And taking advantage of the medium is using the medium for things it can do and only it can do.

R: Would you call that aesthetic structure? Or...

J: Yes.

R: Do you think the aesthetic aspect is very different from other media?

J: Yes, very much so. I think that the way ideas are put together and the way that visuals are put together have a very specific nature to it. You know there is sort of the foundations where you have a link and you have a pathway and you have a link and you have a pathway. But if you can take that and push it even further, I think you really can take the advantage of the aesthetic structure, and really push it to the limits beyond what people can imagine, and that's when the piece is going to be exciting...

R: What aspect, um, of your creating Internet artworks most rewarding to you?

J: I would say...are you saying using the web?

R: Yes, the web, or the Internet...

J: Yes, I would say because it is still a new medium, it's really exciting to be able to explore of what you can do in this medium, and there are a lot of questions that still haven't been answered with regard to medium and how you are going to express your ideas, and so there's a lot of pathways to take that haven't done before, so it is very exciting to try something new. Also, the medium is a very exciting medium, you know, it is very dynamic, and it feels like a collaboration when you are making the piece, you know, you feel like you're collaborating with the user already and that's a good feeling.

R: What do you think Internet art is?

J: I think that Internet art comes in many forms, it is very hard to put a point on exactly what it is. With any art, I think that the artist defines what the art is, you know, if Jeff Coons says this sculpture of this baby chimp is a piece of art, and someone say this is a piece of kitsch, you have to take it for what the artist says it is. So I feel the same way with Internet art, I feel that you

know, I can say, I can list five things that make a piece of work Internet art, but I'll miss something or I won't think something as a construct that an artist would think of it. I saw a piece today, for example, I don't remember the artist's name, but it was almost just documentation of what art is. I mean it didn't seem like a piece of art, it seemed like a research paper.

R: Is it a research paper on the Internet?

J: It is a paper on the Internet but this artist considered that a piece of art. My reason of bringing up that example is I wouldn't think of that as a piece of art. But he says "this is art" and I think that's ok, I think that's the only way you can really talk about art. It doesn't mean we won't criticize it, it doesn't mean I really like the piece I saw today. But, I think if you don't have an open mind with regard to what you can accepted as art, you are really going to be screwed (laughing) and I believe the same with Internet art, that's why I feel very hesitant about saying "it's this, it is that", I am not trying to avoid the question more to just look at it in a different way.

R: Could you talk about the theme, subject matter, and the conceptual content of your works? I knew that you said you preferred to be "an artist as a person" rather than "a women artist" or a feminist,...

J: (Laughing) Yes that's ok I will confirm it (laughing). I agree that I do deal with feminist issues. I deal a lot with sexuality. A lot of the pieces I do have to do with confronting sexuality in a different way than you would think of it beforehand and I also try to deal with the concept of autobiography, and reexamine what is autobiography and when you think a story is true, so if I tell you a story about the time that I went horseback riding, when are you going to start thinking it's true. And I think that's even carried out even more so on the web, because of the nature of the medium there's this recognition of truth right away even though it may be totally contrived. And so when I am writing things or when I am drawing things, I am trying to convey a sense of autobiography, that they may be totally constructed. So, you know, there is a piece that I did about a woman who's raped, and it was totally made up. But it was supposed to come across as this voice telling, you know, being honest and true about an experience that happened to her and I've had people think it was me that I was talking about. You know think that was my experience. And in a sense it is my experience but that physical thing did not happen to me. And I guess I look at that along with feminists' issues. Being a woman, I am trying to convey different feelings that people have. I use a lot of things that I feel inside, that I think are

communal in some ways. A lot of times when I am working, I will take a feeling that I have, like there's a piece I did, that has a survey online, yes, and the little poem I wrote, when I was going through a lot of stress myself. I was going through a very stressful time in my life. So I wrote these little poems as sort of outlets. You know, 2, 4, 6, 8, sleeping through the night is great, well I wasn't sleeping at all then, (laughing) so I thought "sleep would be a great thing", and um, it didn't divulge what was going on in my life, but it did allow me to share my feelings with the user, and sort of say like "you are feeling this, I am feeling this, this is something we are all dealing with", so let's look at it in a slightly different way, let's look at it with a little of humor, let's look at it with a little bit of punch. You know the questions were sort of very tongue in cheek. Looking for approval from cats, you know, I have two cats. I don't really look for approvals from them per se, but, just the idea of being so desperate in the need of approval that you will look at anywhere for it. It was something I was thinking about, because I really think that if you can get to a place where someone can feel what you are feeling, or feel like someone understands them, they would be able to take in your message much more clearly, so would be much more open to taking in things you may have to say. Like when delivering something that has a sexual punch, will work much better if the person is already sort of open to what might be happening and open to what might be said. As compared to say if I just yell **** you at someone, they are going to say **** you right back, there is going to be no sharing there. So that's something I try to deal with.

R: Yes. Do you associate any aesthetic consideration, transcendent experience or spirituality with your artworks?

J: I read this question and I was thinking about it. I would say there is a spirituality which I define as my own. It's very personal. It's very specific to myself. And I probably share it to a very few people who are very close to me, and the way I'm defining it is a very intimate feeling I have about who I am and what my life is about. I don't have a specific goal and things I look toward per se, but there is a sort of, inner peace that I would say that I am looking for. I'm looking to be at a place where I feel comfortable about myself and comfortable with my works. I think part of the reason I feel my work is so uncomfortable, is because I haven't found that place for myself yet. And it's easier for me to say "I am uncomfortable, you're uncomfortable, let's all be uncomfortable and talk about this as compared to being sort of satisfied let's say, with what I am with myself. It's become very psychoanalytic but at the same time not some sort of

spirituality that I'm looking for and I say it is a part of my work, it is sort of, how I approach the "goals" in my life.

R: Do the use of Internet and digital technology affect your creating and expressing through works of art?

J: Yes, it does. The Internet and technology definitely influences the inspiration. Because it is always there, it is always part of what I am thinking about, whether I want it to be or not (laughing). For a while I was doing these drawings, these little sketches in my sketch book. And I'm doing these little drawings, and I am thinking "Oh I can animate this on the Internet, and they can become a cartoon, and then I can make them into a web site, and they can be this, and I got all excited then I was doing drawings every week and making more and more drawings so I could make this web site. So it really pushes me forward, I got very excited about it. The idea of making a web site is incredibly, it's amazing to me, and it's an amazing feeling, I just, just feel so passionate about using that medium. And I feel like it can really push me forward in directions that I normally wouldn't go. It also is structured enough in its own weird abstract way, that it keeps me going, you know, it gives me a goal to aim for. It's like tackling that technical piece with a creative solution is very challenging thing to me and very exciting thing to me. So bringing in an organic feeling into a technical piece of work, into a digital piece of work is a very exciting thing for me to do.

R: Can you talk about your audience; do you have any intended audience you wish to communicate with?

J: Yes and no. I would say I am very interested in communicating with a female audience online, because I feel like there aren't a lot of spaces for a female audience online. I feel like there are not a lot of accessible places for women to feel comfortable online because it's such a male dominated medium, so making a place where women can express an emotion and feel an emotion and think about ideas is very important to me. But at the same time I would say that using that same piece to convey ideas to the male audience is equally important. I would say it is a different sort of accessibility and it is a different sort of familiarity, but I also want men to be able to understand these ideas that women might go through. So if I can do that with my work, that's incredibly important to me.

R: Do you have any experiences that you have gained from the Internet audiences? Do audiences' responses affect you in any dimensions?

J: I would say (Pausing) let me think for a minute. (Pausing) I got a response recently which was very nice, not necessary life changing but definitely was very nice for me to hear. There was a woman who wrote to me and said that she had read and seen my web pages and made herself a chick book, and (laughing) she really liked the chick book and she thought it was really fun and really exciting and she kept her chick book in her wallet that made me so happy. It was great, that's why I made it was so people would have fun with it and you know it'll be a little piece of art that someone can take and put into their pockets. It's just its very warming and its very comforting to know that someone is listening to what I am saying. I don't know the woman, I don't know what her interest in things really stems from, but just knowing that someone has that book in their wallet is a really great feeling. It didn't really change how I approached my works but it definitely gave me more energy to continue with my work...

R: Since you've been working on Internet art for a while, has anything frustrated you?

J: Yes.

R: Could you describe it?

J: Technically there have been some certain things that are very frustrating. I created my thesis in Java when it first came out. And I worked very hard by getting it together and getting it to work and then the version of Java that with accessible of Internet changed, and so you can't see my thesis any more...(laughing)...and so, I worked for a year on the project, and no one can see it, no one has seen it. And that was very frustrating, it very made me almost anti-technology, you know, it really made my really angry with what technology could and couldn't do. And, I would say it really put me off to developing very complex pieces of work, technically. Because there are so much uncertainty with the technical aspects of it, but I like to work with very sure things with web technology, if anything can be sure, I don't know if that's possible, you know on the Internet it's always changing all the time, but if there is something that can be sure, it is much more, it feels safer, if feels, you know, I can still make interesting work. I'm just going to go off on a tangent for a second. Its not gonna be the technical things that carry the pieces. You know, you can program the most complicate bells and whistles around, and it's not going to make a piece interesting, if you don't have an idea, a concept, and a creative aspect to it, it's lost. And, I thing if the idea is strong, and the technology is simple, you will have much better chance of it succeeding than vice versa, which doesn't mean that I don't want use the technology to take advantage of it, but I don't want technology to be the piece. And I guess my experience of my

thesis, really made me aware of this. Because I feel like I got so caught up with the technology that I forgot about having people being able to see the piece. So I feel that was very influential, frustrating part of my work.

R: What would be the intended functions in your works?

J: I am trying to appeal to someone's sense of language, and experimentation with words, and at the same I am trying to present images that are challenging and exploit feeling. I am trying to look at how we feel about ourselves within this piece and how we feel about ourselves sexually, and if I can get across to people that the idea that life is very sensual that will really satisfy me, you know, if I can make people feel that they can feel that they can feel their own skin that is something I would like to accomplish.

R: Are you associated with any type of community online?

J: No I am sorry... (laughing) I would say I have had very mixed feelings about the online communities, the online art communities, I would say that, a lot of it is very male oriented, and very much dominated by men's works, and I think that's a shame, I that's too bad, I think its very unfortunate that's it's a real loss to the medium, and it really makes no sense in a way, because it's a new enough medium that men and women should have equal opportunity online. And I don't think its openly intentional, but I do think there is a tendency towards favoring men's work, and with regards to that community I mean I have been in situations where the sort of white male has really dominated the community that I have been part of. I was in a show, a group show, and there were 2 woman and 6 men and that's unreasonable and that makes no sense. And it was really strange that the ratio was so off balanced. So, I would say as much as a community as I can say I am a part of it. But in a way I don't feel I am a part of that community it's very hard to feel like you are a part of some thing, that's so separated.

R: What do you feel about the off balanced situation?

J: I can look back to when I was in graduate school, and I know that there were more men than women in programming classes, and more women in my aesthetic classes than men, and the people who taught the programming classes were men and the people who taught aesthetic classes were women. So if, it does make it different of who are your role models, you know, if you have a woman, a strong woman who is a programmer, you know, you are going to much more likely as a woman to endeavor into programming. And same with aesthetics, if you have a strong male who interested in aesthetics, you are going to have a much more likely chance of

men being interested in studying aesthetics. With the stereotypical role models, it is very hard to explore different avenues. I mean, that's a problem I would see. ..And I think a certain degree of men will work to keep women out, not, again, not overtly. I don't think it's a conscious thing.

R: It's by default...

J: Right, I know.

R: Could you describe what elements are comprised in a good Internet artwork, given your experience, is there a general way of experiencing Internet artworks?

J: I don't know if I have an answer to that. Let me think, I really don't there is a very compact answer to this. I really thing that a lot of what I was saying about the artworks being what is defined by the artists is really what comprises a good piece of Internet artwork. What I would say to my students "if you can defend it to me, then I will give you a good grade" (laughing). You know, they can make whatever they want, it can be as sloppy or it can be as incomplete as they want. If they can give me a good reason of why they did what they did, and convince me that this is what they believe in, and this is why they do and what they do. That would mean so much more to me than a little package that supposedly is exactly what art should be. I had a student do a piece about laziness and he didn't finish it at the end (laughing), and he said to me "I didn't finish it, because I felt if I finished it, it would be inconsistent with what the piece is saying", and he had a whole paper written about why he didn't finish his art piece, and it was great. I mean it was amazing, I mean that context made it very funny, and it made much more sense than if he had finished it, and it had been a complete piece about laziness. I mean you can still look at it and you could still experience it. But it was so much more about itself than anything else.

R: Is it more conceptual?

J: Yes, I think a lot of how I define things is more conceptual, but that doesn't mean that I would do without sort of what I call the "passionate", I think that passionate part of a piece is what sort of brings you toward a piece, you know, you look at the piece and go "wow, that's great" and you remember it, that's going to mean to be so much more than you know, thinking it's a great idea and then forgetting it. So I think the response is incredibly important and having staying power. And being in a such way that, you can defend yourself with the work, but also the work stands up on its own. You know I think the work should stand up on its own to be able to survive without the explanation as well. If it can't survive without that explanation, it gonna to be in trouble. Because in the Internet it's such an anonymous medium, then if it can't stand on its own,

you're really in trouble because you are not gonna be there to defend it, you are not gonna to standing next to your piece saying this is what it's about. There's not going to be a gallery owner saying "this is what you should be feeling", you know, your piece is gonna to out be there by itself, but that's why it is so attractive about the medium, it is this anonymous nature you can create thing very safely. Because of that you also have to create things very carefully so that's what I would say.

R: Is there an ideal way of experiencing Internet artworks?

J: I think how I imagine people experiencing my works, how I want people to experience my works, is at their home, by themselves, on their computer, at three in the morning, just surfing on the web and looking for things, very randomly and coming across a piece of art by mistake, almost, and then experiencing it very naturally and in a very curious way, as compared to, going to a gallery that you have been told you should look at and seeing the computer inside the gallery and standing there with the computers in the gallery, looking at the work and being pushed off the computer because there is someone else is waiting to look at the piece of art. I don't think the gallery right now is a good way to experience Internet art. I think there is a personal place at home for the piece as well. As for the person and, I think that's very important to experiencing the work. I mean there is one to one connection that needs to happen and that's not going to happen in an open space.

R: So what do you think about to place this type of work in a museum?

J: It would be very difficult, yes, I think it would be very difficult. I think if it was displayed in a museum, it would have to be in a space that you could sit down and you could take your time and really connect with the piece. I think that's very difficult in a museum. I haven't seen a place where they've set it up that way. You know when I went to the Whitney Biennial...

R: How did the Internet art show go? I knew they had their first Internet art show two years ago and they had on this year too.

J: It wasn't very good, no, I didn't like it very much. This year they have some pieces some were good but again you are standing in a big space, and you had people looking over your shoulder and it was very impersonal and very hard to connect to the work, it's a very different experience than a painting because it requires interaction. So it was very disruptive.

R: So it's different from the Internet users sitting at home without expatiation.

J: Yes, yes...But I think that's good, the experience become part of it, it just, you know, you are on the net, you are, you have this personal connection, and it happens, and if you feel something for the work, you do, and if you don't, it's ok, you know, it's a very, you aren't being told what to experience.

R: Yes. Is there any Internet artwork that you admire, and could you describe that experience?

J: Does it have to be on the Internet?

R: Yes.

J: Yes, um...I...that's a hard question for me to answer (pausing). I know, I know, em, Jodi.org, um, Jodi has been around forever since I have first been making works, they were doing very fascinating things. They really took advantage of the medium, and used it for what it was as compared to trying to disguise it as a painting or disguise it as a photograph. They were making Internet art and they were proud that they were making Internet art. Jodi was a great example of combining creativity with the digital. Their pieces while being incredibly digital have a very organic feel to them because of their structure, which really allowed the viewers to participate in the technical aspect of the piece without understanding necessarily where the piece is coming from, Even if you do not get the message, you get a feeling from their work, their work will leaves you with something. It may be confusion, but that's something in itself, that's better than nothing. And, curiosity if anything will be staying with you about their work, and I think that's an amazing feat. I mean, they manage to mesmerize a huge number of people, and on top of that, their work is of a very high quality, it's not a shock value work, you know it goes beyond shock value, it really tries to challenge people's notion of what art is about.

R: Can you describe your feeling of viewing Jodi.org? What was your first response to their work?

J: Oh, I thought it was fabulous and I thought it was amazing. I was really blown away. I thought it was really creative and very exciting and I was curious about how they've done they did, but also why they've done what they did. I think that it was incredibly inspiring experience for me. It really made me want to make interesting work, and it made want to go out there and take the technical and twist it around. When they really turned things inside out, and I wanted to be able to do that too.

R: Was the response happen immediately?

J: Yes, yes, the minute I saw it I thought it was incredible. It was a very immediate response.

R: Are there essential conditions for having such experience of Jodi?

J: I think, again, I think it's sort of like what I was talking about with the regard to the ideal of experience of something on the net. You know, I sort of found it randomly, cause someone emailed me "check this out" and I checked it out, and that just allowed me to be by myself and have a one on one experience of the piece. It was just me, you know, just the piece, you know, its looking at it all by myself, and, it was very intimate and it was very personal, while being a very global experience because here you are communicating with the Internet, you know, it is going across the world. And, here you are sitting in your living room, looking at this piece, and, you know, getting this experience.

R: How would you talk to students about this piece?

J: I would probably tell them to try to recreate the experience I had, because the experience I had was very powerful. And if they could look at this piece in non pressure situations, you know, not in a high pressure environment, not as a requirement, but as a, as an exploration to look at it with curiosity, and not necessary a priority, you know, its something you come across, something you're just enjoying. I would encourage them to look for their own journey, don't look for what I saw, look at what you see, explore the Internet, see what you know about and see what excites you.

R: So, what do you think how Internet art should be taught, based on your experience?

J: Um, ...(pausing) I think it is very, I think it is an answer of how you teach art in general. I mean, clearly with Internet art there's a technical aspect to it. But there is technical aspect to painting and a technical aspect of photography, and I think finding your own voice is the most important part of any sort of art work including Internet art. Being able to express yourself, and really show who you are through your work is the most important thing, feeling free about what you are saying, being able to explain why you are doing what you are doing, being able to understand why you are doing what you are doing. These are all things I think apply to all forms of art. But right now I don't think there is a specific way of teaching Internet art that's different from teaching other forms of art and I don't think it should be separated.

R: What was your first place to be involved in this field?

J: Oh, well, in the computer art, how I end up doing it, oh, my mom showed me a CD ROM of Peter Rabbit, and I thought it was really great, I thought it was amazing, and I said "I want to make computer art, I want to make CD ROM and make rabbits that jump around", and so I

decided to go to graduate school for computer art, and when I started graduate school, it was just as the web was just starting taking off and so one of my classes was in the web and they showed us what you can do with it, and I created “Drowning Girls are Sexy”, which is the fish piece. And it was very exciting, it was using the medium that had so much to do with communication was very exciting to me.

R: You’ve given me a lot of information and thank you for spending time to give me this interview.

Shu Lea Cheang

Artwork examined:

<http://www.rich-air.com>

Education

1977-79 New York University, M.A. in Cinema Studies

1972-76 National Taiwan University, B.A. in History

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2001 Baby Play, InterCommunication Center (ICC)Tokyo

2000 Shu Lea Cheang & Matthias Vriens, The Project, New York.

1999 Ota Hidenori Fine Arts, Tokyo, Japan.

1993 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University, Columbus.

1990 Exit Art, New York.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1991 Capp Street Project, San Francisco.

1989 International Center of Photography, Midtown New York.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Selected Group Exhibitions

2001 IKU Stripped, Women Art Network, Tokyo

I.K.U. (screening) Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio

2000 Taipei Biennial, Taipei, Taiwan

I.K.U., produced by Asai Takashi, Sundance Film Festival

1997-98 Brandon, a one year collaborative installment project in development with the Guggenheim Museum, Soho, co-production with Banff Center for the Arts, Canada, DeWaal, Society for Old and New Media, Amsterdam

Second Johannesburg Biennial, Johannesburg, South Africa

NTT/ICC Biennial, Tokyo, Japan

1996 Elephant Cage Butterfly Locker, Atopic Site Exhibition, Tokyo, Japan

1994 To Enter, The Final Frontier Exhibition, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York

Those Fluttering, Objects of Desire, Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

1991 The Airwaves Project, Capp Street Project, San Francisco, California

ARS Electronica, Linz, Austria, Festival für Kunst, Technologie und Gesellschaft, "Video: Violence"

1992 Making News/Making History, ICA, Boston, ICP, New York

the Feminist 'I', The Brooklyn Museum, New York.

The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s, Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York.

1990 Asian CineVision, New York, 7th Asian American International Video Festival

European Media Art Festival, Osnabrück, Germany

1987 Cinemad'art '87, Barcelona, Spain.

1986 Women in the Director's Chair, Chicago, IL

1985 American Film Institute Video Festival, The American Film Institute, Los Angeles, CA

Featured Film Screenings

2000 I.K.U., 90:00, a Japanese Sci-Fi Porn Digi Movie, an Uplink Production, Tokyo, Producer, Asai Takashi, Premiere, Sundance Film Festival.

1995 Fresh Kill, Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
Bowling Alley, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

1994 Fresh Kill, feature film, premiered at Berlin International Film Festival.

Awards / Grants

1998-99 Installation grants; The Mondrian Foundation, the Ministry for Cultural Affairs in Holland.

Presentation grant, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

Artist in Residency, Amsterdam Fonds voor de Kunst.

Master Residency, Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue, Harvard University.

1997 Computer Art Fellowship, New York Foundation for the Arts.

Awarded Second Prize and Permanent Collection, NTT/ICC Biennale Exhibition, Japan.

1996 Moving Image Installation and Interactive Media Fellowship, the Rockefeller Foundation.

Artist-in-residency, "Pop, Mass & Sub", Banff Center for the Arts.

1995 AT&T, New Voice/New Visions, Installation Grants.

1993 National Endowment for the Arts, Visual Arts Fellowship.

1992-1993 Film/Video Fellowship, The Rockefeller Foundation

Film production grants, ITVS (Independent Television Service) and Channel Four, UK.

Film development/production grants, New York State Council on the Arts

Selected Bibliography

2000 Rich, Ruby. "The Shu Lea Cheang Phenomenon: The I.K.U. EXXXperience."
Cinevue, Asian American International Film Festival Special Issue, July, pp. 23,
70.

Bottenberg, Rupert. "Cybercafe Flesh: Shu Lea Cheang's I.K.U. Straddles the Line between Art and Porn." *Mirror*, July 20, p. 20.

Fonfrede, Julien. "I.K.U." *Fantasia* #5

"Shu Lea Cheang: I.K.U.: Sexe Machine." *Voir*, July 13-19, p.12.

Poland, David. "The Hot Button." Roughcut.com presents 10 Days at Sundance

1998 Hays, Christian. "Spin City" *Frieze*. Issue 38 January-February, 1998.

Silberman, Steve. "Guggenheim Goes Digital." *Wired*, July 1998
www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,13648,00.html

1997 Kroker, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, "Web Delirium, The Okinawa Project." in *Digital delirium*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997

Cheang, Shu Lea. "Elephant Cage Butterfly Locker," in *Collapsing New Buildings*, ed. Lawrence Chua. *Muae 2* (New York, 1997).

1996 Furlong, Cindy. "Gender Bending, Works of Shu Lea Cheang," College Press, 1996

Kimberly SaRee Tomes, "Shu Lea Cheang: Hi-Tech Aborigine." Interview in *Wide Angle* 18.1, 1996, pp. 3-15

1995 Asai, Takashi. "Fingers and Kisses," interview. *Dice* (Japan, 1995)

Nakamoto, Akio. "Shu Lea Cheang," interview. *Wired Japan* (1995)

1994 "A Dialogue on 'Fresh Kill' with Jessica Hagedorn and Lawrence Chua." *Bomb* (New York, 1994)

Nelson, Rob. "Kill Your Television." *City Pages* [Minneapolis], September 21, 1994, p.23.

1993 "Whitney Biennial 1993." *Art Forum* (April 1993).

Carr, C. "A Cinema Against the Vérités." In *CARR, On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1993, pp. 206-11.

Kotz, Liz. "Shu Lea Cheang at Exit Art." *Art in America*, 81 (January 1993), p.106.

1992 Cheang, Shu Lea and Kathy High, eds. "Shot/Reverse shot, a cross circuit videologue." *Felix* (New York, 1992)

Seid, Stever. "A Joint Operation: The Collaborative Video Installation of Shu Lea Cheang." *Video Networks*, 16 (February-March 1992), pp.14-15.

Parris, LaRose. "Art: In the Name of Desire." *Color-Life!*, June 28, 1992, p.27.

Bourdon, David. Short review, *Art in America*, September

Taubin, J. Video Choice in Voice Choices section, Village Voice, May 26

Parris, LaRose. "In the Name of Desire." COLORlife, June 28

1991 Howell, John, ed. Breakthroughs, Avant Garde Artist in Europe and America, 1950-1990/Wexner Center for the Arts, New York: Rizzoli, 1991.

1990 Saalfield, Catherine. "Video: No Fabric Softener." Outweek, March 28, 1990, pp. 55, 64.

Grundberg, Andy. "Making News/Making History: Live from Tiananmen Square." The New York Times, June 22, 1990.

Furlong, Lucinda. "Shu Lea Cheang." The New American Film and Video Series, 50 (program notes). New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1990.

Interview with Shu Lea Cheang

Grand George, New York. August 4, 2002.

R: Would you please talk about how you entered in this field?

S: Um, well, which field? (Laughing)

R: Internet art.

S: Yes, well, anyway, I guess in this sense I wouldn't say that I am particular only engaged in the Internet art. You know, rather than, um, I am really doing different types of works. You know, um, some how since the early 90 I was involved with the Internet I learned about the Internet by using BBS and started to know the power of the transmission of the words and texts of BBS the language and than from there, you know, comes the whole, the Internet browser , and learned about the global transmission possibility. So um, I mean in a certain way, the internet liberated me, you know, and I sort have being working with this medium for ten years you know, so I feel at the moment its not so much like, its for me, it's a way of keeping the communication tool, but I wouldn't say I am in particular engaged in Internet art. It's true.

R. Speaking this field, well, would you please describe more about your current position, your background, and how do you come to be evolved with field of art that you deal with your current position?

S: Actually I wanted to do cinema from the beginning, you know, I guess out of school I gonna be working on cinema. And than so from the cinema um I've got into, come to New York to study cinema than I guess that when I was here in the early, late 70. Also the time on the video, you know, the medium itself was not taking a new movement, because at the time that the camcorder comes in so everybody can have a video camera can shoo. So I um also became part of that generation. And so from there um to actually get out the Internet you know for me is just another medium Ultimately, I would say that, my concern of my work is about a lot about like social political involvement and than I guess in terms of the manner how you make art, it became, you know, how, how abstract you would make it, you how conceptual how conceptual you would make the art, you know, well, mean while, like, I think it's the desire to communicate with the public to have the interact possibility, talking about like interactivity, not particular like you kind of push the button, you know, like a way of how people appreciate each other how people react to each other that kind of work, you know.

R: Why did you feel like to communicate with the public, can you talk about the culture of climate, or political climate?

S: Um, well I think everybody has the need to communicate, that not so unusual to have the desire of communicate and I feel, you know, maybe we well get in there like in tern sort of like different kind of art practice, you know, you have sort of formalistic, you know, more subject matter, you know, more content, you know, different genre of practice you know, but I think, in certain way, you know, either artists is frustrated in communicating or want to communicate but there is always desire to do so, I would say.

R: How does any of your social/cultural experience enter in your creating of art?

S: I think all my work has come to in response to my, you know, the kind of social/political environment within in, the first piece, back in the early time I made in New York is probably very, really a lot about racial politics, it's called "color scheme" in 1985 you know that time that time the back is exactly is like a total reaction of social reaction or kind of social politics in America, you know, but I decided to make a more sort of art form, you know, it was presented as an installation piece in Whitney Museum. You know in that case its like, you know, it does come from a direct response to the racial...yes. Because I think, I was, you know, of course I was quite engaged with different media collective. In a certain way, um, I consider my work very formalistic, you know, that kind of installation, that kind of design, that kind of very clean, formalistic thing I'd like to do, I don't like, urn, I can't get into melodramas, so you know, in that case, yes, but I think it's a its that the you became to make work so its like something's getting into you so you have to do something about it, you know, I think I have done a lot of that, so I think in a sense my life is sort of surrounded by, you know, this kind of reaction, yes.

R: Would you please talk about your educational, learning experience in digital art, or technology media...I know you study cinema

S: The rest of it, I totally just self-taught I mean I just learned long away. You know, I don't know I just like, I just turn on the computer I just learned it. I never, I still never learned a software, you know, (laughing) I've never gone to a class, I've never read a book, you know, how to do about the software that you know, and by the computer, I mean, you know, I am really lazy, I don't learn too much, I learn exactly enough for me to work on the Internet, you know, but, I've learned to like for most sophisticated programming I've always seen. Like I am working with lots of Java programming Data Base programming but I have no way of doing it.

But I know enough to know how its function to read to code to communicate with the programmers. And that you know, but I always like, I always come out with all these ideas that drives programmer crazy, but its fantastic but they love to work with me and they are always quite interesting.

R: Can you talk about um the current project? can you talk about the process, subject matter, conceptual content and theme of this work?

S: The current project I am doing is actually...I have not working in New York for a long time since 1999, 98 when I worked on Brandon. So basically I think sort of, you know, well, but I did a gallery in New York in 2000. So I am kind of in New York but then I have not really worked here as a you know, I am not involved with the community or the media makers here because of...and so the project was really special return because it's a particular grant is written for this proposal, is a grant called "Challenge to the field" and is set up by a memorial found for Lyn Blumenthel who is like a distributor of video art, um, you know, died suddenly, so I guess she had some money and people set up this foundation and so they asked me to make a proposal about, you know, the theme is challenge to the field, you know, and I think previously people would say oh me as an artist make a video work but I was really like not interested in making a video work so the idea is actually that the first thing that I want to do is actually try to challenge to the field, "field" which field we are talking about, the green field? You know, or media field? The Internet field? You know, there are so many fields we are talking so I think in a certain way I want to merge these fields, and that was the first intent and um, I think a lot of things in this project is great to do right now, all this time I've being on the Internet, been traveling, and at a certain point, field, you know, like this whole virtual being is taking over you, which is fine, you know, I am very comfortable with my computer, and everything. I think the desire to kind of reconnect you know with the earth, is also very important, you know, is also I think at the end the project got develop into this whole like, sort of, kind of activate quest post economy questions, because when I wrote this proposal this is last year before 9/11 also before the Argentina economic cracked down you know, so its like when I wrote that at the time I was just really thinking about this field, you know, and this how the way the garlic is such of like generational thing ,is like, um, multiply, you know, how you can multiply, you know from one clove, you can have ten points, so its like so beautiful if you think about it if the generation to generation keep going, you know, so, I kind of like that metaphor, you know, and then also this

talking about like you have garlic inside you eat them if you don't finish eating, the whole clove of garlic, each bulb, you know, bulb of the garlic, each crop can become the seeds, you know, so again, its like a bulb have ten clove that can go into ten plants, so it's a very beautiful metaphor and I think at the end I would say that I want to, I think there are maybe two reasons to do the project, one is to think about the field, you know, the media field, the green field, how to reconnect, you know, with different, the media field how to reconnect, you know, with different, is not only about reconnect with earth but it also about among the media makers how do we talk to each other you know, is like everybody was so occupied with oneself, you know, people don't communicate, don't, you know, so that was one of the purpose for me to do this project. And second is more like, I am thinking a lot about the after crash scenario, you know, its like the economy system failed, maybe this is also the after dot com, you know, syndrome so if the whole economy failed you know, what would happen but what happened is true I think our life has been doing a lot with the so called barter system, We always trading, you know, trading each other, you give me a chicken and I give you a sack of potatoes or you give me a book and I give you something, you know, of course it's a very old tradition, you know, but to bring up this idea again in this digital age is very interesting. That is the main part of doing this project is to consider that things can be shared, can be trade, rather than relying on the whole monetary system because I find my, maybe this is after I have doing so many years traveling for me, you know, I traded everything, you know like, more physical, because I don't like to own any physical thing (laughing), but I must have done something to people so people gave me everything too, you know, like I have studio in New York, I have studio in Holland, I have studio in Tokyo that I can work, you know, and part of that is because that I am trading some of my work or whatever so its about the trading system.

R: So its like you have the idea first and you have that idea first before the technical processes?

S: Yes...I think like this project is so interesting. Actually this project in the beginning I don't want to do Internet at all (laughing). I was thinking that I did not have to do Internet, you know, I think like we will harvest the garlic; we bring the garlic in the truck, and we go to the city and we trade the garlic, you know, very old style, you know, but then there was because Brenda she always asks me, she said, "Shu Lea, but if people give you many many things for trading, what do you do with all these traded thing?" you know, at that time I was having nightmare because I said, "no....but all they gonna give me are like old pan, you know like, pots, you know, whatever

baseball cards. For me it will be like everything they wanna trade for me is meaningless, nothing, because its gonna to be public event, you know, so its like I didn't think about like doing it on the Internet, you know, I really wanted to go back like this really face to face work, as a performance piece, but Brenda kept asking me, one time I was kind of like, I was like going to bump, I said, ok, if people give me a truck load of whatever garbage, for whatever then I traded I take a picture then that's it, the work (laughing), yes you talked about the process, that's really like got into my mind. And so, so like maybe two or three weeks it just really bothered me. I kept saying that, "Ok, something is wrong here," because I know this is what happen, and I really didn't care about the trade itself in that case, and so that what I developed into this idea of Internet trading you know so first phase for this project is like we gonna to have like the virtual garlic trading and from the virtual garlic you go to trade the real garlic, you know, its like, it that kind of process, you know, and than, when someone is doing Internet project with this one, you know, so its great, its good to have this to have this really life and the Internet, you know, I would, I think...I feel very good that's why, I guess that proposal kind of written as four phases I only did that in June, I only finished the writing, rewrite the proposal in June, you know, so its also very interesting how the work develops.

R: Can you talk about the technical processes, how you organize the entire event?

S: Oh right now its not quite organized but, the, I am doing the programming now for the trading system because that involve like database. And people can upload different stuff and then want to trade and then when you trade you get the garlic and its like making like a portfolio for your trading system you know, its kind of like a stock market, you have your own portfolio like, you know, like also, maybe you are going to red or you are going green, you know, so, ya, its would be very interesting...but I don't know, em, at the moment we are still programming I made the sketch of how the work would be, but I am working with two programmers in Germany, um, I have been working with two programmers in Germany on some projects who I have never met. I have never met them, I have never know how they look like, but they have worked with me on four projects.

R: How did you find them?

S: Um, they were like in school in 2000 I did a project in Germany and then in school and then I met with the professors and the professor said, you know, "I can't do what you want but I know have two students who can do what you want." So I said "ok. We will work with these two

students” (laughing). You know, it was really a very funny story I was in Germany in like a media lab and some of them were scientist, programmers, scientist, and I had a very, for me I feel I had a very simple project, and then I went there for one month, trying to work with this programmer, and this programmer told me like what I wanted to do is impossible or very complicated it would takes like six months, you know, whatever, and I was like I don’t have time because I know it shouldn’t be so difficult and it should take...one month? (laughing) and finally, um, the media lab people got this other professor coming to consult with me and we made a presentation and I said this is what I want, this professor said, “oh you are very advanced, you know, your idea is very advanced, I know what you want but I am in developing this part, but I cannot do this part and two of my students can do this particular part, I can do this database, two student can do this part, three of us we can work with you and we can do it in one month.” So that was when I first met these two guys Roger and Wong. So since then whenever I am working on more small different projects that I am not having a lot of money or whenever I am more free to play, I’d ask them to work with me and we always communicate through email, and they just do it.

R: That’s the only way you communicate with then?

S: Yes, never telephone, never...I think one time we did a little chat because we did a little bit of IRC because of the programming became very tricky, like, we have to like, you know, back and forth tuning so we did kind of IRC talk on the Mac but we have never spoke to each other. I don’t know what they look like, I am not curious, you know. But really, and it like we’ve got the best team. So now they are working on this project. The great thing about some of these things we’ve done is like...then its like maybe they are not political or they don’t care about what I am doing anyway, but its just fantastic. For me I love this kind of working relationship, you know, because its so easy. I get on the Mac, and I said today I said ok this what I want to do, can you say you can do it? And then they made the prototype and then we talk about it more, you know, and it saved me so much energy to really have to research on if this can be done. Because I think, one part, maybe, when I talk about this, maybe what we should consider, a lot of people consider, yes, in a certain way I am so nomad, mobile person, but I am so connected with, you know, different organizations, different media labs, different people, so like, in a certain way, also, I don’t like to, I am not this kind of so-called individual artist like you know I am doing this on my own...you know, and I really enjoy collaboration you know, like if I need this part of

programming Java that, you know, I don't have the language for, I know I get someone to come in and do it, you know, rather than I go crazy trying do it but I think being an artist in this way you have to know enough language...you have to know enough to know what you want, to explore this language...you know, its, ...especially I think you work with programmers if you don't know the language they'd really angry with you, you know (laughing). So you kind of have to know what you are talking about, right? So you kind of that, and then the collaboration will be good.

R: So based on your experience, what would you make suggestions for teaching and learning in studio art program related to digital technology?

S: Well I think everybody, I think everybody when you want to work with mixed media you have to learn enough basic language. You know, but then, but think a lot of, it all depends on kids, you know, like some people they love softwares, they want every updated version of Flash, you know, that's find, so that's why they keep getting updated version of Flash and keep learning that. You know, Its one way of doing it. I think in the Internet field some people only working on the programming languages the software as an art and its totally fine. You know, so I think it not about, its really hard to say, I have my way, there are so many different ways of, you know, different genres that is put on the Internet, you know,

R: So its different from person to person...depending who is learning it...

S: I would think so...yes.

R: Ok, I know you've traveled from project to project...can you tell me what does it mean to you, and what is its value?

S: Well, I think, I think at this moment um I am pretty much based in Europe, um, and last few years I also had been working in Tokyo quite a lot. And before, you know, in New York, I was working quite a bit. I think at the moment I was able to get commissioned works, you know, people said " oh Shu Lea come to do this projects or give us proposals or join this festivals of come to this kind of exhibition projects", um, they kind of um, sort of proposal based and commissioned, um, which is very different from the way I worked before when still in New York, you know, you come out with an idea, with concepts, with a proposal and than you would be looking for money for it.

R: They give you something and than...

S: Right so its so different because before its more like you have the proposal you have the concept and now you have to try to write all this grant to the council of the art to the National Endowment of the Art and looking for money and that approximately can take two or three years by the time you get it done. Yes that's pretty much the practice of certain, you know, independent media artist still because you are not doing the drawing you are not doing painting that you can sort of work on you own. Usually doing new media, the production work you actually have to find a crew, you know, and that costs money and technology costs money so its like a lot of independent media people that actually would have to go through grants and it takes a long time. So pretty much I think, pretty much I think...I would way 97, 96, oh, may be 95, since 95 with Bowling Alley, you Bowling Alley was a commissioned work. So pretty much since then I was always being commissioned you know, so like, for example, so Walker Art Center when they commissioned for me, its not like they give me say "do this project", but they would give me a subject matter, you know, they would say "do a project, we'd like to do a project about public and private space", you know. That's the only criteria they gave me. So I would take the criteria and "dream" of the project (laughing), you know, and then you go through the processes, with talking to the curator, see if they agree with this proposal, can we do it. You know, and yes, they give certain amount of money, they give me a lot of support, and that's how I could do it. You know, so, yes that is more real of working...so, pretty much since 95 with Bowling Alley I was able to kind of go from project to project, maybe people know me or my work a little bit now or know the kind of work I do. You know, like 96, um, um, in Okinawa in Japan there was a big public art exhibition so also they said "I would like to participate", you know, the artist residency in Okinawa, you know, but, please give us proposal. You know, so again, I wanted to do a project with Okinawa situation. But I did some research and I came out with a proposal. So you know, its kind of since then it became this kind of sort of project based kind of work. In a way its very good for me, because I have been not worry about um, like, looking for money, you know, its more like money is there. Um usually this kind of project based is not like that much money for artists, you know, you probably get, you know, so called ten percent of project fee but the project fee, you know, is not so high. So, um, it not so much like, I am in the sort of "high commissioned", you know, sort of "high commissioned", you know, certain sculptors might be get like a million dollars to make a sculpture, but in the new media field is not ridiculous, that huge amount of money. But you can, you know, you can

kind of get by. So you know, in certain way, that's how I get from project to project. And um, in certain way, because of my works, and people know that kind of work I would do, this, you know (pause)..., sort of, come out with something, you know, every work I do I think the theme, the subject matter is very different it become. Because it becomes like in different situation you have different idea. You know like this project, "Streaming the field project", would be more like, it was a proposal written for memorial funding, you know, I really want to do a different kind work that could bring people together that you feel the sort of generational, you know, memory type of thing. So this is a very different experiment you know, but again, the proposal is totally written because of this grant. (pause). So if I didn't get this grant, I would not do this project, in a way, you know.

R: Um, when doing this type of work or project, what aspect do you find most satisfying and rewarding?

S: Um, one way of working right now for me is that instead of like, you know, like a lot of time, if I have a base, instead of I have a base in New York, and I am working in New York, I come out with this idea, I think about it, I write the proposal, then I, usually creating a work will take a few months. Yes, um, so a lot of time so I say I am basing in New York, New York is my base, is my home, I'll say ok I come out with idea whatever preparation I need to do I prepare or like I need to go there to work with people there I fly there sometimes you know, to talk to people, you know, but, um, maybe around 95, 96 also I decided that, I decided to travel, I decided to kind of get out of New York and also I decided that sort of in certain way I became, I live with the project, you know, so if the project takes three months to do, and its happening in Okinawa, than I go to live in Okinawa for three months, so you know, in a certain way, I feel like one year I did the filming in Tokyo than instead of keeping going back and forth I just lived in Tokyo for one year. Yes, so in this way of working and living, I kind of put myself into a, I kind of become this kind of floating agent, you know, in a certain way, um that I actually just like living, traveling, living, work, you know, with different people in different countries. And for me, you know, like almost every country now I sort have this kind of base of people who I worked with museums, the galleries, the art space, you know, I work with, you know, so its really, um interesting because I live in a place long enough, three months, six month, you know, in this case, every place I actually was able to create a community that people I like, so its very strong, you know, so like, people like, we keep in touch of course its not like, you know, day by day, but there was

very concrete, um, together, you know, um, concrete friendship, I've working in Amsterdam for a year in 98, and then three years I did not work there so four years I didn't work there but this year I worked there again so its like I already know all the people, and its just great. So this kind of thing, I guess this project is the same, I haven't worked in New York for 4, 5 years, now I came back here and I want to, I connect with the people and friends again. Really I think that's probably part that I feel satisfied, you know, in a certain way, not so much, of course each project is a challenge, each project if it is successful or not. The challenge is a different story. But in terms of the process of working, you know, how you work together with people, how do people come together, you know. And a lot of my work is about, is about collaboration, is about bring different kind of technologies, different kind of genres work together, you know, when I can do that, then, particularly I feel happy then. Actually in different country that I am building that kind of base.

R: When doing this project, do you have any difficulties or frustration? If there is any?

S: Um,.. frustrations and difficulties come with work, you know, I think you always need so much communication with people. Um, of course like, ok, say for example, last year I did a project in Tokyo, the "baby Play" project, you know, its quite a, technically, programming wise, its quite challenging, because it was to connect sort of, the real play field in the gallery space to the Internet, you know, so like, a lot of these things it become like, no one can do every aspect of the work, you know, so I have to get a programmer, then I get this programmer but this programmer said "I can only do Java, I cannot do data base", you know, so you need to get another programmer who can do database, you know. So this kind of communication that actually people were able to come together, you know, but then, um, I find what happen as a new media artist, you know, in a certain way because we will have to discuss because of there is no so called the artist as the sole performer. Its like, the artist is almost like a catalyst as like a conceptualist that is able to see the whole piece, the whole vision of the whole project. But everybody we work with become like the certain person who just knows how to do one thing, you know. So there is some kind of communication that I really need to go through. You know, and the difficulty of frustration comes with that, you know, but it's a good process. So, um, I don't remember, you know, getting particularly like upset or frustration. But you know, certain project was really painful for me, because of the, I have done recently, you know, Bowling

Alley, you know, like, there was really sometime some problem with social issues, so its like, that was really painful for me, I thing, I um, I have a few tough cases like this (laughing).

R: How did you overcome these difficulties?

S: Um...You just have to...I think I just keep fighting it, you know, I keep fighting until I get through it. You know, like in 96 when I did the Okinawa project that kind of involved in U.S. Base in Okinawa and the Japanese government became very sensitive, you know, for example, that project, the Japanese government became very sensitive and they want to, they wanted to stop my exhibition. You know, So like for a week, I was in Tokyo having meeting with these government personnel to discuss like art and politics, like, you know, and for example, and then like right before the show, like half an hour before the press conference they wanted to negotiate with me not to show my work and, because they asked me to make some changes and I refused, so um, but that was like after a week of negotiation and 30 minutes before the show they wanted to shut it down. And, sort of like, I was like, you know, I just cried (laughing). I cried, and I say no, I want to show. You know, it kind of like, you don't give up, you don't give up easily, you just don't, people say no and you say, ok. You know, you keep trying to figure out a way to work around it and keep fighting, you know, I think the fighting spirit is very, such a, you know, I think I have the fighting spirit in me, I am not just like taking no for an answer. I know what I want and I am going to do it, I am going to get there; it doesn't matter how I do it. You know, its like, this project, I guess this project Kingdom of Privacy, you know, will have a lot of censorship issues, but um, at the end I am doing it. (Laughing).

R: What gives you the energy to keep doing so?

S: I don't know...yes I don't know...in the moment I have five projects and um, you know, my head is just like spinning like, I am like, think about this, think about that, you know, that's a lot of energy floating, and there is a lot of thinking, a lot of real, you know, practical matters that I have to organize and take care. I guess that last night I couldn't sleep for like, most of the time (laughing) because I was like, I have so much to do...you know, its also like, we've been spending like ten days, about a week in the country and its so beautiful and its kind of finishing up, you know, the first phase of the production. But than the next phase I am thinking is the third phase, you know, the second phase of the production I am already kind of taking care of, you know, the Internet part, I am doing programming it's all in phases (00:40:50) But the third phrase we will go to the city. That phase I am still very nervous, you know, like I still have to prepare

lots of work. You know, So its like you kind of, you know, thinking ahead and really like try to plan things as well you know, I think all the work is about preparation and organizing, you know. Um, energy, I don't know, I just keep, you know, I don't really do much sleep, and I like, like...I mean I usually think a lot when I sleep. I usually probably like couldn't sleep because if I am thinking about project I just stay all night, and dream and think the whole night so you know, I've done quite a lot of projects, I "dream of" the projects (laughing). So I think, you know, I don't really...I don't know, so its just a,...a lot of things for me, I am just really grateful, or... you know, I think a lot of artists in my stage is like, you know, it become very difficult to get new projects go in, you know, some people, some artists like a lot of my contemporary artists they become get involved with teaching, you know, they have teaching positions to make money and so they have much less time to devote to their works, you know, and also as I said in like America like um, trying to get money to produce a work is so difficult, you know, so you kind of, wait, you probably, most of people spend two or three years to finish a project. So right now I am still working, you know, I am getting works done, I am getting commissions, I am doing, you know, I have five projects, because some project is already finished and some project is still in development, you know, more like, like, after this project, I have another two projects waiting for me (laughing), so its like, ...it depends on different stage of the project, you know, then there are two projects totally in development, you know, it won't be like, I won't jump into production right away, you know, and it's ok...you know, I think I am taking a good path of doing my work...although I think this year I already work too much (Laughing)...yes...

R: What is your short term goal and long term goal?

S: Um...short time.., I think every year I kind of make a plan, you know, and just trying to look through it. On the long term, you know, I think I have, I've been doing work always on a long term sense, I mean, at the moment, like "Streaming the Field" project, at first I thought, oh this is just a, you know, this pro...you know, this grants and I just use this money and finish this project in two month and I am done, I am finished, you know, and then after spending a week here in the field and people come and work with us and enjoy the space and enjoy the field, and then you realize that, you know, the farming, and the spirit, it just not gonna to finish yet, you know, you can't, I just cannot just say that "oh, this whole garlic field is finished", you know, because next year can more garlic, next field,... you know, so its like I kind of feel like, like this continuity makes me very happy, and I kind of, then I was thinking like, yes...it's a long term project like

for this one, you know, but um, I , I really, you know, I, I just have a lot of different another projects in Europe for example that I am trying to make a long term project in terms of like building a theater uh, is called “Theater Digitally” and trying to use technology and performance, also I want to bring a lot of social issues in to, you know, into technology. So, in this case, I think, on the long term, on the long run, I am doing what I want to do, and some projects take a lot of development and a lot of money and so it would be a longer term, bigger project. In the short term, sometime I just make like small works, you know, to entertain myself (Laughing)

R: Like the Kiss and finger we saw days ago

S: Yes like the sex video, I just need to make some small work, you know, like there was a time I was making this movie “Fresh Kill” and it was just taking like three years, four years, maybe. It’s just like, at the end, you just like, you make small works, sort of, at that time we made this work with my friends so we just made it I was like, just kind of like the home movie. You know, and after you finished it you showed it to the friends. You know, I was at my friends’ party, you know, and the distributor was also there. But also we want to show to distribute this film, we were also so shock, you know, like we didn’t, like me, no money, we made the film for like 200 dollars,. You know, those video probably each piece costs 200 dollars (laughing), you know. So its different, I enjoyed that, I wish I could do more that, you know, but in the same time I think, I am really involved in the larger, conceptual work right now, you know, like I am doing this kind of work, its not so much about coming out with a video, a, piece, a product but its about process, its about, its about build it to work, you know, whatever, like net-ecology or if you can talk about it, like, so a lot of these things you know, it becomes connecting these people, connecting with the fields, with different fields, connecting with the technologies, you know, viewing the technology, in a different way. I think I will just keep doing this kind of work in different, you know, restoration, like, be restored in different manners, in different formats, but, I don’t think this will change, you now.

R: Are there particular contemporary artists you admire, and how do you response to their works?

S: Um...I think, you know, in different fields, um, because, I um oh, I came from the 80’s so I was more involved in the independent film making, so you know, so like, the whole field New York independent film making, you know, the, um, this kind of East village um, uh, all these people that kind of work, but then I got involved with Dee Dee Halleck, then I started doing a lot

more kind of public access, and you know, sort of really advocacy kind of work also, you know. So for me I think it's more like I am in certain different ways of associated with different kinds of fields and artists, you know, um, ...in a way that I go from that to doing the video installations and then again its like Bill Viola, or you know, eh, Garry Hill, all these people sort of became, you know, the leading of the field and then you kinda, sort of associate with that, you know, and then at the moment I think I am working at the Internet, and again, you know, with a lot of Internet artists, media artists, I am actually quite associated with, you know, like Jodi, or, you know, different people, and then, I am thinking, I really do not to like to name a particular one person to say they are the one that whatever, you know, but I think its like, more like, I feel like different media I am working with, I am associate with a group of, you know, a kind of community of artists, and through this community artists I was able to create works within the contexts, you know, if you look at the rhizome, you know, you look at the database of rhizome you see, you know, you'll see all this bunch of media artists, you look at things.net, you know, a lot of artists that they just like doing their works, you know without funding, also, its quite of, (laughing), its that kind of community I am really associated with and then doesn't matter. Besides, you know, like, in the field right now, you know, for me, its like, its not so much like someone should particularly stand out because everybody is trying to get a hold of the medium still , you know, by being control the medium in a way. But it like, you know, theirs is this urgency or different phrase... that how you will try to do work that is different of trying to do work...you know, keep proceeding yourself, or keep experimenting, ...so its not so set and down thing you know, in terms of like working with new media or the Internet, you know...I wouldn't, I wouldn't just say, oh, I know the field, yes...

R: What role does theory play?

S: Theory...um...actually I stopped reading theory since...(laughing) probably since 95 (laughing) eh, Also since 95 I started traveling and I don't really carry books (laughing). Um, what can I say...I think,...you know...um...I, again, this is another thing you know, I decided, I kind of , I was really at certain point I didn't catch up with a lot of theory development, you know, like I think, maybe, maybe ok, like you turn to the Internet thing, its like a cyborg, you know, Donna Haraway, a lot of theory, developed in the early stage, um, that I was in touch with, you know, and back form the base a lot of my work too, you know, there is a few people, eh, ..em... Sadie Plant, or Jennifer Terry. These people, these human theorists' work I was particular

in touch with in terms of making Internet work and so in a sense, I am, you know, in connection with that. But I think at certain point I just didn't quite articulate then the just theory but become much more practicing practitioner . Then, I guess its interesting, sometime like after you practice the work, you know, in the process of creating, you don't really know what you are doing, you cannot really... I guess I am saying that I do not create a work as a theory based. But, maybe in a certain point that I will have to reread my works, with a theory, you know. So lets say, if I, um, reread my work with the Nomad, with the...a lot of French theorists works that kind of thing, its like, you, then you, you kind of catch up with a bit of theory, you realize that, ok, yes...

R: How important is your own and someone else's verbal interpretation of your works?

S: What did you say?

R: How important is your own and someone else's verbal interpretation of your works?

S: I guess maybe, I don't really, um, I don't really read that much review of my work any more, (laughing). I actually have people written about my works and I don't even read it sometime, you know...um, of course I've being doing a lot of interviews, um, especially with the film I did IKU, its like in year 2000 I've been spending a lot of time doing interviews with you know, with right after Brandon and then with this movie IKU and I did a lot of interviews and maybe it was widely shown. And it became like quite a few people write a paper about the film or Brandon even.... So, it is...I think there must be a few of study there on my work some part,...but really I um, I really don't really read so much about them... (laughing)...I don't care about that much...yes you know...I guess some people I met talked about my works, it's fine, you know, eh sometime I had debates you know, in different symposiums,...it's fine...but I haven't, ... you know, and I really, I probably should be doing a bit of writings about my works, you know, more often. Because, I am that kind of artists, sort of, I just keep producing but I am not archiving it very well, you know, so its kind of dangerous situation. But I am just too busy, you know, like, I would be invited to write a chapter to talk about narrative or Internet narrative, but then I said, I will try to write, I will try to write, but I am always doing projects, you know... (laughing). You know writing takes long time, so, so I just like at the end I just missed the deadline (laughing). And they get angry with me...so you know, I am trying not to, you know, not to promise too much you know, sometimes, yes.

R: Can you tell me about the nature of the community related to Internet art?

S: um...I think probably starting from um, Bowling Alley which I would consider my first installation with the Internet and with Bowling Alley, I was using this local bowling land in Minneapolis you know, like this in local bowling. I don't know if you studies Bowling Alley a bit, the piece, you know, the piece actually in 95 was technically quite advanced, you know, quite complicated, I had to set up cameras and also different sensors in the bowling alley, and in a real bowling alley which is more like local people hang in there, hang out there. You know, so, with the gallery and the museum, um, with the bowling alley, the museum, the Internet its like became a three sites that its all connected, so if some bowling in the really bowling alley, its actually affecting um, the test on the Internet and affecting, you know the gallery projection. So there is that kind of piece, you know, dealing with that piece I think I was really trying to, sort of transport the local community onto the Internet, you know, I think in a way this garlic project is kind of the same thing I am trying to transport the garlic from the project, the real objects into virtual garlic to create, again, I think, the trading, the performance of trading activity I would do for the project. Its really about creating a community, I mean, you know, so it more like, if we have a kind of club of exchange, if we exchange our sort of our common, you know, then in a way we know each others work, and then in a way you create a community. But lets put it in this way, I've actually working in the Internet for a quite sometime; I think it's rather difficult to really build a so called community. I think in the sense of much successful case on the Internet of building community is probably the *Indymedia*. Yes,...in terms of, how could they, how could they going from one *Indymedia* to create so many different branches of *Indymedia*, and, and of course *Indymedia* is more working on the kind of activists' space, you know, but that, that's quite amazing that you know, because every country creates their own formal *Indymedia*, you know. So, so, become, like, I think, I think people have to work locally. You know, locally you have to have that certain community you know, in order to be able to be creating a community globally on the Internet...you know, in a certain way. So like, if I am building the exchange club of garlic in New York first, you know, maybe there could be a different exchange club in different countries, you know. But this is like, the same thing I got inspired by the Argentinean the Trueque club after the economy failed in Argentina, um, they created this kind of Club of Trueque, Club of Trueque is translated as this "exchange club", which is become every different town in Argentina has their own clubs. You know, it's just a club, its kind of like free market basically, you know, like people bring things and do exchange, you know, and because like some

time the exchanged value, you don't, you don't have to exchange right away, you know, its not so much like I bring the piece of wood, you bring a piece of chicken and then we can quickly exchange so then they created this kind of local currency called "credito", and that's how it becomes an alternative money value in a certain way, but, but, like, in the sense of Trueque Club is not like a national practice, you know, its more like every country, every city has that, every town has it, and also check out a lot of web sites, you know, all the clubs, so like everybody is using Internet as technology to create...so for me this is a very different practice on the Internet to create, you know, clubs, you know, but maybe it's a big difference from the eBay because eBay is more like a commerce type of thing but again its like, um, for me, you know, I think I will be always trying to work with these kind of building communities, building bases, building connecting points, you know, so my work is kind of having that kind of faith, you know, you know.

R: How do you communicate with these people, your audience?

S: Well I think you know, you know you just more like, you know, ok, so, so this project I am doing for example, I know by mid August I have to do very big, sort of outreach campaign, I have to, I have to sent a list, sent a many list, you know, different people. But of course, you know, it takes a lot of work to try to reach out to different people to participate on the Internet with your project, you know, so, so that it self becomes a challenge. I think I am going to hire someone to do that (laughing), you know. But this is like, you know, its like, if you think about like Raphael was talking about, like *Indymedia's* mailing list like 30,000 people join that mailing list, you know, so if I put the notice in that mailing list, if people can know the news, well, maybe Rhizome, you know, but it reaches different kind of group, you know, different group, you know, or like, if you say we were on Dee Dee's house she was watching Satellite TV, which is like, for us we don't have Satellite TV but apparently using Satellite TV reaches a lot of rural people. Well because in the city, people tend not to have Satellite themselves, but in this rural area you cannot watch anything unless you have Satellite. So it's a very different crowd you are reaching. So its like, its really fantastic if you think about how certain kinds of media can get through to different kinds of people this way, yes.

R: Can you talk about your desire of communication to the public?

S: Well I think every artist, doesn't matter, you can say I am a self fulfill artist, you know, I mean I am a abstract passion, abstract expressionists artist, whatever, maybe I can say, you

know, I say I am a conceptual artist maybe. But I think every artist in certain way does have a desire to communicate with each viewer, you know. I think every work, you know, let's consider it's a stroke, it's a splash of paint or something, I think, within that, in a certain way it's a communication between you and canvas, between you and the media, and between you and the viewers or between you and the public if you get show, you know (laughing). So I think there is always the desire, how successful is another question. So I think I had done a lot of my works with all the desire to communicate, to interact, and to communicate with the public. Um, at the end, you know, how successful, does it become to abstract, you know, doesn't work, or something, I don't know, but I think my work sometime is still kind of in between, in between more formalistic, abstract and more community based, you know. So that's all this language problem in a way like how successful am I communicating, you know, you know. Yes...lets stop for a second...

R: I feel your work is so conceptual, so abstract, so when you deal with this kind of project, do you intend to communicate with certain audience or you plan this project but not imagine the target audience?

S: (sigh)Yes,...in a certain way its very frustrated in this way (laughing), you know, talk about frustration. I think I create work seem to not I am...people cannot understand me, you know, thinking that I am communicating with people, that people cannot understand me thinking, you know, um, in a way of communicating. Um, but sometimes I failed, you know, but part of that I feel is more like, I have many people had to talk about my work is like, very eh, ahead of the time, you know. I showed my film in 2000 IKU and I showed in Sundance and the remarks. I get from the distributors of America would say "this film is so ahead of time, you know, we cannot distribute this film, we cannot find audience for the film, which is totally not true, you know, its like, I believe my film can have its audience. But at the same time, when I produce this work, I am working with a production, a producing system, I have a producer, I have a distributor, um, I have to work with a director I know, at the certain point I stopped in the part of the project. Not stopped, but I am not, um...I cannot continue to explain my work for the distribution. So I think a lot of time in this kind of thing, your work become part of distribution system and a lot of time an artist does have to a lot of interpretation, talk about your work for people to understand, to communicate, and that again, it takes a lot of energy. You know, that's like a whole different job after you create your work, you know, most of people after you finish a project, you just go on to

another project, you don't keep, you know, want to explain it. But if you don't, your last work may not be seen, you know. Its like ok, I did another project in Japan 2001 Baby play, I wanted to make a three parts project with that or I wanted to travel the show, but then again its like, that project is technical complicated, technology based so for another place to take the project; they have to prepare a lot if they have to really negotiate a lot of technology to present the work, you know, but then I was just, I got tired of, of keep, you know, selling the work, you know, I have a gallery but then also like, you know, it just becomes very difficult so then I just have to not to worry about it, just keep working, you know. Yes.

R: Do the audience response change your mind, or have it?

S: Um...Not really in a way. No. I think I am very,...I mean, you know, the audience response is always amazing, and its always appreciated, you know, I really appreciate that. Um, But at the same time I'd try to challenge them, maybe. Umm, what do I mean by that by challenge them is that sometimes the work is done and people expect the work to be this way or that way, you know, and then you have to sort of say, "well this is the way I, I intended to do it". You know, and this is the way, maybe I do find a audience, maybe small audience, but then I cannot try to blow the case, you know, the base. You have to, sometimes you become a very narrowcast, you know, to a small audience, but maybe that's ok, you know, because I don't think, in a certain I am not creating the so called "popular project". I want to, I mean, everybody want to have their works viewed by millions, you know, like, sort of like, same thing, people say, oh no your work is on the Internet, millions of people watch it, supposedly, right? But it is not true. Because you know that audience is like, one by one, you know, is looking at your work. You know. Especially on the Internet, people are so lonely when watching the work, you are like, you know, it is really no such thing as the millions, you work is presenting to millions, you know, because its like between click, and link, and lucky—one person decides to study your work, you know...

R: Can you talk about your aesthetic experience and aesthetic consideration with your work?

S: I used to consider myself very formalistic actually. In a certain I think my work is about building up forms and structures...

R: Conceptually?

S: Conceptually, yes. Um, I think pretty much all my work in terms of like installation work, you know, its about building up forms and structures, a system. However, instead of proclaiming that this system is um indestructible, I actually allowed people to break into my work. So in a certain

way if you consider the Bowling Alley piece, is that I have a whole Internet the structure, the system, the server, the sensors, is all set up, its like technical is totally set up. But then is like, through the audience's interaction that will break that system, they would scramble the text, you know, do different things. So its like, in a like um, I think that's part of that kind of practice I do, is about infiltration into a system that would break the system, you know. So I think in certain way I keep doing that. I guess in a way, "Streaming the Field", if you think about, you know, the whole economic system, or whole country, is quite faltering, its failing, in a certain way. So its about trying to, sort of, reconsider the system in a certain way. Or, setting up a system so people can break in. You know, yes. Oh well in that probably, probably, I was quite, you know, I'll never, I'll never be a hacker, I don't have the knowledge, but in a certain way I think I am hacking the system.

R: Do you think there is an optimal, an ideal way of experiencing this piece of your work?

S: (laughing) by optimal, do you mean like utmost?

R: yes...

S: Well, actually, if you could experience the harvest, if you are already involved this harvest period, and then you go through the Internet online, and you go through every process accord, but most people gonna you know, be on the Internet, you know. I think the project will probably happen on the Internet participation. Um, then again, its more about how people engage themselves on the Internet with this project with the trading activity. You know, so that part, I am really like, this is very risky if I don't have any people participate in. Then the project will fail, terribly. So for me is about how to generate that participation. How to get people involved, and really...

R: This is what challenges you?

S: Yes. It is really. But it is so unknown. It's factor unknown. It's not like, you know, maybe there will be the problem of programming, maybe the problem with the concept, maybe it's a problem of outreach, I don't know, but I am trying. I would try to every aspect. But then, I still may fail. Yes, I say this clearly right now, I may fail, terribly, with this project. (Laughing). But yes, but I am doing it, you know, I am trying to do my best to carry it out, but I am not, I am not doing a safe project per se, you know, I am not doing a project that I know it would be successful, I don't know.

R: You don't do that...

S: No, I don't do that. (Laughing) I guess it is true I would that kind of project that every project is very big challenge.

R: For a viewer, an audience to participate in your current project, is there any essential condition for experience or you really cannot control...

S: Yes I really can't control and also because of in a certain way we always think we can reach to like a mass public, you want, you want to reach different public but it becomes very difficult. Like for this project this is the biggest issue. Like if I do the exchange on the Internet, everybody of course can join, every body can exchange anything. You know, so, in a certain way, if you only trying to communicate with media field then everybody is exchanging digital bytes, it would be easier. But if people come and say like "ok, I want to exchange my message service with a garlic", you know, I cannot stop it, right? So it would be a whole different activity going on. But I can only say well maybe who will know about the project, how do I sent out the release in different lists to advertise this project, I will get different audience to participate, maybe. But this is all that process, you know. We can do it to like 12 year old kids, also. I mean, its more like, if I build this system, basically I am building like trading system, or alternative. But then the trading system can become very small, I can say "ok, now I am going to use this trading system among all the 12 school, 12 year old kids, which they can use it, You know, we set it up, only they can participate, and then maybe they will be trading something totally different. You know, its about this kind of like, how do I do this model, and practice it in different way. And so, so in this case, this kind of project actually have to be very locally promoted, you know, reality, in real life, you have to promote it in different community to participate, you know, like, for example, I was talking to Kathy yesterday like, for me I think this project is gonna be ongoing in a certain way, So we can take this project go to, you know, let's say, Vermont, from the Vermont small institution of small local space. They say "ok, we gonna work with this project". I say, "Fine, ok, we'll set it back, we'll build a one month trading on the Internet, we collect with the local farmers market or whatever, you know, it doesn't need to be a garlic. It could be, we can now say, the zucchini is the currency. You know, so, its like, it could be really adapted in that way, that's why it excites me about the project. Beside I was thinking like, how could, you know, if someone says, "How are you doing the project, like, so New York?" Well this, because I cannot deal with like, handing out garlic to national, international, (laughing), in a certain way, we can

give out seeds, you know, symbolically, yes, you know, but in terms of the school trading, locally, you become like, going down on the street, you know...yes...

R: Maybe like taking this project to Atlanta...

S: I would love, exactly, exactly, but again, this kind of thing need a local press, local organization that has to be involved with this kind of work to say "ok we invite you come", you know, you set it up, I set it up, you know, in Atlanta, I find a kind of supply line, you know. I mean, again, really, I mean, really it doesn't need to be a garlic, you know, but, this is one is just being easy. But you know, this is what I mean, its really, then you can do like, one month, I want a whole local community being involved, with trading.

R: Yes...can I put is in this way, the function this project might carry is for... S: Well it does, the thing is like, it does have to connect with kind of you know, "produce", and that's why like I was thinking about a this sort of, sort of, eh, "organic" internet, you know, in a way we are talking about "organic vegetables", and we are talking about "organic Internet", its like, I do not consider virtual community can exist on its own. My consider is it needs a grounding support. You know. Let's put it in that way. You know. I think that's what people, a lot people are struggling. In a way like after Dot.com crash, its like, you are building this big empire on the Internet thinking its lasting forever, you know, so as we kind of see the crash, the, you know, the stock market went crash. Beside, we are always building on the dream. We are building this big bubble, we just don't know when its gonna get needled, and to be needle, (noise of burst), but, America, is built on this bubble. You know. So it is ok, you blow it up again, until the next cycle of crash, isn't it. You know. But this is the ability of America. You know.

R: Building the bubble?

S: Yes, (laughing) Yes! I mean, you know, part of American dream, you know, the next generation you will build a different bubble, you know. So, but, that's why, that's why, you know, I've been in Europe for these years, then I think about America in this sense is like why, is this America so...? You know...and I committed myself I am a American citizen so I, usually people, you know, now I say I am a drifter, I am a nomad, but, you know, ok, like, if I really want to claim a nationality, I say yes okay I'm an American, I'll say ok, I am a part of, this kind of like, you know, I created almost my work in New York, you know, and this is, New York is my kind of ultimate resource, energy, if you want to say, you know. You worked in New York; you worked in America, in New York particular maybe. It's just like, you always try something,

and you always have to do something (laughing), you know. (laughing) This one failed, you try another one, you know, (laughing). Its like, it's just like Tovey growing vegetables, you know, this year he grows um, string beans, or this year he grows one kind of potato, but these were all bitten by bugs, next year he'll try some other kind of potato, you know. So it's always kind of big, sort of like experiment, and never give up, you know, and I think, refer to back what you said about this energy, is like, if you consider everything you do, is not so safe, and you are always nervous, you are always worried, you are always like, experimenting, you always think, "maybe this one will give me million dollars", for example. I don't think any of us is expecting for that. But you know, in a certain way, we say, "maybe this one I will get everyone to like the film", you know, that way. And, that challenges you, and that keeps you going. You are trying to think, you know, and because also all my works, in a certain way like every work is so different. So for me, is like, well, how do I make this one work. So that keeps you going. You know, its like Tovey, we talked about it, he was like, (mimicking Tovey's tone) "I don't want to be too rich, you know, like if I am too rich I would not feel I want to work!" so you become the struggling artist that so that can keep working (laughing).

Michael Oliveri

Selected Professional Information

Lives and works in Athens, Georgia.

Web site: <http://www.michaeloliveri.com>

Education

1995 MFA in New Genre, University of California, Los Angeles.

1993 BA in Sculpture, San Francisco Art Institute.

Selected Exhibitions

2002 Candy, Athens, Georgia. Solo show: Titicuttly Stamping Nauman.

Rhona Hoffman Gallery. Armory show, Pier 90 NYC. Acoustic mole.

2001 Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, Georgia. Group show: Impact.

Plan B Performing Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Group show: Sound and complexity.

2000 Florida State University Museum, Tallahassee, Florida. Group show: Van Gogh's Ear.

Beyond Baroque. Venice, California. Group show: Works on a yellow legal pad.

Florida State University, Ruby Diamond Theater, Tallahassee, Florida. Collaborative project, Anthony Morgan, Sounds Unseen.

Florida State University Museum, Tallahassee, Florida. Group show: Visiting artists.

Mouse Loop 1. Polar Bear Swim.

1998 Beyond Baroque. Venice, California. Group show: Beyond the matter of space. Big ideas in a small room.

Santa Ana Collage, Santa Ana, Collage. Group show: Sound. Don't tough, Ear Muffs.

Duchamp wheel with joker cards.

Selected teaching positions

2002-present Chair and assistant professor of digital media. University of Georgia.

1999-2002 Visiting artist. Florida State University.

Interview with Michael Oliver

Athens, Georgia. June 12, 2002.

R. I was looking at your works installed on your web site this morning, were they installation works?

M. Oh yes, most of them were videos but that's single channel videos, just one shot of, you know, could be shown in a theater or a video monitor projection or whatever. But it could be shown on the Internet like it is.

R. Yes I like that.

M. Yes but, Which is nice to have it on there to have people see it on there, um, ...but I don't think of when I am doing something that, I don't think that that's what I'm doing it for, the Internet. So, I think, um.... Think of web design and things like that, we have a different perspective of what art on the Internet is. And so most people look at it like it is art being put on the Internet versus having the Internet....

R. like a category, such as painting, sculpture, photography...

M. like photography,...yes well...but I don't think there is such thing as Internet art. I mean there probably are but I think it's more along the lines of..., first you need to understand what the Internet is and it's not what we see. So the Internet is not logging on into a web page. That's not the Internet. So, if you are going to look at Internet as web page. Then we are only getting documentation of artwork and there might be, there are interactive, sort of very subversive web designs I've seen. But I think, I think that's a very narrative perspective of what could actually happen on the Internet. Because of all of its connection to everybody's life—so if you use it like as it like a vascular system to a person like all this connection, all these things happening, the connections inside...I think really where the art of the Internet is...is in hacking. Truly. I think that the true art of Internet is done by hackers. It's done by people writing viruses, developing code. So someday eventually people will look at code, and look at the simplicity how it is written and one hacker look at some other hacker's codes and say that "that's beautiful". They use the term 'beautiful'; Terms which we would normally use to describe a painting they use to describe code. So that's what I think Internet art is. Internet art actually is exactly happening in programmers or hackers where they have groups so that function is very similar to when artists

used to put together groups years ago, the blue rider group, movements, the dada group, hackers form groups just the same way, they function just the same way the way art did a 100 years ago.

R. Yes...I heard about their having an art show...

M. the what? Hackers are having art show? where?

R. I can't remember now but I knew about it from Rhizome.org

M. Well, I think that makes sense. You know, pretty much as far as Internet art, that's the next thing. That's definitely where it is. People coming writings codes, getting inside your computer at your house, making your screen change different colors go crazy, um, and this, the tricky part is, how do you create a nonviolent act violently? So like, in art, the hacker will get in and they hack and maybe they destroy your hard drive, but there's other forms of hacking too, where they're not destroying, but they are just other nice viruses.

R. What if only hackers could understand these hackers Internet art and other people would not be able to understand it, how could these works reach bigger population?

M. Well, I don't understand of how, if you were to see certain types of art, some how you need to be educated to understand it any way, so that falls on all kinds of different levels where if somebody goes to a museum it is contemporary art but has no reference to that piece, it can be ugly, it can be meaningless, it can be stupid, so I think it's the same thing with hackers, if we, we want to appreciate it, with what they are doing, we need to learn about it, to have empathy to it, and then you will find the beauty in it.

R. Do you think schools should teach hacking?

M. Hacking? I think they should but I don't think they should title it "hacking"..[Laughing]. I think they should figure a way to...I know in my course I teach things like that. I even give out the "Hacker Manifesto" on the first day of the class. So, you know, to set a tone because the hacker, if you look at the Internet, I don't know which version, but I know there is a hacker manifesto, I forget who it is written by, it's written very much like an artist would write a manifesto...so I give that out, to give that perspective out...but that hacker, that to me is where the art is. It's in there, it's not in the web sites, or somebody put art on their web sites

R. Is there something else could be Internet art, other than hackers' works?

M. I think there are some people, some artists, that are using the media, um, for instance, people using what's on the Internet, as information to activate other things. There is a person who is using the chat rooms, and the texts that comes out of the chat rooms converting that into sound

and there are lots of people doing these type of work where they utilize what's happening on the Internet to cause an effect, um, scenario, and there are also people writing stuff with Flash or Director that seems to be more subversive, more poetic. See I think that's the problem it's very difficult to be poetic...

R. When you say "poetic", does it mean "aesthetic" ..?...

M. No. I mean "contained contradiction".

R. I don't understand, can you explain more?

M. Where there are two messages being told simultaneously, two opposite messages being told simultaneously which creates a sense a movement, which it's non-linear, it's causing you to umm, there is a sense of timing to the piece, a sense of, similar to how you would think about music, like you would have a note, in a note you have amplitude, and you have time, how it's spaced by time, and there's other things you have to consider when you are thinking about what's happening as far as art on the Internet.

M: You know when somebody's just showing a web page,...I think that you have to be more controlling over how the viewer is interacting with your work. How does it affect it over a period of time? And I don't think anybody is doing that with like a web page a web site. There are some that are beautiful web sites and very elegant web sites, um, I would think that as more as design. I wouldn't think of that as art. I don't know how to uh, I don't think that it stretches the boundaries of what can actually, it's not pushing the boundaries of the internet at all. It's creating a design a next design, but it doesn't push the boundaries of what is actually, it doesn't critically um, evaluate what the internet is at the same time that it is producing the work. And for me that's important, like the work needs to criticize itself, like what's making it functions. It needs to look at that and I don't think that...I think that are probably people doing that. You know, but I think that a web site itself, like my web site. I don't find that to be art at all, at all. It might be pretty, you know, like it might look good, it might function well, and it might navigate well, it might I don't know it might have a lot of really good things to it, it might have a lot of bad things to it. I would never think of it as art.

R: Including those movie clips?

M: including the movie clips, the pieces were art, the pieces that are being shown, are art in the context that they were shown, but not necessarily in the context of being art on the internet.

R: Yeah, but do you feel, it will also depends on how viewers interpret it? For example, people go to a web site and they think it's a work of art even though that was not your initial purpose.

M: Ok, but now you start to talk about what, the discussion really is not about whether it's internet art is, but whether, but what does an individual consider to be art, whether it's on the internet or not. If I looked at, some sculpture of a cut out piece of steel, looking like a coyote screaming to the moon, and it sits on the floor and it's an outside piece in Santa Fe, then everyone would think that it's art. But I would never think that it was art. I would never look at it like it was art. So some people would, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it is ... it is art I guess to them, but it's not art according to what I define art by.

R: How do you define art?

M: By poetics, it's really about contained contradiction, it's about criticizing itself in the process, I think that's important, um... and I think that there's a hierarchy to it. Certain works have a hierarchy attached to them. Where one needs to understand, one needs to know a lot to even understand the piece. So they may never get it, they may never see it as art, it may look uh, like a brick to them, but ... and I think that, that's why the culture of the hackers really have more or less of a monopoly of what art is on the internet. I mean I really feel strongly about that, that that culture has a culture that functions with all the same definitions that we would apply to art. And they function with that. We are not gonna, society is not gonna to... at least not now, they may in the future. But they are not gonna look at that and say "oh that's incredible, what beautiful art" it's hard for a society to look at that and say that that, I think maybe you know ten years from now they will.

R: You mean hacker culture? The culture of hacker?

M: I don't think it's too far off where, where a hacker um.... Has a show in a major gallery in New York where he's showing blank pieces of paper with code, of a certain virus that he's written, just the code, and a gallery is probably not far from selling it either. But what they're doing in a situation like, that would be all about what a person was thinking.

R: Sounds like conceptual art?

M: Yeah. For me it is, for me yeah, I don't, not too much art exists outside of that.

R: conceptual?

M: for me, yeah. I don't know, I don't know how long the web site...I mean people will always be making their web sites better I'm sure. But I don't know when we will just be bored with

that...Well do you remember, when web sites, when people were first making web sites, We were making gif animations

Y: Yeah

M: And everybody had gif animations and all of a sudden, everybody's web site had a little gif animation everywhere, it was crazy, it was like all of a sudden gif animations everywhere. And then, after we were saturated with all the gif animations, we thought that made your web site look really bad if you had a gif animation. You'd never want a gif animation on your web site. Well I think flash is the same thing. It's getting to where we, we are.... You see something, even if it's so incredible, you still look at it and you say okay so what, there's not much on the internet that really.... I think if something came along though and you went to a web page and it took your computer over. That it literally took your computer over, that would get you. That would make you say whoa what is going on here, what happened? Or if they just took it over for five minutes and went away and you know like well, I don't know....(Pausing).There's a piece that I'm working on right now that's, which uses the internet, but it's not, what it is, a company has a device that you wear and it tracks you where ever you go through satellite. GPS, you know GPS, global positioning system?

R: No, what is it?

M: it finds your longitude and latitude coordinates. So you wear this device so wherever you go it knows where you are, it tracks you through satellite. But there's this company who puts the information on a web page. So you can log on and it will tell you where you are. So I'm working on a piece where, and it measures your temperature and your pulse and location.

R: there's a web site like this?

M: yeah there's a web site, yeah there's a device that you wear and you log on and you can check where you are. So I'm doing some work where I would wear this thing, the information would go through satellite, go through the internet come out the internet go through midi functions on the computer and come out and run analog sound making machines base on the information from the chip. So the piece will only function as long as I'm alive too. So that's the kind of internet art that I would think of.

R: so that's what you are doing now?

M: I'm working on it. I've made contact the people who have the thing. I think that's the real, that's the real thing about what the internet is, not that it's, being able to go into Borders log on,

I'm sure that I can get online in here. I mean years ago if you look at some of the work that I did before, like my pager piece, the piece with the pager. Did you see that pager piece? Where?

R: yeah it's on the web right? I think I saw that piece.

M: yeah, I ran all the ads, the fake ads in the paper for people to call the pagers.

R: I didn't see that

M: So I have all these pagers, this was 19... 1994, so what it was 6, 7 years ago. It uh, 1993, 1994, I took the pagers and ran ads in the paper, people would call the ads like to buy a motorcycle or whatever right. But really what they were doing was activating a pager. The pager was then connected to a synthesizer so it was making music. So I had um, 8 pagers and going off, creating music and that was kind of using the this, back then it was pagers it was all they had, cell phones were way too expensive. And then I did another piece where I installed phone lines around the city to get all the sounds from around the city all at one time, but I had to use the phones to do it. If the net were as good as it is now, back then I would have used the net. It would have been so much easier. So I think that the same concepts of, of cause and effect, something, because you have this sort of like organism that's functioning and people are activating it, but they don't really don't know what's going on at the other end of where they are. They know they are in front of their computer, but they don't know what's on the other end. So if uh, if um, that thing that interests me is using those kinds of ideas where, where we use the system and we you know, having somebody in Iowa on their computer, I don't even know who they are. But they're activating something where I am, so there's sort of this cause and effect, where if I do something here something over there will occur, even though I don't that it will occur, it's kind of I think along the same lines like, if I go to Borders like here we are and we buy coffee right? I just bought a cup of coffee, well what does that really mean? When you buy a cup of coffee. Like how much, what do you think that cup of coffee has affected, who do you think that affected when you bought that cup of coffee? I mean I have no idea, but let's say it's uh, you just, because you bought that cup of coffee, Borders had to buy so many pounds of coffee from Africa which employed some man to um, to work at the coffee plantation to feed his kids. I have no idea or vice versa, there because you got that coffee some, they're using child labor to pick the beans, I have no idea, but neither do you. But we just buy the cup of coffee. I think it's the same sort of thing, this cause and effect where something is happening somewhere...Anything that you can be more accurate by raising a question than a fact.

R: Can you explain more?

M: I don't know how many, answers seem to be temporary. You know so like if you raise the question you're. You're asking, by raising the question, you're asking for a temporary answer. So I think you're better off raising question. So that's what I kind of mean by the poetics of things is like there isn't really an answer there's always an opposite answer so how does one create a piece of work that contains both of those things where it just forces the person think about it, to pause you to just have a state of pause. Um and I think that's um... I mean, I think that's really, you know, that state of pause really is that moment of contemplation that, most works of art can't do that, so it's, it's a very successful thing to be able to that. So now I mean, if you think about it like that too, and you go back to the hackers, and you get back to what you read in the newspaper, oh a hacker, a virus got into IBM's mainframe, you know, I don't know, they lost all this information right. You read the story, you stop, you stop and you think oh my god, you know how did this person do this? Like what, you start to think about it. So you, I don't know it's a very, I don't know it's why I keep going back to that...but I mean, you think of hit and run but I mean, if somebody were to see your car door open right and they put a hundred dollar bill on your seat, right? Is that a hit and run too?

R: that's hit and run.

M: that's a hit and run too right?

R: yeah

M: but I think that's the best way to use the internet, that's the beauty of it. You can't hit and run. You don't even have to run. You've already gone. You're never there to begin with. I think that's where... you know it's a system, a giant system. How do you apply art to the giant system. How do we utilize this system to make art, that's really, because I just don't agree with, I just don't visual art being a visual thing on the internet. I think that it's just very limited, very, very limited. And I haven't, I must say, I don't think that I have. I have a student right now, who um... he's a programmer and he uh, created a web site that people write a sentence. This, they write a sentence in a certain structure a certain type of structure, he goes into a database and so all of a sudden all the sentences go into this database and then this thing produces random sentences out of the sentences people made. So it randomly takes this information and formulates its own sentences. And I think that's the closest to like web art. That I've seen, that I've really appreciated that is sort of it's not really visual either, the visuals on it are really horrible.

R: it kind of reminds me of magnet on the refrigerator.

M: Yes its like that. Yes, Its kind of like that...except for its...its your refrigerator is writing the sentences, right? So when the refrigerator rearranges, when you come back and there is different sentence. It, its like that.

R: Are looking for autonomy?

M: Autonomy?...see that's, that's um...I think you need to ask what art should be, and then you ask yourself is that happening on the Internet. You have to define it first for yourself but...

R: Is there anyway to define it?

M: There is, I have a definition for myself...

R: What is the definition for you?

M: It's poetic. I think, if I understand what that is clearly, I can start to look at things on the Internet. But if I don't understand that, and I say "Internet art", the first connotation I would have would be...web pages...digital...any digital art...see now I am the chair of the digital media program at the UGA, I know what a problem all that is...I know that, that the majority of population would think Internet art as art that's digital that is on the Internet...and I think there is a huge problem...first I hate the word "digital"...

R: It is not about digital or not, right?

M: It's conceptual, it about concept, it doesn't matter about digital, it doesn't matter about digital or, it doesn't matter about what that is...so like, than, what happened, because this program is entitled "digital media, which I am trying to change to "art and technology, um, because digital media has two really bad connotations. Digital, is a term that the general population segregates as being something other than what's in their lives. So like, they assume their life is, is, natural, and they are quite comfortable with analog, and so digital become this....

R: Scare people away?

M: Or become an interest. You know, I want to be a digital artist, or I want to, I have a digital recorder, I have a digital this or digital that, everything is digital. Right? Digital telephone...whatever, but it is not, it addresses something else. When really in fact, we all, are already in a digital environment, it is not possible not to be in a digital environment, no matter where we are. So, the term doesn't need to be spoken about, it doesn't need to be segregated, it is just art in the digital world so there is no reason to make emphasis on it. There's no reason to teach emphasis on it. It is just what it's gonna be, its not, there is no...it just is, there is not

reason to put a capital letter on, you know, digital,...digital means computer one and zeroes. And that's fine, we live in that world. So, if we get rid of the word, then you have more people start to think about what art is, versus the focus on the medium. And then you have media, and media you have this connotation of being like, um, multimedia presentation, right, like, projection, video, or, you know, anything but like painting and sculpture, you know, its like some other thing...I think that's problematic also, like say, you start to define art based on the media, and it's, it is not what art is. So you know, you have to all that, all those things are problems, so that's what Internet art...first what is art?

R: It's hard to get an agreement of what that is right?

M: Yes! I think that there would be different cultures on that. There are always different cultures of what that is.

R: What about within the contemporary American culture?

M: Well, I think micro cultures within America there will be different cultures, just like we, we have people who think um, there is parallel art worlds, you know, there might be 20 galleries on a street on one street in New York, or Los Angeles, but some people will go to one gallery and not go to the rest, and some people will go to another gallery and not go to the rest, because this gallery here sells western art, like, like southwestern art, this one over here sells contemporary works, this one over here sells young contemporary works, this one over here sells works from the 60's minimalism, and...the person who collects 60's minimalism may not collect contemporary works today, may not believe it, may not even see it being art, but he sees, you know Rob Raymond's white canvas as art, but you're not gonna see any thing like any hacker doing anything as art, right? But that's all, that's all because we have a definitely ... we start, we try to define what art is based on what we're visually seeing...um, so,...I don't know, I think the more educated people become upon it, the more refined, and the more hierarchical the problems of art on the Internet will be. So there might be a highly critical area of art on the Internet, there might be a few connoisseurs of what that is, what's happening, and how does that function in relationship to other things, and what criteria, you know, are being met to make that art versus a web page. But that, that...and I am sure that's happening now, I'm sure that there are connoisseurs of what's happening on the Internet. Are you familiar with PS one?

R: No.

M: You should go to ps1.org and look at the Internet, that's a gallery in New York. Just like that. And they show, traditionally been just a gallery but now they are showing Internet art. And also the last Whitney Biennial...

R: Oh yes, the Biennial 2000 and 2002

M: And now if they look at it, they would never think of my web site on there, because my web site is not Internet art so they are looking at people utilizing the Internet, um, there is a person name Eduardo Kac, he has people, he does thing utilizing Internet, and genetics, stuff like that. He has people to do genetic alteration stuff to organism to use the Internet. So, um, ...god I wish I know how to spell this guy's name...z, u, r, a, I, awalski, maybe awal, skia...something like that...he was teaching at San Francisco State last year, he does some genetic things using the Internet. Do you remember I used to teach like Flash in the class, right? But I am not like that I am not teaching the software at all. Because I think that is not that, I don't think like I am teaching art just by teaching software, people to make web sites, I mean, that's what they wanted me to do over there but I don't think that's really were...

R:

M: They don't know...well let say, let say you have a good idea right, then you find somebody who can do it. You find a programmer, you find, you...yes...

R: So its more like artist being a director...you have the idea and you find someone to work in a team to accomplish the artwork

M: yes, yes. I wanna to have people thinking and being an artist and they go find the person that can do the programming, you know, and than,...

R: Not do that by themselves...

M: Well if they want to, they can, but...

R: its overwhelming...

M: Yes its too much, yes its too much work. It's endless it changes and changes...

R: Does the use of Internet and digital technology affect your creating and expressing through works of art?

M: I don't think it changes my mind. I have a lot of ideas which I cannot afford to do them,.. um... but I think that because idea is not necessary depending upon material. Technology material, I can change what I am doing as far as material whether technology, you know, so like, even like the piece that I used the pager for, it would be a lot easier to do a piece using cell

phones now than it would be to do pagers or things like that. The piece will change a little but not whole a lot. The ideas of the piece would be still there. I could use the Internet, you know, I could run the ads on the Internet, that were, um, phone sex on the Internet for that matter. You know, and having advertisements taking place on the Internet, and they would call the number because I use the Internet to post the number, you know what I mean? And then number will then be, you know, I could have the computer that has 10 numbers attached to it and they would call the numbers to the computer. The computer would then generate the signals and it's endless. The Internet as a system, you know connecting things. So, the technology, I don't think I've run into a situation where the technology changed my work. Money, changes my work [laughing].

R: [Laughing] . Well, do you think that any aesthetic expression or spirituality would be part of your consideration?

M: Oh yes. I think all of it. Aesthetic consideration...yes, yes, I think it is the core of it...

R: Will you equal aesthetic to poetic, or spirituality?

M: No. I think these are...Poetics is the, the...rhythm of what these and other, you know, aesthetic consideration, transcendent experience or spirituality, it's the rhythm in which all those play with each other. That's the poetics. So it really is the rhythm of how one addresses of all those things. And more, because you would have, I mean, aesthetic consideration, yes, you would look at, cast your own judgments on what is aesthetically, but aesthetics, you know, runs through into a lot of different scenarios, you know, I prefer leaving all of my electronic cords out where everyone can see them. Some people aesthetically might want to cover them up, so you know, But I do take aesthetic consideration, highly detailed aesthetic consideration, but it may not be a formula that everybody would follow, but I do personally take that. And the transcendent experience, that's the goal. I guess is to be able to project that so that your work does have a transcendent experience upon the viewer. The viewer actually can somewhat experience what you are trying to convey then. And I mean spirituality; I don't think I would waste my time making artwork if I didn't think of it like that. But the idea of the piece, for instance, a lot of work you saw on the Internet had to do with cause and affect scenarios, so, but, conceptual part of the work, the idea is also part of all the things that you have there. And then it needs to be like, you have this sort of, you would have this conceptual framework, um, experience, you would experience all of those things, you experience the rhythm.

R: When teaching studio classes, do you teach this to students?

M: I try, but it doesn't always. It's very difficult to teach this. I think you can teach around that. I think you teach around it by showing them what has that, identifying it, a lot of times like humor, for instance, to just analyze what humor is, break it down, look at the hierarchy of humor, look at what's happening with that, what it's causing, I think people can start to understand what poetic is, what poetic rhythm is. But I think it is just difficult to teach...you can talk about it. But to actually teach it, you know. I think this comes with experiencing it, understanding, like, like understanding your material completely, like, where, you understand the plastic that coats the electronic wires that's in here, the material, that this is made out of, the weight of your recorder, to really understand the all of the elements, that's when you can start to arrange it and to where you end up with sort of, off-balance. It's kind of balanced but off-balance, but it just keeps moving...where you can actually create a piece of art, you know, and that's a hard thing to teach. Most of people just want to learn software, they want to know how technical problems do, they want to know how to do something.....so it is not an easy thing to teach. I mean, you cannot even teach of it through critiques, trail and error, that's where people start to learn the boundaries of the medium. They try. They mess up. They learn their own limitations, what their own personal limitations are, within the medium that they are actually trying to work with. Whether if it's the Internet, some people want to try all kinds of things and have great ideas for the Internet, but they don't have the skills to do it. So they can't make it happen so they need to learn the skill, or vice versa, they have the skill but they don't have the ideas, you know, things like that. But, and it's always because of the Internet, because of people are able to self-teach themselves at home and everything else, there's a multitude of different levels of the students, like you could, how a class of 15 students and have somebody who doesn't know anything and somebody who knows everything, technically, it's hard.

R: So, how should Internet art be taught?

M: Well, what we do in our program is to give two semesters of history, mixed in with making studio projects.

R: Art history?

M: Not art history. It is, we give our own history. The history department doesn't, because the history department doesn't deal with contemporary art history, so we don't have, or if they do it is not even relative to the program that I am teaching, so we teach our own history. In contemporary art and along with studio projects. So, there is a lot of that because to even have a

student function in this area, they have to have to know where they coming from, they have to know what's been done before, they have to know the thought process why, what's happening in this area. So we do a lot of that. And, I think what we are trying to do is to; basically, just eliminate the fear, that one has with using a mediums that they aren't familiar with. So whether it be the Internet or with the computer, or computer operated machines, or things like that, robotic, whatever, it's all about eliminating their fear where those environments are completely normal, completely nature, completely part of their life. Just as you sitting in that chair, you are not afraid to sit in a chair, it's that, it's to eliminate the mystery behind it all so that they could actually use it. I think, you know, that's pretty much the goal....

R: But technology is moving so fast and there are so much...

M: But, I don't, I don't...It is not about teaching technology, we don't teach them technology. They have to learn by themselves, and we need to teach them how to learn. That's really what it is. To teach them to not to be afraid of it, then to teach them to learn, you know, so that they go, because if you are involved in this area, then you never never stop. It never stops. There is always...but that doesn't change the premise. That doesn't change the premise of what you are doing and why you're doing it. Even though the technology is changed, I find it doesn't matter if the technology is changed. I mean, right now, I am also building furniture and I'm painting, so it doesn't change me as an artist whether the technology changes, I mean, if all of sudden, it was all gone, it wouldn't change me. I would not all of sudden be an artist or make art, ...because of the Internet is gone or, you know, well...

R: Do you think there will be something different or new because of the Internet?

M: Well, I think there already is...How long you think the Internet is being around? 10-15 years. It's around lot of longer but in general, it is probably... But if you think about hacking, but the hacking is new. Is there going to be something newer? I am sure there were being, I think that if Internet, um, creates micro cultures and dilutes the hierarchy of contemporary art, where the gallery, the collector, start to change the notion of collecting, the notion of the gallery, um, and it starts to break that down, then I think you would definitely have, you would definitely generate new forms. I think it is happening like where the Whitney is having Internet art, PS1 has Internet art, these are major galleries cause they...here is the scenario of the art world and the museums. As long as museum, uh, adapt to what's out there then they will have ownership over whatever it is. So, as soon as the museum can not absorb what's happening creatively, then you will have

something new. You see, so if museums cannot accept it, hypothetically, let's say somebody creates a genetic, create a genetic creature that reproduces itself, and it was done by an artist and it is an absurd animal, it does nothing, it just looks good. It's kind of like a one wing, furry bunny that's blue, like this not being a pet, so and it reproduce itself, well, the museums absorb it, that's one thing, maybe they've seen a cat they will absorb it. But maybe the museum can't, like for instance, museums would have long way from absorbing virus. And saying that "this is not art", or "these genetic creatures are", they probably assimilate new, that would be some new form. I don't know what that would be, whether it's art, whether it is poetic or not, but it's a different story.

R: Is it easy for museum to assimilate the new thing?

M: Well, its their goal, they have to keep absorbing everything. As soon as they don't, they are not the cutting edge; they are not part of their cutting edge, the culture. As long as they keep absorbing it, than they can stay cutting edge, but as long as they don't, that's something else happening. But I think there probably a lot of things that are...we don't know, and they are very poetic, poetic thing, but the person who is doing it is not part of the artworld, is not part of, thinking about what they are doing is art. You know, they are just some office or just some laboratories or something, somebody is out, creating artificial intelligence, you know, like here we have A.I. lab in the campus. I don't know what these are, but like, you know, maybe there this powerful poetic thing happening that, and maybe that's the next start. A.I. I don't know, you know, I think it is happening. You forget this...and this is important....In what way do I communicate with audience...I have completely control...

R: How?

M: I know exactly, I know with what parameter I am allowing my viewers to have; I give my viewers what I want to give them. There is an interactive work on the Internet, I mean, that people, you know that, they are having interactive by if you push a button, this will happen, you know ...I don't want them. I don't like that kind of work at all, I want complete control of my work. I wanna make sure that I know exactly what is going on. And I don't want the person to know that they are interacting with my work. I don't want them to feel that they are participants of a piece of the work. I don't want my work to be depended upon a viewer to be activated. I mean, consciously, I would have a conscious viewer to know that if I do this thing, this happen, to me, that's like toy, like children and or for a baby. No, I don't want, I want to utilize the

women over there walking, activate something, that's on the Internet or something, and her not knowing. I mean that's form of...but I know, and that person who's dealing with may know, eventually, maybe they read something, they know, but its all about generating a hierarchy, showing the hierarchy of the, how much, what happen, when someone knows more. It's the same way like a humor. You laugh because you understand. Usually you are laughing at something, or someone. The humor is very dangerous thing. You always laugh "at" something, to somebody who is always less hierarchical scale than you, because you are able to laugh at that. So, it is the same, its in the way is to explain what level, what hierarchy is, and also the form of colonizing participants. What's very important, the "colonizing" the participants, not to "invite" to participate to take place in your work. But that's actually colonize them, make them become part of you work. And...I think my work is very different from other people's work, interactive work. When I see the question in what way do you communicate with your audiences, well, my audiences, they get to see what I want them to see. They get to experience what I want them to experience, um,....

R: Do you have any particular experience you gained from the audiences?

M: I haven't yet, to date, I haven't....ya, no one shipped me a suitcase of money [laughing] because of my web site....Nothing is actually happening other than my, maybe job...getting my job it helped.

R: Do you think any Internet community will be beneficial for creating art, or any negative impact?

M: Hm...no....not I know.....no, not in this. I don't think so, I mean, my creative process always exists without Internet communities, so...nothing would change, its not depending upon it.

R: I think you..... Well,....giving your experience, do you have a sense that there is a general way of experiencing Internet artworks?

M: I don't think that the Internet...I don't think the term, using the term changes anything...whether its on the Internet or something else.

R: What about hackers'? You mentioned hackers' works earlier.

M: I don't think you can experience a hacker's work not by, not by, you don't need to be on the Internet to experience the work. You can hear on the new, the experience by listening to what some hackers did, you know, he stopped, what happened recently, there is...they stopped cell

phones, like all the cell phones were done, like some hackers, so you can experience that by not...

R: Its like knowing it from documentation....?

M: You can experience by hearing the news, so you can experience by thinking, you visualize what occurred by hearing, you visualize it so you do have an experience of it, or you can experience, you know, by many way, which is the way I kind of like,...you don't use your cell phone and the Internet doesn't work, and you don't know why, right? Well imagine that is a piece of art, all of sudden,...so you have your cell phone, you go to make a phone call and it doesn't work, you know, "why isn't my phone working?" try, try, try, no, no, keeps you spend hours, all day, trying to figure out why it doesn't work, than you go home, you have dinner, you sit in front of the TV, turn the news on, than you hear about this hacker shot down the phone system, and you say "!! there was a hacker, this guy hacked the system, shot down all the cell phone for 10 minutes, whoever he was..." I mean when you say, you think about that, you are like experiencing that, but in the time you were experiencing you didn't know you were experiencing it. So I would say that's Internet art.

R: Is it about language or being poetic?

M: I mean, you questioned the technology first of all, all of the sudden, something you take granted daily, you know, your cell phone, all the sudden, you realize at that moment, your phone doesn't work, so you, the technology failed you, you don't know why, so that's the experience of it, at that moment, you are experiencing, really, truly, experiencing it without any...the term of hierarchy of what it is, you just like "my phone doesn't work", so more of like you are pissed, you go through that emotion, secondly you wonder why, you questioned why, you tried to figure out why, you go through that, you give up, next you go home and you turn on the TV, and now you have news, so now you re-experience it again with this enhanced knowledge of what occurred, and now you are torn between the fact that it was, this wasn't an accident, this was done on purpose, this **** ruing my phone, for many minutes today, why, why is this person really, why is this happened. Then bomb, he didn't make any money... there was no any huge damage occurred, could have, maybe, somebody could have really used the cell phone, and, it was depending upon the cell phone, and they got, you know, or they were being attacked by somebody, who knows what, I mean, could have, for sure,...but the process that it caused you go

through, is more than we get at most pieces of art in the museum, and its affecting more people than we do like putting a piece in a museum for month, so, I don't know, I mean,...

R: Also when people go to museum with frameworks in mind....

R: Yes! There is a framework, they judged on the certain criteria, and, ...but to actually experience it, ...so this person was able to...it, it was to me there were a lot of criteria of what this person did, he took complete control, you know, of everything, and use the system against itself, I am saying that its like, a genius piece of art, I am just saying that mindset, the thinking which change a few areas, and you probably can have really great piece of art. [pausing] Ha.

This is interesting because I've never asked of this current position...

R: Yes...would you please describe your current position and how did you come to be involved with the field you are dealing with your current position?

M: I am the chair of the digital media program, I got a job here, I applied a bunch of places, this was my first interview, I didn't even consider that I would take this job because I wasn't in the digital media arena, I didn't want to be teaching digital media, I wanted to teach sculpture, and that's my background, I came from sculpture and I, I am in a area called New Genre, from UCLA. So the reason I got the job was that, I thought, I needed to get my portfolio on the Internet, so I can get shows, so as, I didn't have to make slides, cause it coasts the fortune and trying to send my slides to every gallery, right? So, I guess I just put myself on the Internet, and hope that could get me something. It ended up I had got to use it to get jobs, and it became a good tool in getting me a job because hiring somebody who knows technical stuff... The jobs ... to teach, that you know, technical things....but that wasn't my goal, that wasn't the reason I put myself on the Internet, it was really I didn't have to make slides. So when I was interviewed here, to this program, I didn't think that I would take this job because it is primarily like, it seemed like graphic design, um, digital media, I didn't want that type of job. When I got here, I got really alone with the chair of the program, and it, I, I, well, became chair very quickly after 2 weeks of being here, and the goal was to change the program completely, so, that's why I am here that's why I took the job, and so, I actually create a program that doesn't exist...

R: So you are developing a new program...

M: Yes, and its primarily gonna to be art and technology, its not in the digital media, its art and technology, which could be anything from robotics to genetic to any,...I mean...to be hacking...to be...whatever students to make it...it's a conceptual program.

R: How does your background and experiences enter in your creating artworks on the Internet?

M: I think the question should be rephrased though...I think its more...how does your background experiences enter in creating...how, no, how does the Internet assist with your background and experiences in creating art. Because I think my background is... the way I think based on causing and effect relationship. The Internet will come in handy in making art, but I don't have necessarily...you see...

R: Yes...Could you talk about how did you start to use digital media...

M: Um...my father, he was working for McDonald Douglas, he works like a company produces Bombs, you know, like aerospace. He brought first calculator like hand calculator to our house, and than after that we had very first home computer, so, I was had computer was on my life. I wasn't, I never, I can't say that actually "became", like, just always...just always has been, yes.

R: That's great! Thank you very much.

REFERENCES

Anderson, T. (1995). Toward a cross-cultural approach to art criticism. Studies in Art Education, (36), 4, 198-209.

Anderson, T. (1997). Toward a postmodernism approach to art education. In J. Hutchens & M. Suggs (Eds.), Art Education: Content and practice in a postmodern era (pp. 62-73). Reston, VI: The National Art Education Association.

Adorno, T. (1990). Culture industry reconsidered. In J, Alexander and S, Seidman (Eds.). Culture and society: Contemporary debates (pp. 275-283). NY: Cambridge University Press.

Anton, S. (2000). The virtual museum. Flash Art, (33), 210. 56.

Anton, S. (2001, March). Net gains: A roundtable on new-media art. ArtForum, (39), 7. 118-125.

Atkins, R. (1997). Art speak: A guide to contemporary ideas, movements, and buzzwords. New York: Abbeville Press.

Atkins, R. (2001). Surface pleasures: Bitstream/Whitney Museum of American art/New York. Artbyte, (3), 3. [Online]. Available:
http://artbyte.com/mag/may_june_01/bitstreams_content.shtml

Barliant, C. Net worth. Artbyte, (3), 2. [Online]. Available:
http://www.artbyte.com/mag/jul_aug_01/networth_content.shtml

Barrett. T. (1997). Talking about student art. Worcester, MA: Davis Publications, Inc.

Barrett. T. (1990). Criticizing photographs: An introduction to understand images. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Barrett. T. (2000). Criticizing art: Understanding the contemporary (2nd ed.). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Barry, P. (1995). Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press.

Barthes, R. (1977/1998). The death of the author. In E. Dayton (Ed.), (1998). Art and interpretation: An anthology of readings in aesthetics and the philosophy of art (pp. 383-385). Toronto: Broadview Press.

Baumgartel, T. (1997). Interview with Jodi: We love your computer. Telepolis. (October, 1997). [Online]. Available: <http://www.heise.de/tp/english/special/ku/6187/1.html>

Baudrillard, J. (1992). Hystericizing the millennium. Retrived October 12, 2001, from <http://www.uta.edu/english/apt/collab/texts/hystericizing.html>

Baudrillard, J. (1994). Simulacra and Simulation. University of Michigan Press.

Baudrillard, J. (1997). A Conjunction of imbeciles. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ctheory.com/event/e043.html>

Baudrillard, J. (2001). Consumer society. In M. Poster (Ed.), (2001). Jean Baudrillard: Selected writings (pp. 32-59). Standford: Standford University Press.

Bell, C. (1958). Art: Part II. New York: Capricorn Books.

Berwick, C. (2001). The new new-media blitz. ARTnews, (100), 4. 112-116.

Benjamin, W. (1968/1998). The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. In E. Dayton (Ed.), (1998). Art and interpretation: An anthology of readings in aesthetics and the philosophy of art (pp. 415-428). Toronto: Broadview Press.

Biggs, S. (2001). On navigation and interactivity. [Online]. Available: <http://hosted.simonbiggs.easynet.co.uk/wall/navigation.htm>

Binkley, T. (1997). The vitality of digital criticism. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, (52) 2, 107-115.

Bender, C. & Druckery, T. (Eds.). (1994). Culture on the brink: Ideologies of technology. Seattle: Bay Press.

Berners-Lee, T. (2000). Weaving the web: The original design and ultimate destiny of World Wide Web. NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

Bodow, S. (2001). The Whitney's digital sampler. New York Art Magazine. (March, 26. 2001). http://www.nymag.com/page.cfm?page_id=4507

Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (1998). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and method. Needham Height, MA: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

Bowers, A. (2000). Let them eat data: How computers affect education, cultural diversity, and the prospects of ecological sustainability. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Braman, S. (1994). Art in the net. Undercurrent issue May, 1994. [Online]. Available: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~ucurrent/1.2.html>

Brown, J. (2000). There goes the neighborhood. [On-Line]. Available: http://www.salon.com/21st/feature/1999/01/cov_19feature.html

Canning, S. (2000). You can't always get what you want: Shifting through the Whitney Biennial 2000. Art Paper, (24), 4. 20-25.

Carroll, N. (1993). Essence, expression, and history: Arthur Danto's philosophy of art. In M. Rollins (Ed.), Danto and his critics (pp. 73-78). Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Carroll, N. (1998). A philosophy of mass art. NY: Oxford University Press.

Carroll, N. (Ed.). (2000). Theories of art today. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. Cultural Anthropology, (9) 3. 302-38.

Congdon, K. & Blandy, D. (Eds.). (1991). Pluralistic approaches to art criticism. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

Cook, D. and Kroker, A. (2001). The postmodern scene. Canada, Montreal: New World Perspectives.

Costigan, J. (1999). Introduction: forests, trees, and Internet research. In S. Jones (Ed.), Doing Internet research: Critical issues and methods for examining the net(pp. 4-15). London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Coxall, H. (1999). Re-presenting marginalized groups in museums: The computers second nature? In Cutting Edge. (Eds.), Desire by Design: Body, territories and new technologies(pp. 123-138). NY: I.B. Tauris.

Cutting Edge. (Eds.). (1999). Desire by design: Body, territories and new technologies. NY: I.B. Tauris.

Craig, R. (1994). Universal pragmatics: A critical approach to image ethics. In D. Beauchamp, R. Braden and J. Baca (Eds.). Visual Literacy in the Digital Age. (pp. 61-72). The International Visual Literacy Association.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Robinson, R. E. (1990). The art of seeing: An interpretation of the aesthetic encounter. NY: Harper & Row.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Flow: The psychology of optimal experience. Malibu, CA: Getty.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with every day life. NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). Creativity. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group.
- Dayton, E. (Ed.). (1998). Art and interpretation: An anthology of readings in aesthetics and the philosophy of art. Toronto: Broadview Press.
- Dery, M. (1996). Escape velocity: Cyberculture at the end of the century. New York: Crove press.
- Dickie, G. (1984/1998). The new institutional theory of art. In E. Dayton (Ed.), (1998). Art and interpretation: An anthology of readings in aesthetics and the philosophy of art (pp. 257-264). Toronto: Broadview Press.
- Dickie, G. (1974/1992). Where is art? An institutional analysis. In P. Alperson (Ed.), (1992). The philosophy of visual art (pp. 434-444). NY: Oxford University Press.
- Dickie, G.(1993). A tale of two artworlds. In M. Rollins (Ed.), Danto and his critics (pp. 73-78). Combridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.
- Dickie, G. (2000). The institutional theory of art. In N. Carroll (Ed.), Theories of art today (pp. 93-108). Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Dietz, S. (1999). The online artworld: A work-in-progress. Vera List Center for Art and Politics, May, 10, 1999.
- Danto, A. (1973/1998). Artworks and real things. In E. Dayton (Ed.), (1998). Art and interpretation: An anthology of readings in aesthetics and the philosophy of art (pp. 242-250). Toronto: Broadview Press.
- Danto, A. (1997). After the end of art: Contemporary art and the pale of history. Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press.
- Danto, A. (2000). Art and meaning. In N. Carroll (Ed.), Theories of art today (pp. 130-140). Madison, MI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Dewey, J. (1958). Art as experience. NY: Capricorn.
- Dretzin, R. (2001). The Merchants of Cool. [Online]. Available: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/>
- Ekenberg, J. (1997). Ontological problems with web art. Switch, (3) 2. [Online]. Available: <http://switch.sjsu.edu/web/art.online2/jan.links/ontological.html>
- Hazan, S. (1998). Are the engineers holding hands with the artists? [Online]. Available: http://www.archimuse.com/mw98/beyond_interface/hazan_engineers_gray.html

Ettinger, L. (1991). Criticism of computer art: The implications of interactivity. In Congdon, K. & Blandy, D. (Eds.), Pluralistic approaches to art criticism (pp. 24-31). Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

Feenberg, A. (1991). Critical theory of technology. New York: Oxford University Press.

Feenberg, A. (1995). Alternative Modernity: The technical turn in philosophy and social theory. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Feenberg, A. (1996). Marcuse or Habermas: Two critiques of technology. Inquiry (39), 45-70.

Fraenkel, J. & Wallen, N. (2000). How to design and evaluate research in education. NY: McGraw-Hill.

Fusco, C. (2001). All Too Real: The Tale of an On-Line Black Sale Interviews Keith Townsend Obadike. [Online]. <http://bbs.thing.net> (9/24/2001)

Galloway, A. (2000). Net.art year in review: State of net.art 99. Switch (5), 3. [Online]. Available: <http://switch.sjsu.edu/web/v5n3/D-1.html>

Garoian, C. & Gaudelius, Y. (2001). Cyborg pedagogy: Performing resistance in the digital age. Studies in Art Education, (42), 4. 333-347.

Gigliotti, C. (1998). Bridge to, bridge from: the arts, education, and technology. Leonardo, (31), 2. 89-92.

Gilroy, P. (1993). The black atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Golonu, B. (2000). A conversation with Benjamin Weil. Artweek, (31), 5. 17-18.

Greenberg, C. (1939). Avant-garde and kitch. Partisan Review (6), 5. 34-39.

Greenberg, C. (1990). Modernist painting. In H. Risatti (Ed.), Postmodern perspectives: Issues on contemporary art. (pp. 12-19). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Greene, R. (1998). From Adaweb to the ICA-An interview with Benjamin Weil. RHIZOME. [Online]. Available: <http://rhizome.org/object.rhiz?1219>

Greene, R. (2000). Web work: A history of Internet art. Artforum (38), 9.162-167.

Gregory, D. (Ed.). (1997). New technologies and art education: Implications for theory, research, and practice. Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association.

Grigar, D. (1999). Over the line, online, gender lines: Email and women in the classroom. In K. Blair & P. Tokayoshi (eds.), Feminist Cyberscapes: Mapping gendered academic spaces (pp 257-281). Connecticut, Stamford: Alex Publishing Corporation.

Habermas, J. (1987/1998). The public sphere. In R. Goodin and P. Pettit (Eds.), Contemporary political philosophy: AN anthology (pp. 105-108). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.

Habermas, J. (2001). From a culture-debating to a culture-consuming public. In P. Weibel and T. Druckery (Eds.), Net condition: Art and global media (pp. 48-50). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Haraway, D. (1991). Simians, cyborg, and women: The reinvention of nature. New York: Routledge.

Haraway, D. (1994). A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s. In S. Seidman (ed.), The postmodern turn: New perspectives on social theory (pp 82-115). England, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harris, J. (2001, February). Wunder Boys. ArtForum, (39), 6. 39.

Held, D. (1980). Introduction to critical theory: Horkheimer to Habermas. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Helfand, G. (2001, March-April). SFMoMA Online Exhibition: 010101. ArtByte,(3), 6. 28-29.

Higgins, K. (1996). Aesthetics in perspective. TX, Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Hopkins, D. (2000). After modern art 1945-2000. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hutchens, J. & Suggs, M. (Eds.). (1997). Art education: Content and practice in a postmodern era. Reston, VI: The National Art Education Association.

Ippolito, J. (2001). Whatever happened to the gift economy? Leonardo (34), 2. 159-60.

Ippolito, J. (2001). The art of misuse. [Online]. Available: http://telematic.walkerart.org/overview/overview_ippolito.html

Jones, K. (2000). Whitney biennial. Frieze, (25). 112-113.

Jackson, T. (1997). Theory and criticism of new media. Dissertation. The Pennsylvania State University.

Jameson, F. (1998). Postmodernism and consumer society. In The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998 (pp.1-20). London and New York: Verso.

Jones, S. (1995). Understand community in the information age. In S. Jones (Ed.), CyberSociety (pp.10-35). CA, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication, Inc.

Jones, S. (1997). The Internet and its social landscape. In S. Jones (Ed.), Virtual Culture (pp.7-35). London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Jones, S. (Ed.). (1999). Doing Internet research: Critical issues and methods for examining the net. London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Kafala, T. (2000). The emergence of a 3D object aesthetics in computer media. Dissertation: The Ohio State University.

Kant, I. (1951). Critique of judgement. New York: Hafner Press.

Keifer-Boyed, K. (1997). Interactive hyperdocuments: Implications for art criticism in postmodern era. In J. Hetchens & M. Suggs (Eds.), Art Education: Content and practice in a postmodern era (pp. 122-131). Reston, VI: The National Art Education Association.

Kendall, L. (1999). Recontextualizing "Cyberspace": Methodological considerations for on-line research. In S. Jones (Ed.), Doing Internet Research: Critical issues and methods for examining the net(pp. 57-74). London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Kingwell, M. (2000). Fringe Research. Artbyte,(3), 4.

Koivunen, H. (1997). From tacit knowledge to cultural industry. [Online]. Available: <http://www.lib.hel.fi/ulkkirja/birstonas/koivunen.html>

Kroker, A. (1997). Digital humanism: The processed world of Marshall McLuhan. In A. Kroker and M. Kroker (Eds.), Digital Delirium. (pp. 86-110). Montreal: New World Perspective.

Lazere, D. (1990, June 13). Academic Marxists are being falsely accused by association with totalitarian communist regimes. *The Chronicle Higher Education*.

Lialina, O.(1998, January 19). cheap. art. Message posted to RHIZOME electronic mailing list, archived at <http://www.rhizome.org/query/>

Lovink, G. (1996). The work of art in the age of cyber technology. [Online]. Availavle: http://www.nettime.org/cgi-bin/wilma_hiliter/nettime/199602/msg00021.html

Lovink, G. (2001, February 26). Interview yourself. [Online]. Available: <http://plagiarist.org/iy/geert.html>

Liebrum, M. (2001, November 2). Gold fever chilled. posted to Houston Chronicle, archived at <http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/story.hts/ae/books/reviews/1115864>

Lyotard, J. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis and Manchester: Minnesota Press and Manchester University Press.

Maitra, R. (2001). Jameson, postmodernity, and visual culture. Conference paper presented in Critical Themes in Media Studies Conference 2001. [Online]. Available: http://www.newschool.edu/mediastudies/conference/visual_culture/rob_maitra.htm

Martin, L., Gutman, H. and Hutton, P. (Eds.) (1988). *Technologies of self: A seminar with Michael Foucault*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Mäkelä, T. (1997). Techno formalism and polygon aesthetics. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ljudmila.org/nettime/zkp4/09.htm>

Manovich, L. (1999). Avant-garde as software. [Online]. Available: http://www.manovich.net/docs/avantgarde_as_software.doc

Manovich, L. (2001). *Language of new media*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Manovich, L. (2001). Post media aesthetics. [Online]. Available: http://www.panix.com/~squigle/vcs/pm_aesthetics.html

Manovich, L. (2001). What's old is new again: How fresh is today's emerging? *ArtByte*, (3), 4. 34-35.

Marx, K (1848/1988). Bourgeois and proletarian. In F. Bender (Ed.), (1988), *The communist manifesto* (pp. 55-66). New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Matlow, E. (1999). Escape from the flatlands: The impact of new technologies on graphic design education. In Cutting Edge. (Eds.), *Desire by design: Body, territories and new technologies* (pp. 95-109). NY: I.B. Tauris.

Margolin, V. (1995). Design History or Design Studies: Subject matter and methods. *Design Issues, History, Theories, Criticism*,(11),1. 13

Maynard, P. (1997). Introduction. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, (52), 2, 95-105.

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Counter blast*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

McRorie, S. (1997). Inquiry in Critical Theory: Questions for Art Education. In J. Hetchens & M. Suggs (Eds.), *Art education: Content and practice in a postmodern era* (pp. 103-110). Reston, VI: The National Art Education Association.

Miles, J. and McLennan, D. (2001). Digital goes critical. *Art Watch*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.artsjournal.com/artswatch/digitalcritical.html>

Miller, A. (2000). A conversation with Ken Goldberg, net artist. *Artweek*, (31), 4. 18.

Miller, D. and Slater, D. (2001). *The Internet: An ethnographic approach*. New York: Berg.

Mihalache, A. (2000). The delightful diversity of cyber-images. *Spark*, 6. [Online]. Available: <http://www.spark-online.com/april00/discourse/mihalache.html>

Napier, M. (1997). *Potatoland*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.potatoland.org>

Neitzsche, F. (1927/1998). The birth of tragedy from the spirit and music. In E. Dayton (Ed.), (1998). *Art and interpretation: An anthology of readings in aesthetics and the philosophy of art* (pp. 106-124). Toronto: Broadview Press.

Obadike, K. (2001) Keith Obadike's Blackness Item #1176601036. [Online]. Available: <http://Obadike.tripod.com/ebay.html>

Packer, R. (1998). Net art as theater of the scene: A hyper-tour of Jodi and Grammatron [Online]. Available: http://www.archimuse.com/mw98/beyondinterface/packer_senses.html

Patel, U. & Matlow, E. (1999). What have science, design, and technology got to do with gender: A conversation between Uma Patel and Erica Matlow. In Cutting Edge. (Eds.), *Desire by design: Body, territories and new technologies* (pp. 139-146). NY: I.B. Tauris.

Pauly, J. (1991). A beginner's guide to qualitative research. *Journalism Monographs*, 125. P. 13.

Penny, S. (1995). Consumer culture and the technological imperative: The artist in database. In S. Penny (Ed.), *Critical issues in electronic media* (pp 47-73). New York: State of New York University Press.

Poster, M. (2001). *Jean Baudrillard: Selected writings*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Pope, R. (1998). The abstract painter as snake handler: *An investigation and interpretation of practice of five American abstract painters in 1998*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation: Florida State University, Tallahassee.

Jana, R. (1999). But is it art? Wired News. [Online]: <http://www.mowa.org/about/editorial/wired.html>

Jana, R. (2002). KOPy Cat. ArtForum, March 2002.

Reynolds, R. and Summer, T. (Eds). (1994) "Cybernetic capitalism and surplus intelligent: An interview with Andrew Rose." *Crash: Nostalgia for the absence of cyberspace*. New York: Thread Waxing Space.

Rheingold, H. (1998). Introduction. *Virtual communities: Homesteading on the electronic frontier*. New York: HarperCollins. [Online]. Available: <http://www.rheingold.com/vc/book/intro.html> (Jan. 20, 2002)

Richardson, J. (2001). Free Software & GPL Society: Interview with Stefan Merten, Oekonux. [Online]. Available: <http://www.rons.net.cn/english/FSM/smerten>

Risatti, H. (Ed.). (1990). *Postmodern perspectives: Issues in contemporary art*. NJ, Englewood Cliff: Prentice Hall.

Robins, K. (1996). Will images move as still? In L. Martin (Ed.), *The photographic image in digital culture*. New York: Routledge.

Rollins, M. (Ed.). (1993). *Danto and his critics*. Cambridge, MI: Basil Blackwell.

Romano, G. (2000). Webscape. *Flash Art*, (33), 210. 57-58.

Rosenberg, H. (1973). Art and words. In G. Battcock, ed. *Idea Art* (p. 154). NY: Dytton.

Salts, D. (1997). The Art of interaction: Interactivity, performativity, and computers. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, (52) 2, 117-127.

Savedoff, B. (1989). The Art Object. *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 29. 160-167.

Seel, M. (1999). The career of aesthetics in German thinking. In A. O'Hear (Ed.), (1999). *German philosophy since Kant* (pp. 399-412). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schneider, F. (1994). Frequently Asked Questions on alt.cyberpunk. [Online]. Available: <http://www-personal.umd.umich.edu/~nhughes/cyber/cyberpunkfaq.html>

Scruton, R. (1995). *A short history of modern philosophy*. New York: Routledge.

Sharf, B. (1999). Beyond netiquette: The ethic of doing naturalistic discourse research on the Internet. In S. Jones (Ed.), *Doing Internet research: Critical issues and methods for examining the net* (pp. 243-256). London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Shaviro, S. (2000). Fringe Research. *Artbyte*, (3)1. 18-19.

Shields, R.(1996). *Cultures of Internet: Virtual spaces, real histories, living bodies*. London: Sage Publication.

Shiva, V. (1996). *Arts and the Internet*. NY: Allworth Communication, Inc.

Shulgin, A.(1997). *Form Art Competition*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.c3.hu/collection/form/>

Singerman, H. (1999). *Art subjects: Making artists in the American university*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stalbaum, B. (1997). Conjuring post-worthlessness contemporary web art and the postmodern context. *Switch*, (3) 2. [Online]. Available: <http://switch.sjsu.edu/web/art.online2/brett.links/conjuring.html>

Stern, J. (1999). Thinking the Internet: Cultural studies versus the millennium. In S. Jones (Ed.), *Doing Internet research: Critical issues and methods for examining the net* (pp. 257-288). London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Strehovec, J. (1997). The web as an instrument of power and a realm of freedom. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ctheory.com/article/a049.html>

Tomes, K. (1996). Shu Lea Cheang: High tech aborigine. *Wide Angle*(18),1. 3-15

Turkle, S. (1995). *Life on the screen*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Ueno,T.(1999). Techno-orientalism and media-tribalism: on Japanese animation and rave culture. *Third Text*, 4. 95-106

Wittgenstein, L. (1953/1998). On family resemblance and on seeing as. In E. Dayton (Ed.), (1998). *Art and interpretation: An anthology of readings in aesthetics and the philosophy of art* (pp. 225-230). Toronto: Broadview Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958/1994). The first person. In A. Kenny (Ed.), (1994). *The Wittgenstein reader* (pp. 191-207). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd.

Weitz. M.(1973). Wittgenstein's aesthetics. In B. Tilghman (Ed.), *Language and Aesthetics* (pp. 7-19). Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Weits, M. (1956). The role of theory in aesthetics. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, (15)1. 27-35.

Wood, R. (1999). *Placing aesthetics: Reflections on the philosophy inquiry*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Valovic, T. (2000). *Digital mythologies: The hidden complexities of the Internet*. NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Veen, J. (2001). *The Art and science of web design*. Indianapolis, Indiana: New Riders.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ying-Yi Chou

Born in Chia-Yi City, Taiwan, 1973

Education

Ph. D. in Art Education, Florida State University, 2003

M. A. in Painting, Savannah College of Art and Design, GA, 1998

B. Ed in Fine Arts & Crafts Education, National Hsinchu Teachers College, Taiwan, 1997

Selected work experience

Instructor, Department of Art Education in Florida State University. 2000-2002

Research assistant, Department of Art Education in Florida State University. 1999-2002

Faculty, Department of Multimedia and Web Design, Art Institute of Atlanta, 2001.

Art Teacher, Tehyin Primary School, Taiwan, 1996-1997.

Research interests

Critical theories/Postmodern theories, Philosophies of art, Contemporary aesthetics, Media art practice and theory, Post-Colonial Feminism, Post-secondary art education.

Presentations

Internet art: the new media, the expressions, and the practices. Presented in Georgia Art Education Association. November 2002.

Presentation discussed selected contemporary artists' conceptualizations, expressive means of their Internet artworks, and their practice in the environment of Internet.

Internet art: contents, contexts, and practices. Presented in Art Institute of Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia, May 2001.

Presentation discussed idea and ontology of Internet art, Internet culture, and suggested use of a cross-cultural criticism strategy to examine Internet artworks.

Selected awards

Dissertation Research Grant Award, Florida State University, 2002.

Faculty Residence Research Assistantship, Department of Art Education, Florida State University, 1999-2002.

Professional memberships

Member of National Art Education Association

Member of Georgia Art Education Association

Other Interests and leisure activities:

Computer multimedia, Web installation, Photography, Painting and drawing. Other leisure activities include playing musical instruments, listening to classical music, cooking, running, and travel.