



Postautonomie | Post-Autonomy

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»I think of further art development not in terms of postmodern but of post-autonomous for which art need only give up that moment of autonomy that allows it no final purpose. Because – if art has come to the end of the road of aesthetic autonomy, it seems to me unavoidable that it will look to extra-aesthetic goals and functions in order to survive and evolve.«

»In order not to lose its autonomy, however, art must set its own extra-artistic or heteronomous social ends in strict self-determination, that is, autonomously. It will need to invent potential functions that can be artistically elaborated or to adapt to those already available. By setting up extra-artistic, that is, heteronomous, functions for itself, that is, autonomously art becomes a part of the he-autonomous structure. This is a rediscovery of a mental image of FRIEDRICH SCHILLER, one that he called 'he-autonomy' in his letters to KALLIAS. It is a type of autonomy and can only be carried out in society, not used as an instrument against society. From which it follows that art and its productions must be brought into the process of social communication. It is obvious that, as a result, art will be faced with the possibility and the necessity of venturing into the public arena.«

Michael Lingner

from: Art as a system within society 1993

[http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml\\_publicationen/kt93-1.html](http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml_publicationen/kt93-1.html)

Stefan Beck

## Autonomie 2.0 | Eine Einführung

Postautonomie kann als ein Stadium der modernen Kunst verstanden werden, in dem sie kritisch ihre eigene Autonomie reflektiert.

Ihr Erzeugungsmuster lautet: Autonomie von der Autonomie. Darin ähnelt sie Formeln wie Deleuze und Guattaris »Produktion der Produktion« oder Luhmanns »Beobachtung der Beobachtung«. Ein Schema zweiter Ordnung sowie ein Begriff in der Form eines Feedbacks.

Ungleich ihren Vorgängern enthält sie jedoch ein negatives Element der Aufhebung. Denn sich autonom von der Autonomie zu erklären, nähert sich einem Paradox, weswegen Michael Lingner, auf den der Begriff im Wesentlichen zurückgeht, ihr vorsichtig Heautonomie voranstellt. »Heautonomie« meint, dass die Kunst sich willentlich von ihrer Autonomie verabschiedet hat, nachdem ihr im Prozess der Autonomisierung nichts mehr übrig blieb, von dem sie sich noch hätte autonom erklären können. Die Kunst hat sich - historisch Ende der 1960er Jahre - nicht autonom von ihrer Autonomie gelöst, sondern unter dem Zwang, der Autonomie als Letztes ihr Autonomes zu opfern.

Postautonomie als Gegenstand der Forschung betrachtet ihr »Post« weniger als ein »Danach« denn als Erweiterung, Steigerung und Überbietung von Autonomie. Weder kann Postautonomie eine völlige Auflösung von Autonomie noch deren Transzendenz bedeuten. Denn eine Autonomie von der Autonomie der Autonomie würde in strukturellen Mehrdeutigkeiten münden.

Wenngleich Bourdieu in den »Regeln der Kunst« die Rolle der Autonomie für die Entstehung der Modernen Kunst Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts würdigt, ist damit ihre Exegese bis heute noch nicht abgeschlossen. Die Diskussion der Postautonomie begnügt sich damit, diese vorläufig mit Selbstbestimmung in der Form, der Deutung und der Distribution zu kennzeichnen.

Keineswegs geht es hierbei darum festzustellen, ob es je eine Autonomie der Kunst gegeben hat. Vielmehr wird Autonomie als eine Geschichte (»story«) verstanden, die bis zu einem bestimmten Punkt der Kunst fruchtbare Ergebnisse beschert hat.

*In Erweiterung des Blickwinkels* sei hier auf einen anderen, mit der Autonomie eng verwandten Aspekt moderner Kunst verwiesen: den ihrer Funktions- und Sinnlosigkeit.

Es ließe sich die gleiche Geschichte folglich auch so erzählen: Die Kunst ist sich derart sinnlos vorgekommen, dass sie in letzter Konsequenz ihre eigene Sinnlosigkeit für sinnlos erklärt hat. Sie produziert nun sinnlos Sinn. Das lässt sich anders als die Autonomie ins Endlose ausdehnen.

Beispiele dafür lassen sich zur Genüge finden. Weniger geht es also um ein Dass als ein Wie. Wie lässt sich Postautonomie oder postautonome Praxis begreifen, ordnen, strukturieren?

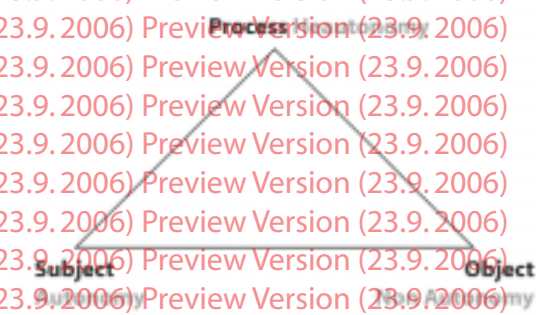
Die Aufhebung von Autonomie lässt sich nach zwei Richtungen denken, die von einer Relativierung des Subjektes als autonomes Agens ausgehen. Ein nachgelassenes Fragment Nietzsches weist den Weg: »Das Kunstwerk, wo es ohne Künstler erscheint, z.B. als Leib, als Organisation (preußisches Offizierskorps, Jesuitenorden). Inwiefern der Künstler nur eine Vorstufe ist. Was bedeutet das [Subjekt-?«

Das Aufgehen des Künstlersubjektes in einer Personenmehrzahl (»multitude«) wird gerne unter den Begriffen von Partizipation, Kooperation, Kollaboration und kürzlich – Mutualität (Alsleben/Eske) diskutiert. Ich meine allerdings, dass es sich dabei keineswegs unbedingt um reale Menschen aus Fleisch und Blut handeln muss, sondern dass eine zweite Linie von Autonomieauflösung durch einen Übergang in das allgemein Prozesshafte, wie es in den Schriften Gotthard Günthers behandelt wird, erreicht werden kann. Günther geht in seinen Überlegungen zur Überwindung des logischen Subjekt-Objekt-Antagonismus (ausgedrückt in einer zweiwertigen Logik) von einer dritten logischen Instanz aus, die er den »Prozess« nennt. Durch ihn suchte er die spezifischen Zustände kybernetischer Maschinen zu begreifen, denen er durch aus Bewusstsein zusprach, wenn auch nicht Selbstbewusstsein.

Dass postautonome Kunst somit Maschinenkunst entspricht, ist zwar nicht notwendig, aber möglich.



Post Autonomy shall be regarded as a field containing the »values« Autonomy, Non Autonomy and Heautonomy.



Following Gotthard Günther we connect Autonomy with Subject, Non Autonomy with Object, and Heautonomy with Process.

Process

Immerhin finden sich die überzeugendsten Ansätze postautonomer Arbeitsweisen im Internet. Verwiesen sei nicht nur auf die viel diskutierten Arbeiten von Sal Randolph, Wikipedia, flickr, del.icio.us setzen in die Tat um, was sich unter dem Schlagwort »Tod des Autors« bereits ankündigte: Es schreibt.

Kunst, es produziert.

Das Ergebnis: Nicht nur das Bild versinkt in der Wand, die Skulptur im Sockel; die gesamte Kunst verschwindet, verliert ihre ihr eigentümliche Formensprache (was sich schon mit Duchamp gezeigt hat), taucht ins gesellschaftlich Allgemeine unter. Kochen, Sozialarbeit, Mülltrennung, politisches Engagement etc.

Fig. 3

Certain states in the field can be described as coordinates within the triangle of the three »values«.

Ob die Kunst ihren Sinn nur noch innerhalb der Gesellschaft finden kann, wie Lingner meint, ist trotzdem weiterhin fraglich. Eher scheint, als hätte sie geschickt die Fronten gewechselt. Stelle sie anfangs Sinnlosigkeit (oder wenigstens ihren eigenen Sinn) gegen die bürgerliche Moral eines durch Arbeit sinnerfüllten Lebens, behauptet sie nunmehr (als Einzige?) Sinn gegen zunehmend sinnentleerten bürgerlichen Alltag, dem nahezu alle Sicherheit abhanden gekommen ist. Selbst Bankangestellte werden entlassen.

Kunst, die z.B. Sozialarbeit verrichtet, macht dies ja, weil sich die Gesellschaft aus diesem Feld zurückzieht. Hat sich also die Kunst nicht wieder einmal außerhalb der Gesellschaft gestellt?

David Goldenberg kommt der Verdienst zu, die Diskussion um Postautonomie aufgegriffen und fortgeführt zu haben. Dennoch sehe ich in Postautonomie weder »a new model« noch »a breakaway«, »degree zero« oder »a clearing point«. Ausdrücke, wie sie sich in den Schriften von David Goldenberg finden, die insgesamt auf eine vollkommen neue Kunst hinweisen sollen.

Versuche, die Autonomie der Kunst aufzulösen, sind jedoch beinahe so alt wie ihre Autonomie selbst. Wie Boris Groys gezeigt hat, ist gerade die Idee einer radikal neuen Kunst den Ideen der Moderne zutiefst verpflichtet und somit ein alter Hut.

Process

Sollte sich eine Erörterung von Postautonomie als fruchtbar erweisen, käme ihr die folgende, ans Paradoxe grenzende Aufgabe zu zu erklären, wie die Kunst sich ändern könnte und trotzdem die gleiche bliebe.

\* \* \*

Das hier vorgelegte Magazin versteht sich als eine Einführung in die Diskussion von Postautonomie. Es versammelt einige Stimmen, die sich in letzter Zeit zu dem Begriffsumfeld geäußert haben. Dass die Quellen zu allergrößtem Teil aus dem Internet stammen, mag kein Zufall sein, spiegelt er nicht nur die räumliche Distanz zwischen den Beteiligten (London, Hamburg, Frankfurt) wieder, sondern auch ihre Auffassung, eine mögliche postautonome Praxis mittels Werkzeugen zu verwirklichen, die nur im und durch das Internet gegeben sind.

Fig. 4

States may not be considered closed fixed but within approximation to the origin of the »values«. Autonomy will never be totally lost, but retained to a certain degree.

Zwecks Verfolgung der aktuellen Diskussion sei auf die Seite [www.thing-frankfurt.de/postautonomy](http://www.thing-frankfurt.de/postautonomy) verwiesen.

Detlev Fischer u.a.

### Post Autonomous Art, from Wikipedia

Post-autonomous art describes a mode of making art at a time when the artist's presumed autonomy has become rather problematic. A post-autonomous mode of production is no longer concerned with creating singular works of art attributable to a particular artist or author. Instead, a post-autonomous art practice employs a collaborative or dialogical mode of production, for example, via face-to-face or online dialogues, conversations or events, wikis, salons, bulletin boards, chat rooms, or collaborative visual editing environments.

The German Conceptual artist Michael Lingner proposed the notion of Post Autonomy. The aim of post-autonomous artistic production is not (or not primarily) to create objects (electronic or physical) or to document the traces of the productive process. Rather, it is to support and embody a political transformation whereby the human participants subscribe to an open ended mutual learning process and define and activate a productive space outside capitalism and its competitive mode of production.



Seminar »Aesthetics of Participation«  
by multitrudi artspace,  
Frankfurt, 2003  
www.multitrudi.de/adt

### History of post-autonomous art

The history of post-autonomous art can be seen in various practices for which one or several of the criteria below hold true:

Conscious control of the artefact outcome is relinquished or weakened. The surrealists experimented with the unconscious in automatic writing; a number of conceptual artists used random events as input to the productive process; dialogical encounters contributed to the work (see, for example, some works of Stanley Brown or Douglas Huebler); choices of performers and improvisation influence the result, for example, in a (musical) performance where the players can choose which module of music to play.

The process of production itself is considered as constituting the art, not any resulting products or documents. This was very common in various conceptual art practices in the sixties. The role of documentation and of documents (e.g. of performances) as quasi artefacts undermined this somewhat as conceptual artists needed objects for the gallery system. For some artists such as Allan Kaprow, a dissolution of the boundary separating life and art led to the idea of an invisible art practice.

Practices are considered open-ended, i.e., no pre-conceived result is intended. Instead, the initial boundaries or rules of some process are defined and the actual development is left to the interaction of participants. Censorship issues can become important in this context.

There is no narrow focus on the aesthetic experience as in most other art forms. Rather, post-autonomous art explicitly deals with social, political and economic issues as well as with the communication, media, race and gender issues discussed in cultural studies. This also links to the practice of the situationists who intended to abolish the notion of art as a separate, specialized activity and aimed to transform it so it became part of fabric of everyday life.



Flyer 8 for seminar »Aesthetics of Participation«  
by multitrudi artspace,  
Frankfurt, 2003



**Examples of post-autonomous art**

The *Netzkunstwoerterbuch* (in German) is a wiki dictionary of terms relevant for a conversational / dialogical art practice. It may count as post-autonomous work of art.  
[www.netzkunstwoerterbuch.de](http://www.netzkunstwoerterbuch.de)

*Fallen Fruit* is an activist art collaboration on »public fruits« which investigates the interface of urban life and agriculture (in the form of fruit). It incorporates aspects of »pataphysics« and the Situationist International.

Sal Randolph is a New York based artist engaged in participatory practices in real space and the internet.  
[www.salrandolph.com](http://www.salrandolph.com)

See also: *Post Autonomy*, a blog discussing post-autonomous practices.  
[www.postautonomy.co.uk](http://www.postautonomy.co.uk)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-autonomous\\_art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-autonomous_art)

**»Indem die Kunst außerkünstlerische, also eben keine solchen einzig ihrer Autonomie dienenden Zwecke selbstbestimmt setzt, bekommt sie eine heautonome Struktur. Daß Autonomie und Heteronomie nicht mehr als sich einander ausschließend gedacht werden, ist keineswegs eine auf die vorliegende Problematik speziell zugeschnittene Erfindung. Vielmehr handelt es sich bei dem Sowohl-als-auch von Heteronomie und Autonomie in gewisser Weise um die Wiederentdeckung einer bereits auf Kant zurückgehenden Denkfigur von Friedrich Schiller, der bereits in den Kallias-Briefen mit dem Begriff der Heautonomie im Zusammenhang von Kunst operiert hat. Erst recht sieht die Systemtheorie in diesen Unterscheidungen keinen Widerspruch mehr. Sie hält ein System nicht mehr entweder für autonom oder heteronom, sondern geht davon aus, daß seine Autonomie durch Heteronomie gestärkt oder geschwächt werden kann. Auch heteronome Zwecke können durchaus als Bestimmungen zur Selbstbestimmung verwendet werden.« Michael Lingner**

aus: Die Kunst der Gesellschaft 1992 | Perspektiven postautonomer künstlerischer Praxis  
<http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml/publikationen/kt92-10.html>

David Goldenberg

## A year of festivities to celebrate the launch of the era of Post Autonomy

In the summer of 2005 I announced the beginning of a year of festivities to launch the era of Post Autonomy, the following material brings together the disparate activities that have taken place since that announcement.

The announcement signalled a shift in thinking about Post Autonomy. Up to this point in time many of the projects were word based, lecture performances, text as art works, concerned with fleshing out the theoretical space of Post Autonomy concerned with articulating basic questions about the make up of that space. What is Post Autonomy? Is Post Autonomy an actual practice? Is Post Autonomy an actual term we can go onto use?

However, the use of text and language could also be seen as more than a theorization of a practice, it could be seen as an actual process of dematerialisation away from the physical attributes we associate with the tradition of European art that we have inherited. In other words, the use of language could be seen as a process of stripping away the current tradition, the

Euro-centric tradition of art, back to degree zero, a clearing, a point where it is possible to begin rethinking and rebuilding a new model. But then it occurred to me that this process could be taken much further. So many of the activities and events can be seen to be preoccupied with taking this notion of stripping away thinking and practices linked to the European tradition, whether this takes the form of walking, discussions, on-line activities, 48 hr wakes.

Nevertheless the problem remains. How do we know if Post Autonomy constitutes an actual term, how do we know whether it constitutes a real practice, how do we decide whether the time is ready for Post Autonomy to start? If we are truthful there is of course no way of knowing, all we need to do is to decide it is time to start, and simply begin. There requires a commitment to entering and working solely with the issues and domain of Post Autonomy.

With that in mind, the announcement to begin the era of Post Autonomy projects allowed the possibility to cross over a threshold into a mental space of an actual space of Post Autonomy.

This moment of entering into the domain of Post Autonomy triggered off several processes. If we go along with the idea that Post Autonomy concerns itself with the process of locating a point to start to rethink and reinvent a practice, then the actual material, which made a particular sense within the context of European tradition made a different sense within this new domain.

Once we enter into that space or domain, what is that space we have entered? How do we recognise what is there, and navigate around?

### Linking Post Autonomy with the development of a new model of art

Once we move onto recognizing and accepting Post Autonomy as an actual term and theoretical space, how do we then go onto test out claims for Post Autonomy in actual concrete terms? If Post Autonomy is to exist within the real world in competition with the art industry, and against the context of socio political world, what form is Post Autonomy to assume and exist in that world?

So far the notion of Post Autonomy has been paired or equated with developing a new model, that directly addresses the apparent problems posed by Globalisation and the role a Euro-centric practice is seen to play within that process. In so far that European art is part of the process of spreading European values and life styles. So the development of this new model is posed as taking place once the model of a Euro-centric tradition is completed and finished, decoupled from Western Expansionism, and reformulated against the backdrop of the Global.

We tend to forget that the existing system of Euro-centric art is relatively young, but having said that, is this system or model the best model we require at this point in time? Is there a possibility of developing

David Goldenberg, preparing his lecture, »arts future requirements« at multi.trudi artspace, Frankfurt, March 2000.

[www.multitrudi.de/goldenberg](http://www.multitrudi.de/goldenberg)

Invitation card to »arts future requirements« at multi.trudi artspace, Frankfurt, March 2000.



a completely different model or even improving on this model? With the series of projects titled Post Autonomy, I have staged a thought experiment that has sought to speculate on and embody just such a new model. People have posed the wrong questions on entering this domain, which they have posed in terms of a continuity and repetition of a Euro-centric tradition i.e. What does a Post Autonomous Practice look like? And, what is the relationship between Post Autonomy and the tradition of a Euro-centric art tradition? Now that the construction of PA appears to have travelled beyond its early stage, we now need to ask how do we actually use PA? And what is it?

Where art shall take place...

Visitors discussing possible locations for an intervention by David Goldenberg.

**Chronology of events**

- Launch of a year of festivities to launch the era of Post Autonomy, Marvels of the World, Museum of Fine Art, Dunquirk, France
- 48 hr wake @ <http://London, UK & Norwich international, UK>
- Discussing Post Autonomy, with Stefan Beck, and in collaboration with Interactingarts at Tate Britain, London, UK
- Redundancy, organized by Basekamp and Lars Fischer, Andrew Kreps Gallery New York, USA
- Copy-fight, Centre di Art Santa Monica, Barcelona, Spain
- Node L, London, UK
- Walk/Talk/Eat London, UK in collaboration with Ccred & Basekamp- with groups throughout the States and Europe
- Re launch of the Post Autonomy website <http://postautonomy.co.uk/blog>
- Back to back @ Camp Aalst at Netwerk gallery, Aalst, Belgium
- On-line project, Enter the domain of Post Autonomy, Jump into cold water, Shedhalle, Zurich, Switzerland
- Miss Mao, London and Beijing, China
- PA reader

Confusion. Where is the exhibition? Material provided by David Goldenberg seems to be of no help.

**Euro-centric tradition of art**

I understand this to refer to

- 1) The invention of the current definition of art and its institutions as invented in the late 1700's.
- 2) The absorption of all world cultures' visual culture into the West's invention of the term of Universal art which took place between the 1900's to the 1930/40's, and clearly embodied in the Museum of Modern art in NY.
- 3) The ideological/political function or purpose of international art events – Documenta, Manifesta, Venice – to promote Western Art and life styles to the rest of the World, especially during the Cold war, but as far as I know this function has not changed, since this was a major point of debate in texts and books on curating in the late 90's until recent times.
- 4) The idea also taps into the research embodied by Luhmann, Lingner and Ranciere to question and re-evaluate the body of history, institutions, and knowledge which we understand as Art as invented in the 1700's. This research looks at whether this history is the only possible history or reading of this tradition, or whether there are other possible readings, constructions, developments.
- 5) Lingner mentioned – in the Future requirements of art – that to date there has only been one model of Western art, the one we currently use, and no other. So that the idea that the existing tradition of art is made up of a pluralistic body of ideas and models is wrong.



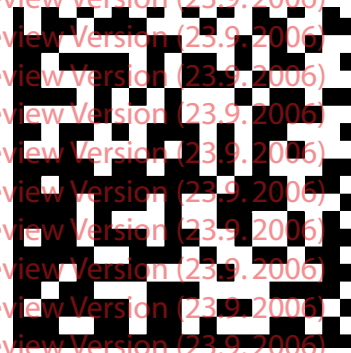


miss.gunst

## PPP [A]: POST > PARA > PATA > [AUTONOMOUS]

please note:

the following musings do refer primarily to the (social, cultural, aesthetical, historical) field we use to call [art]. this has to be said due to the sad fact that from time to time it seems very fashionable for professionals in this field to either pretend not being interested in [art] anyway/anymore or to speak in more general terms, to be able to discuss the history, present conditions, and future of almost everything, the latter is rubbish and the former is probably the most boring gesture to be encountered at large.



Verena Kuni

### 1. post

Tag this code with your mobile phone to go to »Verena Kuni«.

»post« is latin and means: »after«. sorry, no alternative translation available.

hence in case the prefix »post« is used, automatically the notion time comes into play, before – after something changed, otherwise it would not make sense to mention it.

post autonomy therefore means: »after autonomy«, any problem with this?

indeed, if there is an »after autonomy«, there must have been an autonomy before.

which is clearly not the case – remember, we are talking about art, as it can be all too easily grasped from art history even from a relatively naive point of view, and – for those who love to think about it – also learned from more advanced [art] theory (see i.e. pierre bourdieu's »les regles d'art«) even in times when the claim for artistic autonomy was really in fashion, it was exactly that: rhetoric.

that art history loved (and to a certain extent still loves) to play with this term does not change the facts. in other words: we have never been autonomous.

so how much sense does it make to continue this rhetoric game on the next level, now called: post autonomy.

this may depend on personal preferences how you want to spend your time. (btw.: what would you expect from a positive result – a how-to positively embrace your chains?)

however: when it comes to more practical questions, especially those of artistic practices: just forget about it.

### 2. para

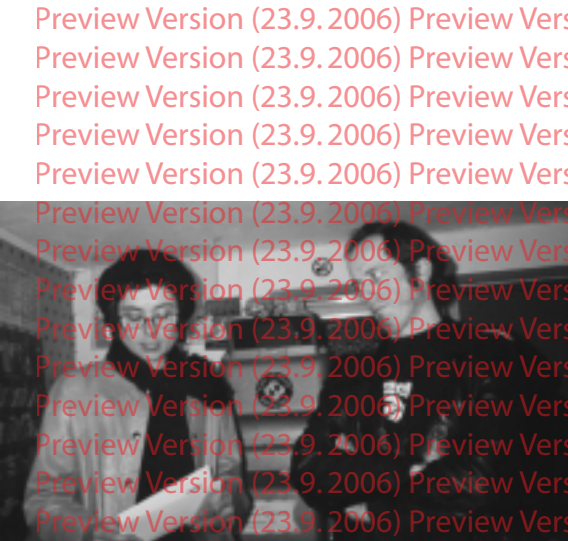
given this, what about a little shift? why not try another prefix to handle our problem. in example, now from greek (but also used in latin) »para«. para comes with a whole range of possible directions to proceed: »along with«, »in parallel to«, »besides, in spatial dimensions«, »during«, in terms of time, »against« in the sense of »counter-« as well as »beyond (the norm)« on a more metaphorical layer.

hence to speak of »para autonomy« might be a apt concept in case you would like to put critique against the traditional idealization of artistic autonomy. yet, with this we are still in the realms of theoretical debates.

now, what about artistic practice? could »para autonomy« offer more fruitful perspectives than »post autonomy«?

perhaps the way the appendix is used in psychology and psychiatry can give us a hint: to describe symptoms that, mimicking one disorder, are occurring within another disorder, but not so severe as to be considered co-occurring or co-morbid. hence, »para autonomous practice« could be defined as an artistic practice mimicking what normally is perceived as one buying in the idea of »artistic autonomy«.

for an example at hand one might think of the work of sherry levine and other artists, some of them – maybe all too hastily - subsumed under the label »appropriation art«.



on the other hand side, one might also look at artistic experiments that come to similar results precisely by making use of techniques usually associated with the loss of autonomy, i.e. seance, trance, automatic writing, deliberately diving into visual and/or acoustic noise – practiced in surrealism as well as in (post-)industrial culture.

in sum, whatever direction in understanding »para« we prefer, we find a broad spectrum of (possible »para) autonomous practices«. yet, all of them, or at least those mentioned above, remain related to the phantasm of individual artistic autonomy; a core/center of gravity probably still sucking too much energy.

### 3. pata

therefore we finally should proceed to test another option. »pata« another prefix beginning with »p« but this is not the point of course, rather fascinating is that here we have a prefix that does exist and not perfectly borderline, for it has no history in classic languages, so no wonder it never made it into official dictionaries – neither those devoted to foreign words nor those dedicated to the new creations of institutional languages.

indeed, it was born in the realms of art, on an island consisting of water, in the famous novel »gestes et opinions du docteur faustroll, pataphysicien« written by the french poet alfred jarry in 1898. in high noon times of so called »artistic autonomy«, btw. the prefix has become somewhat autonomous since, inspiring a whole variety of artistic concepts and practices. however, if we try to pre-fix it to autonomy, we do so precisely because of its borderline character. literally free, yet carrying the association to pataphysics and its methods, both deeply rooted in parody and pastiche, embedding critique against the institutionalized systems of power/state/belief/education without being eager to become an institution of its own.

any examples for an artistic practice that might be called »pata autonomous«?

sure. just think of neicism by itself the perfect parody of avant-garde isms, but also quite inventive in terms of applied strategies like i.e. art-as-strike, situationist methods and practices of dérive, plagiarism and pranks.

think of artistic communication guerilla activities like i.e. shop-dropping, maniac mimicking, clowning (here not to confused with the street dance recently developed in the slums of l.a.? who knows...).

there is a considerably wide variety of possible practices at hand. however, any »pata autonomous practice« should be quite clear about what is not the golden goal:

be the better politician? save the world? or the art world at least? well, from the para point of view we'd have to say: we prefer not to.

remember, pataphysics is a science devoted to imaginary solutions. let us learn from this for the practice: art always was and is at its best when buying into the imaginary. this does not mean to wave goodbye to reality, whatever kind of you prefer.

also imaginary solutions may have real ends, wherever you can imagine.

Vereina Kuni in discussion with David Goldenberg, multi.trudi artspace, Frankfurt, March 2000.

Guests at multi.trudi artspace, Frankfurt, March 2000

Detlev Fischer

### Some provisional notes on post-autonomous practice

These notes were occasioned by an invitation by Stefan Beck to look at a wiki discussion of post-autonomous practice that followed a talk he gave within the event »The space for a Post-Autonomous Practice« that was organized by David Goldenberg. This event was itself part of »OpenCongress«, a conference held at Tate Britain on Friday 7th and Saturday 8th October 2005.

Since the wiki dived straight into various matters I took a step back and googled »post-autonomous art«. At copy-art.net I found an article by David Goldenberg called »Developing a Post-Autonomous Practice« which starts like this:

»I am going to read from an on-going text, which I first delivered at the Museum of Modern art in Arnhem last year. The title for the text think tank for establishing a Post Autonomous Practice looks at the crisis or emergency in art, and a necessity for the reinvention of something equivalent to art under the umbrella term of Post Autonomous Practices.«

Before diving deep into this text, I decided to stop here and produce some quick notes. I am sure I will have misunderstood a few things but I need production as a heuristics, otherwise I'd be lost. Now, my nine provisional notes:

1) Illusion of freedom. »Post-autonomous art« seems at first glance a very stupid thing. If »autonomy« practically means that I conceive myself as a free individual (knowing that I am not), giving myself a licence to act as if I set my own rules, this seems just a necessary step in any individuation. It is the »fuck-off« hurled at parents, institutions, at art history. So why deliberately giving up (as the prefix »post-« suggests) an illusion of freedom which sometimes behaves like actual freedom?

2) Vanishing point. It seems that for artists, »autonomy« has always been nothing but a vanishing point. The artist believing in his or her unbridled autonomy is, literally an idiot (check the etymology).

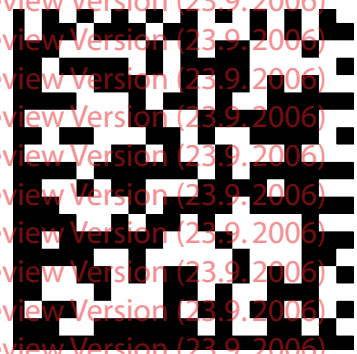
3) Crisis. I can't see a »crisis or emergency in art«, at least not one that wouldn't have been around for as long as I can remember. There is dead art, weak art, obscure art, funny art, desperate art, the death of art, the negation of art, the negation of art as art. Crisis-mongering seems just a way of clamoring for attention, a way of grabbing a discourse by the balls, setting a deliberate rhetorical hiatus. It counts on an audience that will try to identify a novelty in what is being said, worried that it may be missing something important. Insofar as that helps your critical and artistic careers, there is nothing wrong with it. It is an intellectual game.

4) Names. Why is there »something equivalent to arts that has to be re-invented? Inventions get patented. The thrust of an invention is to set a mark which can be tied to a name, or that of a few (never more than a few), like: »in 2005 Goldenberg, Beck et.al. expanded the concept of post-autonomous art originally proposed by Michael Lingner (see Wikipedia entry)«—names that can enter the circulation, appreciate the value of their bearers in the market for art and/or critique.

5) The market. The practice of art and critique in general has two important aspects (not excluding other aspects):

1. It is (co-)defined by a market (even those practices that do not enter the gallery or museum system, as long as they are aware of its appreciation mechanisms), a market that has the potential to provide a job for the artist or intellectual, allows them to make a living somehow – I think this is legitimate.

2. It is a space-time environment where one or more people shape some material, learn in the process, enjoy themselves, produce traces, make friends.



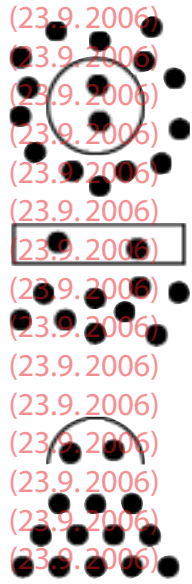
Detlev Fischer

Tag this with your mobile phone to go to »Detlev Fischer«:

Medievalisches Theater  
Um 1500  
Um die Schauspielerei herum.

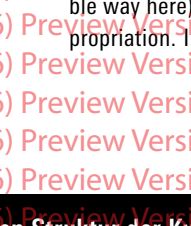
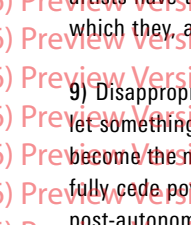
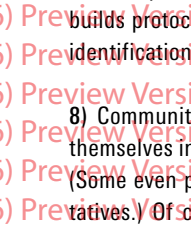
Renaissance Theater  
Eine einfache Bühne steht  
Schräg vor dem Publikum, das  
jetzt frontal, aber immer noch locker  
den Blick auf die Bühne hat.

Barock Theater  
Ausblendung eines ins Unendliche  
ziehenden Bühnenraums.  
Barock Theater  
des Publikums



Group formations. The theater:  
Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque.

Taken from Alsleben/Eske  
»Netzkunstwörterbuch«



A post-autonomous art practice, if it accepts a blending of voices in a wiki, a multitude, or even anonymity, might appear to weaken the position of the artist as producer for a market insofar as the central currency (or economic multiplier for product value) in this market is the artist's name. I believe the system will always create the names it needs whenever it wants to appropriate a new movement, concept or -ism, including »post-autonomous practice«. The press works the same way. To be manageable, circulation needs to curb the number of names circulated. This need not affect the second aspect.

6) Co-operation. In my view, the problem is not »autonomy« or »post-autonomy«, but how to co-operate on an equal basis without making a mess of it and without falling out. The problem starts when that »something« should be something other than a dialogue (a discourse) and something other than a design conceived and controlled by one, possibly with dedicated tasks commissioned to others (»built this minimal art sculpture« [20th century], »painted the landscape in the background« [16th century]). I know that some people are good at it, but usually they enlist the help of others to shape a practice in which their authorship is implied by force of the name relation, even if they reject the notion. (For example, the way Wodiczko may consult homeless people. They will remain nameless – it is his name that will be associated with the outcome. Even if he would insist on listing them they would not enter circulation because circulation rests on resonance – already circulated elsewhere.)

7) Group autonomy. Some people seem to resonate so well that they can build a common art practice. One could say they define a »group autonomy« which recognizes the distribution of strengths and over time builds protocols for shaping joint practices. »Group autonomy« then rises from an ensemble of individual identification processes that appropriate the results of the practice as »own practice«, »our practice«.

8) Community. Another alternative is the community and communication approach where artists turn themselves into instruments for social and political struggle of the weak, the discriminated, the exploited. (Some even pretend to support the oppressors, the way the yes men assumed the role of WTO representatives.) Of course, this kind of post-autonomy (or call it heteronomy) seems quite complex since the artists have to meet both the success criteria of the selected social group and those of the art market in which they, after all, want to reap the rewards. And rightly so, for god's sake.

9) Disappropriation. Perhaps a truly post-autonomous (and post-heteronomous) practice would mean to let something outside self-resonance (or resonance within a defined group) lead one's hand. To agree to become the medium of something that one cannot (fully) grasp. Automatic writing and concepts that will fully cede power to extraneous mechanisms (Luke Rhinehart's dice man) come to mind. In the extreme, post-autonomy is deuteronomy, the »repetition of the law« (sorry to play with words in a not-so-sustainable way here). It means subscribing to, rather than merely tolerating or fighting against, one's own disappropriation. I can imagine to take a perverse pleasure in this.

»Der Vorschlag einer heautonomen Struktur der Kunst bedeutet nicht die Aufgabe, sondern lediglich die Relativierung der bisher absolutistisch gedachten ästhetischen Autonomie. Einmal abgesehen von der theoretisch begründeten Plausibilität dieser Relativierung, welche die Fortsetzbarkeit der Kunst verspricht, hat sie auch einen entscheidenden praktischen Vorzug: Die vormaligen, aus dem Konflikt zwischen dem Selbstbestimmungsanspruch und der ökonomischen Abhängigkeit des Künstlers entstandenen Paradoxien werden auflösbar. In der heautonomen künstlerischen Praxis sind die Möglichkeiten ästhetischer Autonomisierung und die Notwendigkeiten gesellschaftlicher Fremdbestimmung vermittelt statt polarisiert. Während die Paradoxien einst historisch wohl notwendig waren, hat es die immanente Entwicklungslogik der Kunst geradezu erzwungen, daß heute ihre Produktion zu einer spezifischen Form gesellschaftlicher Arbeit wird.« Michael Lingner

aus: Die Kunst der Gesellschaft 1992 | Perspektiven postautonomer künstlerischer Praxis  
[http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml\\_publicationen/kt92-10.html](http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml_publicationen/kt92-10.html)

The only tactic of resisting the institutional market for the freelance artist is to become the mediating machine him/herself, producing productivity and a self-governed networking. His/her work shifts to a multiplication of activities, contacts, formats of work, collaboration and presentation, allowing for the work-in-progress character to take on almost his/her entire opus, a working without work.

Bojana Cvejic, at ARTmargins

Stefan Beck

## Notes about the end of exhibition art

I am writing here about what has been the context of my work for some years now, taking the viewpoint of an artist rather than that of an art historian. This may bring out more clearly what this work is about and what it relates to.

The context is the possible end of exhibition art. And the basic question is:

### What would art be like if there were no more exhibitions?

Emptiness would abound. The museums would be empty, the galleries would be empty, the art fairs would be empty. Any venue offering art for contemplation in whatever form would be affected.

This would also include academia, i.e., art academies insofar as they provide exhibitions in the form of circuits, annual shows or degree shows.

The example of a Mexican gallery at the Art Frankfurt 2001 [1] demonstrates that this is by no means an utopian state. Surrounded by the typical mess of imagery, there was an empty space, and at its centre a travel suitcase with some utensils of travel: underwear, tickets, etc. Two people were sitting at the edge. Asked about the significance of the setting, they handed me a small piece of paper that simply described what was visible anyway. Just imagine all galleries would proceed like that.

Instead of helplessly scanning individual works and comparing them against my rote catalogue of known art — »just wall decoration« — I would suddenly be forced to approach the galerists in their empty stalls and enquire about state and status of their art.

However, emptiness may be a necessary condition for the end of exhibition art but not a sufficient one as Brian O'Doherty [2] has shown with many examples:

Robert Barry 1969: »during the exhibition the gallery will be closed«. This is not the abolition of the exhibition but its potentiation, virtualisation and transfer into the imaginary of all participants. From now on, exhibition happens always and everywhere.

### Why is the question about the state of exhibition art relevant at all?

Two answers may be offered:

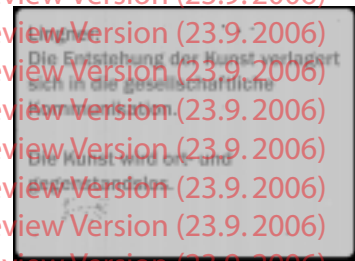
- if the small thought experiment described above seems to indicate such radical consequences, you wonder what kind of art it is — an art that implodes as soon as just one of its parameters is taken away. It looks as if this one parameter (suitability for exhibition) is of decisive importance for art.

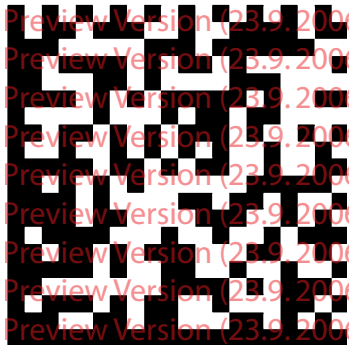
- and there is another kind of answer, one that acknowledges that for the vast majority of artists, sooner or later exhibition art will come to an end. Those who cannot find a foothold in the exhibition circuit at the end their academic training have little chance of presenting their work.

And the lucky few will equally be confronted at some point with the end of their personal art history. In front of me I have the exhibition catalogue of the Frankfurt Kunstverein from the year 1969, which presented about twenty then established artists from Frankfurt. After 36 years, I know of just one who is still active, Thomas Bayrle.

Exhibition Art

Computer Simulation  
C-Print, 234 x 124 cm





For a parliament, the idea is that people from all walks of life should be represented. This is certainly not the case for the museum. Usually, this is justified by appealing to rather dubious quality standards.

But we are ahead of schedule here, since we have not yet reached the end of exhibition art. So far, we are dealing with my own end of exhibition art.

I would like to touch upon a few biographic steps to trace the development that led me to stop exhibiting, to stop considering exhibitions as an instrument for the communication of my artwork.

**Freie Kunstschule Hamburg 1985: Social sculpture (soziale Plastik)**

I began my academic training in 1985 at the free art school Hamburg (Freie Kunstschule Hamburg) after having been rejected by several academies. The FKH had been founded by former students of Beuys, in line with his Free International University (FIU), as an explicit counter model to the then prevailing art academy system. While training at this school involved quite traditional forms such as nude drawing and painting, the school had been conceived as a social sculpture to be shaped democratically by all participants. (Anthroposophical notions of higher beings may have contributed to the concept.)

**HfBK Hamburg 1986: Kurd Alsleben, »I don't know how to continue on my own« – response distress**

A year later I moved on to the academy of fine arts (Hochschule für bildende Künste) in Hamburg since I wanted to gain insight into the conventional academic process. By coincidence I learned of an action by Kurd Alsleben. He had positioned himself at the entrance of the academy, holding a placard which carried the text »I don't know how to continue on my own«. This had upset me somehow, since as a Professor for Communication Theory at the Department of Visual Communication, you would think he was by definition trusted to know »how to continue«. The idea behind this unusual action was to point out that knowledge is produced and imparted as a result of communication, dialogical, poly-logical, network-like. This stood in contrast to the then prevailing view in the eighties that conceived of the artist as a lone seer, a figure pointing to things yet invisible, a shaman of the extraordinary of art.

Exemplary of Alsleben's approach is the key term, »response distress« (Antwortnot): »Response distress is created through shifts of power, through changes of intentions and manners of speaking. It clearly surfaces within artistic and intellectual currents that enable just a certain range of questions/answers. Different questions/answers remain unintelligible or are silenced in the general competition for participation in the current.«

**HfBK Hamburg 1987: Michael Lingner**

From art theorist Michael Lingner, equally teaching at HfBK Hamburg, I learned that the quality of modern art is generated through the quality of communication about modern art. This contradicted a belief that I had held up to then, namely, that the quality of an artwork is due to certain properties anchored in the work itself. If in contrast to this view, the quality of communication proved decisive, what status would then remain for the artwork proper?

**Vienna 1988, media course: Absence of demonstrable artwork**

In 1988 I moved from Hamburg to Vienna to join Peter Weibel at the academy of applied art (Hochschule für angewandte Kunst). From then onwards, media art would lead my way. Everyone who has worked in a painting class is familiar with one important factor: the physical presence of the artwork being produced. In Peter Weibel's media class, however, no artwork was ever to be seen anywhere, which was directly attributable to the mode of production. In the case of video art, work was produced in a U-matic studio and existed only as long as the tape was inside the video recorder. The situation was similar for work produced on a computer. The student would bring data to be worked upon on a floppy disk, and save the results on floppy disk. There were no hard drives in use at the time.

Unless someone explicitly invited others to a presentation – a relatively infrequent event during the semester – there was little chance of actually seeing a work during its gestation or in its final state. The result was excessive speculation in the medium of language about the nature of the work with which fellow students were busying themselves. Lacking demonstrable results, work had to be described or at least pinned down by reference to its mode of production: »He has a Mac II and a laser printer...«

multi.trudi  
Tag this with your mobile phone to go to »multi.trudi«.



multi.trudi artspace  
Frankfurt, 1997-2001  
Continued since 2003 at various locations.

**Frankfurt, beginning of the nineties: Off-spaces**

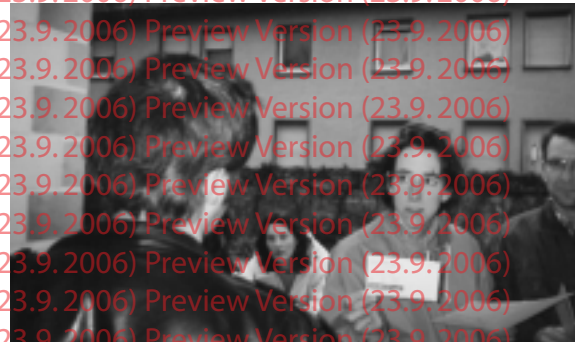
Gartners, Fruchtig [3], emphasis on the event character. Singularity. Clear separation from the exhibition space.

After having arrived in Frankfurt at the beginning of the nineties, I came in touch with the off-art scene, a loose group of people with an art academy degree who were looking for unusual spaces for the presentation of their art. Abandoned high street shops, factory floors, vaulted basements, petrol stations. What they all had in common was uniqueness: the singularity of what happened, its event character. Following Benjamin, one could diagnose a return to the cult value of the artwork. The framing was more important than the artwork itself [4]: the environment, the articulation of the space, the course of the event.

**multi.trudi 2000: David Goldenberg, end of exhibition art**

My »education« found its provisional end with an event realized by London artist David Goldenberg in my art space »multi.trudi« in March 2000. First I was sceptical because of the explicit title »end of exhibition art«, that seemed to be a bad joke in view of the tiny porter lodge miles from anywhere – a place that in my view had lost any connection to the gallery or museum space.

Seen as emblem, however, this intervention by Goldenberg proved to be entirely necessary and apt since it demonstrated the turn away from any positive notion of art, both in his and my own work. Henceforth art was defined by its absence. However, the visitors on a round trip of alternative art spaces that took place around the same time did not appreciate this stance. »Hi there, what is being exhibited here?« – »Nothing, we are discussing the end of exhibition art.« – »Oh well then, bye bye.«



Guests in front of multi.trudi artspace looking for an »exhibition«.

**Regarding the history of exhibition art**

An explicit history of exhibition art is not the subject of this talk. Instead, I refer to the insightful book by Oskar Bätschmann, »Ausstellungskünstler« [5] (exhibition artists).

In this book, Bätschmann shows how the concept of exhibition found slow acceptance in the 18th century to unfold fully with the transformation of the artist into an independent entrepreneur in the 19th century. The openly accessible exhibition is used as a means to create publicity for the artist, while art itself becomes more difficult, withdrawn, esoteric, driving a wedge into the public that would separate true connoisseurs from amateurs receding into ignorance.

This paradox movement enabled artists to assume the role of a seer of a different, heightened reality and in turn, to increase their market value; thereby (with reference to Benjamin's terms) redirecting onto themselves the cult value that had been absorbed by the exhibition value. [6]

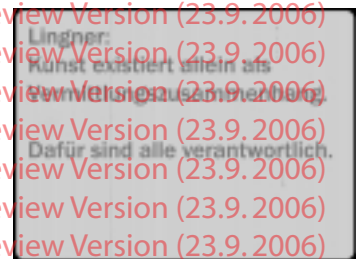
In this context, »exhibition« appears as an operation that marks a space for contemplation, adding a usually passive beholder. The marked space is considered complete and closed, not so the beholder. The beholder is not supposed to make any changes to the marked space. Any change is supposed to affect solely the beholder in terms of a gain of awareness, pleasure, or free play of imagination – needless to say, in sublimated form.

**Michael Lingner**

Michael Lingner has interpreted the history of modern art under the aspect of its progressive move towards autonomy. [7] First art saw its emancipation from exterior conditions such as the court, the church, the guilds, and patrons; then, it freed itself from intrinsic limitations, decoupling itself from the object in the move towards abstraction. At the end, the move towards autonomy peaked around the end of the sixties in a way that nothing was left to emancipate from.

The continuation of the move towards autonomy could then only be achieved by art declaring itself to be autonomous of its own autonomy. This means art now enters a stage that Lingner describes as »heautonomy«. From within its autonomy, art selects objects and topics that were so far beyond the realm of its autonomy, opening up towards society.

As a consequence, new fields of artistic practice emerge that continue to exist until today. Cooking as art, social work as art, research as art, engagement as art – just to name a few examples.



This implies that the separation of art and society is no longer tenable. Like O'Doherty, Lingner observes the cessation of the function of the white cube, the exhibition space that served to isolate pieces of art from extraneous influences as much as from other pieces »distinct positions«.

If art's autonomy from society must be considered illusory, then art can develop its character only within society. The formation of art therefore shifts towards social communication.

Now, art is not only lacking space, but an object. The entire public sphere has become the space of art. What remains, according to Lingner, is the choice between different public spheres (not sub-cultures), which all have their characteristic modes of communication.

Consequently, art has lost its deictic quality. Nothing is left that could be pointed out as art. Art therefore must not only be understood, but actively communicated.

The status of the artwork is becoming doubtful since artworks, according to Niklas Luhmann, exist only insofar as communication about them can be counted upon. This means that only communication is required for the functioning of art while everything else is degraded to not more than a necessary condition of its existence (Lingner).

This is essential. Doherty maintains that modern art has dissolved the frame and melted down the pedestal. In truth, however, the primary role of art has disappeared together with frame and pedestal; in a sense, only frame and pedestal have remained.

This transformation process has not been limited to artworks; it has seized the entire personnel of the art system. Artists have disappeared. Instead, we see graphic designers and product engineers. The museum directors are no longer art historians but managers and PR experts. At least this is what is expected from them now.

Even the curator, this ubiquitous emblem, was once a subordinate from the depths of the museum apparatus. To capture it in one image: the state of contemporary art is that of a silent, unnoticed revolution in which the old masters have vanished and the former subordinates have taken control.

The more art pretends to be without external social function (or sense), the more functional it becomes internally. For many artists, to function inside the art system becomes both a key function and substitute for a function.

This would not matter too much if art itself had changed as well. Instead, we see a restoration of all categories. A huge communication engine is applied to something that has long become a thing of the past. [8] Lingner therefore declares: »If the artist's materialisations cease to have an »artwork« function

and instead must be seen, from a system-theoretical viewpoint, as a programming of communication, then art or whatever takes its place can only result from a mediating process.«

According to Lingner, the crisis of contemporary exhibition art is related to the fact that it is still dependent on the existence and material properties of pre-fabricated artworks.

Artists usually produce their artworks in view of the future presentation. The exhibition therefore assumes a character of reproduction and representation. [9]

Instead, art should now be understood as a mediating context. At any place of such mediation, one would have to reckon with a production facility – not just in the museum, the gallery, the studio, or the academy. Next to the artist, all participants of the mediating context should be recognised as equally valid, equally being »productive forces« of art.

As already mentioned before, Lingner derives from these conditions his claim that artistic quality is solely dependent on the quality of communication, and is therefore accounted for by all (its participants).

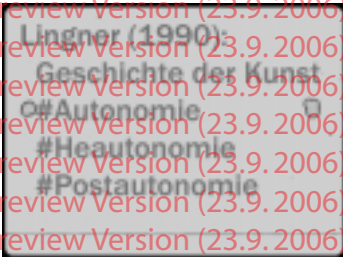
While this reminds of Beuys' »everyone is an artist«, the fuzziness of the definition should be noted, not every occurrence of communication implies the existence of art. Lingner does not specify how communication should be specified to deserve the title of art.

### Clémentine Deliss

The terms »productive forces« and »production facility« have brought us close to one of the fundamental problems of exhibition practice.

Let's turn to the London-based curator Clémentine Deliss [10]:

»I have to make an admission: I am confused about exhibitions. I am no longer able to believe in them [...] I don't believe in their level of productive uncertainty; it seems way too modest, far too safe. More specifically, I don't believe in their dynamics of transfer. For even those that play down their pedagogical remit



Exhibition Art  
Computer Simulation  
C-Print, 234 x 124 cm



still draw the process of interpretation into educational areas that cannot be avoided and no longer negotiated. The understanding of flows of information, channels with access, entries into problematics, the about syndrome, all affect our use of exhibitions as environments that should be fundamentally unstable but, harnessed by these recourses, provide no hazard and offer no gamble.

Every time I go to a large show, I sense my own failure at not being able to respond to their language any longer. This sensation goes beyond the occasional moment when a particular art work affects me. [...] (→ Alsleben, Antwortnot)

I still refuse to do exhibitions because, in my field of experience, they cannot produce adequate bridging mechanisms between discourses, a prerequisite for translation, for the inter-scenic, for the right to move around in this world and convey ideas through a process of ideomatic exchange. [...] In not doing exhibitions I just want to be more precise about who I am talking to. Which public is my public? Why has exhibition making become so generic?

### Walter Benjamin

The question of productive forces raised by Lingner is lucidly articulated in Walter Benjamin's text »The author as producer.« While this work is primarily concerned with literature it is fully generalisable to art as such. Faced with the threat of fascism, Benjamin explores whether literature should confront fascism through political tendentiousness or some literary quality. In his view, the best solution would be a »literary technique« that he tries to exemplify by pointing to Berthold Brecht, who would confront intellectuals with the far-reaching demand not to supply the production system without (simultaneously) changing it. Because to supply without changing (it) »would be a highly questionable practice even if the subject matter with which the system is supplied would appear to be of a revolutionary nature«. He calls such authors old hands (routiniers) who underestimate the capability for assimilation of the bourgeois production system. As a counter example, the soviet press is mentioned, with reference to the author Iretjakov: »There, the reader is at any time ready to become a scribe, i.e. someone who describes or even prescribes. As appraiser, he gains access to authorship. Labour itself turns into expression.«

He resumes: »I hope to have demonstrated that the rendering of the author as producer needs to go back to the press. Because by looking at the press it becomes clear that the monumental process of transformation [...] does not spare conventional distinctions between genres, between novelist and poet, between researcher and populariser, but rather, that it revises the separation between author and reader.« This would have been the place to refer to Brecht's radio theory since here, Brecht had made very similar demands. Perhaps Benjamin did not know this work.

Finally, he comes to talk about photography: »Now continue to trace the development of photography [...] it gets more and more nuanced, more modern, with the result that it cannot capture a housing estate or a pile of rubbish without mystifying it. Let alone be able to tell anything other about a barrage or a cable factory than: The world is beautiful.«

»I refer to the practice of a certain fashionable photography to turn its object into a subject for consumption. As I address the new realism as a literary movement, I have to go a step further and state that it turns the fight against misery into subject for consumption [...]. The transformation of the political struggle from the grip of decision into a matter of contemplative ease, from means of production into consumption item, is telling for this kind of literature.«

Following Benjamin's exposition, the following summary can be drawn in line with Lingner:

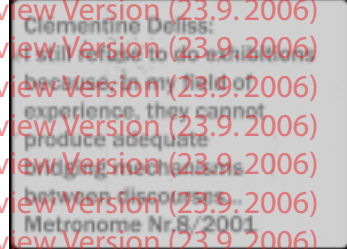
Exhibition art lacks a productive character. The producer (artist/curator) and the consumer (recipient/critic) are juxtaposed with hardly any mediation. Still a novelty on the 19th century, this must be considered an anachronism today.

Exhibition art plays the supply act in the sense of Brecht, insofar as art is supposed to be already »present«, ready to be fetched to gratify. It then only needs the appropriate marketing to persuade the consumers to visit the exhibition. In line with Lingner I start from the hypothesis that art is no longer present as such, but instead needs to be produced through societal communication. In a dialogical manner (dialoghaft) as Kurd Alsleben might formulate.

The emergence of modern art is based neither on perception (Erleben) nor on reception (Erfahrung), but on participation.

The ideal place for such communicative-productive art is the internet.

Exhibition Art  
Computer Simulation  
C-Print, 234 x 124 cm



## Internet

In the context of the internet, the conditions for a productive art [11] can be subsumed under the following terms:

- Immediacy
- Openness, lack of closure
- Communication
- Participation

»Immediacy« [12] means that no separation remains between the artwork and its presentation. In the internet, an explicit exhibition of an artwork is unnecessary since as an Internet page, it is always already present. A distinction between artwork and exhibition is meaningless in an online context. [13] While exhibition art starts with the assumption that the artwork exists prior to and independent of the exhibition, the Internet page maintains that the artwork is created at the very moment of online access.

»Lack of closure« means that the artwork assumes the character of openness from the very beginning. This character is not just accidental but its principal nature. The artwork on the internet is intended to be ever evolving, making connections and branching off, linking back onto itself as well as into other matter. [14] The means of production of such a lack of closure is communication, of which we can say that it is fundamental and definitive for the internet. Even the simplest website seems to convey the message: »Respond, talk back« [15]. In the internet, everyone is entitled to provide feedback.

The consequence of communication is participation. The work is no longer created by an individual but rather by a multitude of persons, which often makes it impossible to determine individual contributions to its genesis. The potential postulated by Benjamin that »the reader can at any time become an author« is one of the outstanding traits of the internet. While Brecht still assumed that radio listeners had to be explicitly organized, it now happens largely on its own, in the context of autopoiesis. The online encyclopedia Wikipedia may serve as an example.

The 19th century still placed the artwork between producer and consumer. In the context of the internet we assume that the artwork has ceased to exist as an autonomous entity, letting producer and consumer coincide. This, however, not in the sense of Bourriaud [16].

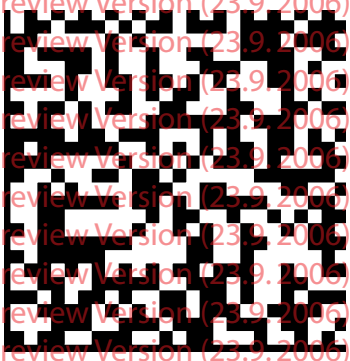
In sum, the means of production of the internet – which, taken together, can be thought of as lacking reference – charge a generic and all-encompassing signification. This signification has a viral [17] character throughout.

Since the internet consists to the largest part of text – ASCII texts hopelessly entangled through hyperlinks –, the indices, archives, data bases, finally the search engines take on a huge importance in the terminological system. To appear at the top of a search engine listing is of existential importance. What does not appear in Google does not exist anymore. What exactly is listed is less important than the very fact of being listed.

I would like to demonstrate this point by giving you an example. For some time now there has been an institute for art criticism »Kunstkritik Frankfurt« at the Städelschule. [18] However, if you put »Kunstkritik Frankfurt« into Google [at the present time, 2005], the first hit points to a page of The Thing Frankfurt, which deals with this institute in a critical way [19]. The Städelschule appears only on page 2 of the search engine results. It doesn't get better if you put in »Institut Kunstkritik Frankfurt«. Even »Städelschule Institut Kunstkritik« only provides an indirect reference to the institute at the Städelschule. Besides, the search for »Kunststudium Frankfurt« (study of art in Frankfurt) does not list the Städelschule either.

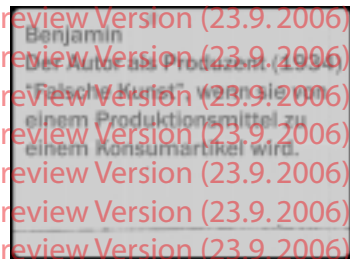
This small experiment is meant to emphasize that in the context of the internet, terms may escape those who originally owned them.

To give another example, let's look at a person who uses the The Thing mailing list (and also other platforms) to distribute manipulated exhibition announcements under a variety of pseudonyms. While I was preparing this lecture at the Städelschule, the organizer in charge asked me about an »international Automobile Exhibition« that I was going to curate in the following year at the Städelschule. I had never heard of it, but it soon transpired that said person had circulated this rumour via a Berlin-based list. In a similar manner this anonymous let it be known that I would be talking about the »end of Yoko Ono« instead of the »end of exhibition art«.



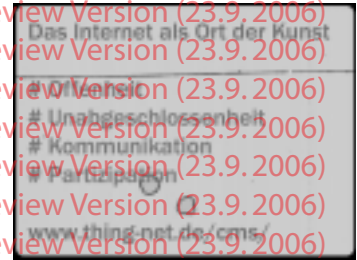
Michael Lingner

Tag this with your mobile phone to go to »Michael Lingner«.



It is easy to discount such manipulations as the work of a deranged person; in truth, however, they reveal a general struggle for the dominance of terms on the internet. Signs can only be interpreted appropriately in their respective contexts. If these are lacking or cleverly displaced, confusion ensues. The fact that said person – we may well talk of a hacker – has a penchant for exhibition announcements shows in all clarity how dependent they are on representation in the media.

This is the end of this text, but certainly not yet that of exhibition art.



Deutsche Version: Innenseite Schutzumschlag | <http://www.thing-net.de/cms/artikel223.html>

## Annotations

1 Refer to my article »Art Frankfurt: Rundgang über eine uncharakteristisch weiße Fläche«, <http://www.thing-frankfurt.de/ft/interzini/m/index.php?id=20&item=20>

2 Brian O'Doherty, »Inside the white cube« (In der weißen Zelle), Merve 1996.

3 Gärtners, Fruchtig and Muttertag were art projects in Frankfurt at the beginning of the nineties that had been established outside the gallery system. The focus was more on events and less on art. Its programme, if it can be called such, was therefore mainly directed at insiders.

4 The space »Gärtners“ therefore announced programmatically: »First-rate, second-rate and third-rate art«. Usually, it was third-rate, but this is unimportant.

5 Oskar Batschmann, »Ausstellungskünstler«, Dumont 1997.

6 This reminds of Sennett's analysis of the theatre, where he maintains that the artist in the 18th century was still part of the personnel. In effect a lackey; then rising to superhuman stature in the 19th century, where he would now express on behalf of the public emotions which this public itself no longer felt able to assume.

7 »Vom Ende der Kunstausstellung und Ausstellungskunst«, [http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml\\_publicationen/kt92-13\\_de.html](http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml_publicationen/kt92-13_de.html)

8 In a recently completed expert opinion for the government of the Federal State of Hesse, the former Senator of culture of Berlin, Norbert Stölz, demands »encyclopedic mega-exhibitions«.

9 »In contrast, the dominating exhibition practice still assumes that the essence of art is tied to the specific properties of a carrier. The production of art is therefore conceived as the making of such aesthetic carriers. This then serves as the basis for the assumption that art will surely take place wherever the respective carriers are shown with aesthetic intent. The exhibition is being conceived as an institution that just re-produces and thereby re-presents art produced elsewhere (see DISTANZKUNST, and Benjamin...). But today, art cannot be conceived ontologically as a materially permanent and indefinitely existing aesthetic substance called »artwork«. Instead of counting on a supposedly constitutional nature of art, we should instead take departure from the concept of a social and communicative feasibility of art production.«

10 »Magnetic Speech«. In Metronome No. 7, London, Paris, Oslo 2001.

11 Regarding my own work, I refer to The Thing Frankfurt.

12 The fact that »immediacy« (Distanzlosigkeit, »lack of distance«) heads the list is not without intent. It marks the critical argument in Benjamin's »Kunstwerk«, where he talks about the loss of the aura as »an impression of distance, however close it may seem«. In Benjamin's view, the immediacy of the modern artwork is allied with its »disposition for being exhibited« (Ausstellbarkeit). The difficulty with this term, which Benjamin thought to orient towards Marx' notion of use value and exchange value, becomes soon apparent in his own choice of examples. While it may still work for photography, the »disposition for being exhibited« becomes more than problematic when applied to film. It is hard to comprehend what exactly might be exhibited in a film. Long after Benjamin, this became apparent in Documenta exhibitions of recent years, where under the dogma of exhibition visitors were forced into dark and stuffy film booths instead of being given a DVD to take home.

13 Nevertheless this idea is still present in the gallery context, given the prevalent assumption that the artwork emerges from some remote and filthy studio only to get its finishing touch, to become art proper in the ideal and cleansed environment of the gallery space with its white walls.

14 The »traditional« artwork is usually unable to do that. Since it has been produced for the museum, as stated by Boris Groys, it has found closure. As the museum vouches for the value of its artworks, it cannot accept work that implies continuous changes of value.

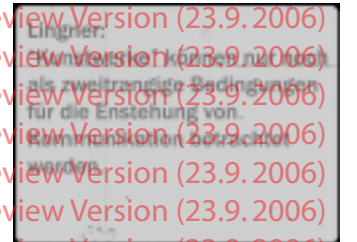
15 Internet expert Gerry McGovern maintains, for example: »If you are in the internet – you are in sale.« A bookmark is the first and slightest sign, but it still signifies: »I have bought it.«

16 Bourriaud also expresses this thought in »Postproduction«, but he starts with the argument that artists as producers can appropriate any prefabricated artwork and thereby partially emulate the role of consumer. In this, Bourriaud does not negate the role of artists as producers. Putting that role into perspective instead increases their power. Refer to Nicolas Bourriaud: »Postproduction«, Lukas & Sternberg / Frankfurt Kunstverein, New York 2005.

17 The metaphor of the »virus« in the following passage shall refer to the ability of a virus to capture alien cells/organisms and to use them as a means of their own reproduction.

18 Städelschule is the main art academy in Frankfurt, where this lecture was given.

19 Compare [www.thing-net.de/cms/artikel194.html](http://www.thing-net.de/cms/artikel194.html)



Stefan Beck

## Tag City - get Frankfurt on your mobile

Interaction of internet pages and mobile phones will create a new sort of city space mapping.

The media of connection are tags, barcodes readable by camera phones. These tags are applied to buildings and all spots of interest. People in the internet may fill these tags with information, while visitors »on location« are enabled to read the comments through their mobile phones.

Tag City is a new project in Frankfurt aimed at recapturing and reprocessing the public space.

Mobile phones become scanners and physical objects (buildings) data.

With video surveillance becoming ubiquitous and innocent citizens targets of police observation, the mobile phone is transformed into a »weapon« to »shoot« back.

Tag City may be considered a post autonomous practice, since it empowers others to form a network on their own.

Tag City is only the service provider for the infrastructure.

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to process it.

Tag City



Use your mobile phone as a scanner to decode messages other people left for the spot your're looking at. Get the software right now: [www.tag-city.net/reader](http://www.tag-city.net/reader)

»Wenn Kunstproduktion als Arbeitsprozess und nicht mehr ausschließlich als unverfügbares Natur- oder spekulatives Marktgeschehen begriffen wird, kann sie sich im Prinzip auch finanziell selbst tragen. Nicht länger ist sie von vornherein ein wirtschaftlich aussichtsloses, nicht einmal dem Lotteriespiel vergleichbares, unhaltbares Unternehmen, das die Art und Weise der Produktion, deren Ergebnisse sowie die Mentalität aller Beteiligten deformiert. Aber auch aus empirischen Gründen gibt es zur heautonomen Finalisierung der Kunst keine Alternative. Rein ökonomische Interessen haben die Kunst längst auf ihre Weise finalisiert, so daß es faktisch nur noch darum geht, ob sie sich weiter um den Preis ihrer Ununterscheidbarkeit finalisieren läßt oder beginnt, sich selbst zu finalisieren. Die Vorstellung einer Aufrechterhaltung der bestehenden oder Wiedergewinnung einstiger Autonomie ist in jedem Fall illusionär und dient tatsächlich nur einer problemloseren wirtschaftlichen Verwertung der Kunst zu Gunsten anderer.« Michael Lingner

aus: Die Kunst der Gesellschaft 1992 | Perspektiven postautonomer künstlerischer Praxis  
[http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml\\_publicationen/kt92-10.html](http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml_publicationen/kt92-10.html)

Kurdi Alsleben

## Computerkunst – Form als ethisches Fragen (1990)

Keineswegs ist die dialogische Künstlerrolle eine spektakuläre Neuerung, wenn ich mir auch nur schwer eine tiefgreifendere Veränderung für unser Lebensgefühl als die des relativen Aufgebens der Autorenrolle vorstellen kann. – Wenn ich vergleichsweise empfinde, wie wir Millionen Ostdeutsche moralisch »ausradieren« und mich erinnere, mit welchem Stolz am Sonntag nach dem Maueröffnen »Ossis« Hamburg besetzt hatten, dann ist das für mich ein schreckliches Lebensgefühl. Das relative Aufgeben der Autorenrolle führt allerdings ins Unvorstellbare. – Obwohl es dialogische Künste immer schon gibt: in Tanz, Spiel, ars sermoneis, Maskerade, Hausmusik, Jam-Session oder Antiphonen u.a.

»Partizipationskunst« und »offenes Kunstwerk« der 50er und 60er Jahre verunsicherten die Publikumsrolle. Komplementär und in diesem Sinne also unausweichlich geschieht nun, sagen wir seit den 80er Jahren, parallel mit Ausbreitung der Computernetzwerke, eine Verunsicherung der Autorenrolle. Die ersten Arbeiten der Partizipationskunst machte Karl Gerstner in den 50er Jahren mit Bildern zum Verändern. Die Medienladenbewegung intendierte dann in den 70ern, Betroffenen die Medien in die Hand zu geben, damit sie sich selbst zu Worte melden könnten. Aus dieser Zeit stammen auch Negt und Kluges besondere Gebrauchsbuchform von »Geschichte und Eigensinn« oder die Materialform Antje Eskes »Von der Großen Mutter zur Heiligen und Hure«. In solchen Formen verschwand der Ermächtigungsanspruch der Autorenrolle. Ein zeitliches Ende der dialogischen Tendenzen aus dem 19. Jahrhundert und einen ihrer Höhepunkte kann man wohl in Brechts Radiotheorie-Vortrag sehen. An ihrem Anfang stehen die Briefschreiberinnen: Rahel Levin Varnhagens dialogisches Schreiben hat Marianne Schuller dargestellt. Die Briefform ist noch heute eine starke dialogische Form. [...]

Den Schluß meines Vortrages möchte ich mit einem Zitat meines Freundes Matthias Lehnhardt – an dessen demonstrativen elektronischen Bankeinbruch sich manche von Ihnen erinnern werden – einleiten: »Die Datenkunst eröffnet die verlorengegangene universelle Perspektive der Kunst auf das Leben wieder neu.«

In der interdisziplinären Computerei der Hamburger Hochschule für Bildende Künste treiben wir und Jero Kunstlerisches Dialogisieren mittels Computer, und in einer Seminarrunde »Dialogästhetik« erörtern wir die künstlertheoretischen Fragen. Unsere Beobachtung ist, daß ein Hypertext- oder Hypermediennetz (künstlerisch ist nur Unterschied von geringer Wichtigkeit) eine andere Artikulationsform als Brief und Gespräch eröffnet. Das Schwierigste bei unseren Versuchen ist zweifellos, sich die dialogische Rolle anzueignen, eine dialogisch-künstlerische Grundhaltung einzunehmen. Sie widerspricht unserer verinnerlichten Haltung als Autor. Ich finde es bezeichnend – ohne auf Differenzierungen hier einzugehen – dass in den Verhaltenskodizes »Netiquette:« dem Netzwerke immer wieder vergleichbar dem § 1 der Straßenverkehrsordnung, gesagt werden muß: »1. Vergiß niemals, daß auf der anderen Seite ein Mensch sitzt!«

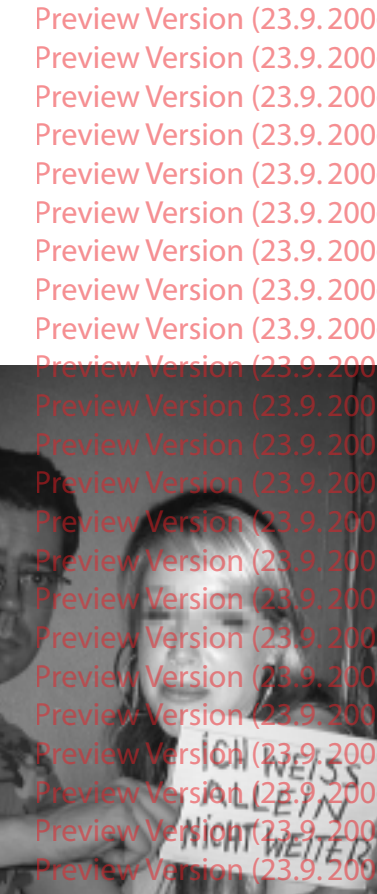
Zunächst präsentieren Dialoge ja Orientierungssuche, sind exemplarische Erscheinungsform ethischen Fragens. Mit der Rolle tritt explizite in Erscheinung, m.a.W., explizite präsentiert die dialogische Künstlerrolle, mit den aus ihr quellenden Formen, Antwortnot: das, was ist, wenn man sagt »Ich weiß allein nicht weiter.«

Dialogizität bedeutet andererseits das Hin und Her des Spiels. Am Beginn steht, wie Urs Reichlin ausführte, das Sich-Einspielen, in welchem spielverderberisch ungebunden versuchsweise, spontan und improvisatorisch Möglichkeiten herausgespielt werden – Leichtigkeit und Ängstigung zugleich.

Dialogizität ist Einspielen fern geregelter Macht und Sicherheit. Im Dialog erscheinen die spielverderberischen Möglichkeiten konkret als die fremde Anderweite des jeweils anderen Menschen. Anderweite ist als künstlerisches Material zu sehen. Wahrscheinlich wird es um die Momente gehen, Anderweiten zu bestaunen, ihnen gegenwärtig zu sein – unter Eristik oder dem Verlangen, Information abzubauen, fliehen die Anderweiten.



Kurdi Alsleben 1986 in front of the Academy of Fine Arts Hamburg with a board displaying the slogan: »Ich weiss allein nicht weiter.«  
»I don't know how to continue on my own«



**Kurd Altleben**  
**Kunst als Verkehr**

**Konversatorium**

Das Wort Konversatorium verschwand aus unserem Wortschatz, so wie die Konservationskunst im vorigen Jahrhundert verschwand. Konservatorien sind Räume, die für Konversation genutzt werden. Ursprünglich sind es architektonische Räume, Gärten o.ä.

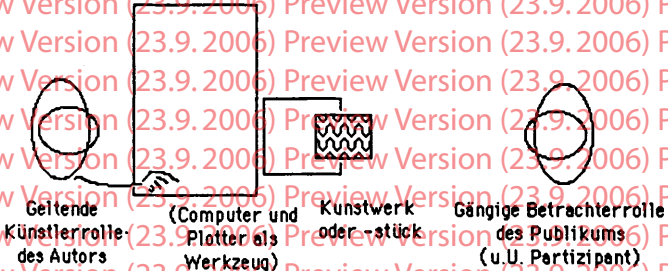
Seit der Ausbreitung der Datenetze gewinnt der Inhalt des Wortes neue Bedeutung im Sinne virtueller Räume. Auf der Suche nach einem wünschenswerten Umgang mit den Datenetzen verweisen er auf die ars sermonis und die Konversationskunst. Für künstlerische Chat und E-Mail sind die ars sermonis der antiken Symposien und die 200 Jahre Brief- und Konversationskunst der Salons zwischen 1600 und 1800 eine deutliche Tradition.

Anders als Lehrgespräch oder Streitgespräch ist Konversation Unterhaltung. Konversation ist Unterhaltung über alle möglichen Themen vermittelt aller möglichen Sinne, und Konversations-Kunst ist eine solche, die nicht redundant ist und Einfluß ausübt. Ihre ästhetischen Valeurs sind Offenheit, Rücksicht, Witz, ... Aufrichtigkeit, Kunst der Andeutung, zwangloses Assoziieren (Schmölders). Sie bilden eine Balance zwischen Heiterkeit und Ernst. Inbegriff der Verkehrsregeln ist das Verbot der Rechthaberei.

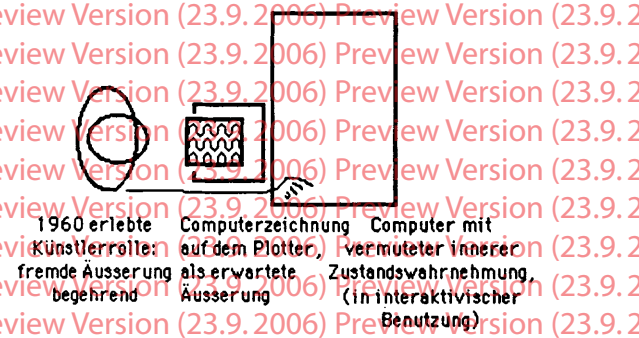
Stefan Beck: «I don't know how to continue on my own» (reprocessed digital montage with »discomouse«

Kurd Altleben; various artists' roles.

1) Standard Author - Audience.

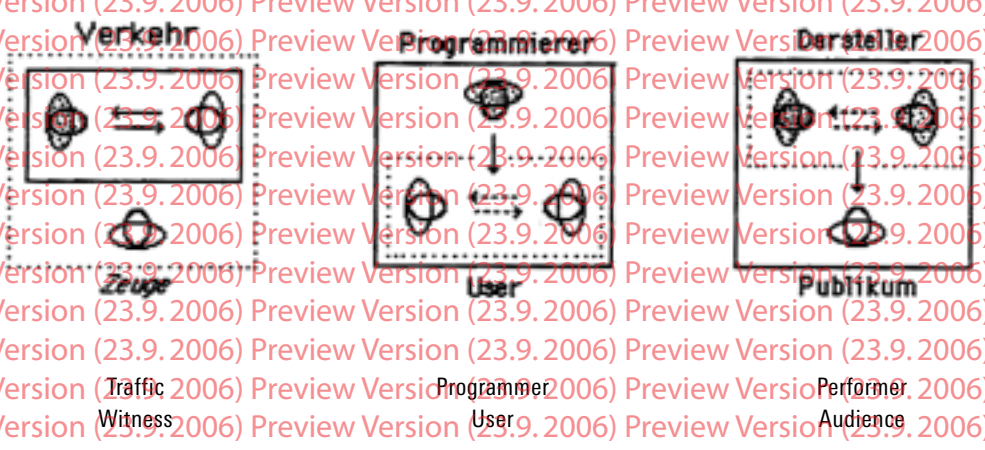


2) 1960: desire of an external expression from the computer.



3) 1980s: dialogue among network users.

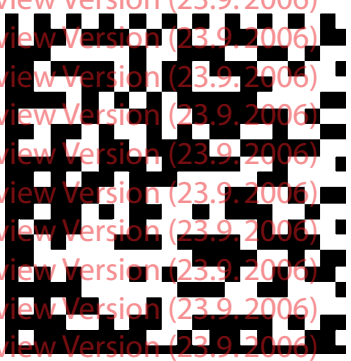




**Ritardando**

Der schnelle sehr bezaubernde Chat ist ein Genre, ein anderes ist E-Mail-Verkehr. E-Mail-Verkehr, Liebesnennen wir, Hypertext- oder Hypermedia-Mail, sind wie Briefverkehr, zeitversetzter Nachrichtenaustausch. Das bedeutet: Die Korrespondierenden haben, um mit Popeye zu sprechen, eigenpersönliche Zeit. – Man kennt das Bedürfnis, sich zum Beispiel während eines Gesprächs aufs Klo zurückzuziehen, um mit klarem Kopf wiederzukommen oder allein, nachdem das Gespräch vorbei ist, zu phantasieren. »Das hättest du sagen sollen! Anders ist es bei der elektronischen Post als bei der gelben Post, die wegen langer Transportzeit keine Situation entstehen läßt – bei jedem ist zwischen Absenden und Antwortbekommen allerhand passiert. E-Mail-Verkehr ist schnell genug, um Situationen aufkommen zu lassen.

So dient die hohe Beschleunigung der Verlangsamung, dem Ritardando von Konversationsituationen.



**Kurd Alsleben**

Tag this with your mobile phone to go to »Kurd Alsleben«.

## Interactingarts Wiki Quotations

As a result of »The space for a Post Autonomous Practice« that was organized by David Goldenberg. This event was itself part of »OpenCongress«, a conference held at Tate Britain on Friday 7th and Saturday 8th October 2005.

Stefan Beck: How to get people into the idea of Post Autonomy?

Yesterday, after the congress, I've been to the pub and was approached by one guy about our »show«.

Not easy to explain in three sentences what Post Autonomy is about? Something like: »PA questions the role of art in society.....!?!«

Now, I imagine a simple questionnaire which might help people getting into the idea of PA.

- 1) All art should be controlled by government. Yes () No (X)
- 2) Artists should be payed a monthly fixum by society. Yes (X) No ()
- 3) Artists should use whatever colours they like. Yes (X) No ()
- 4) Is the title »Artist« still relevant. Yes (X) No (X)

David Goldenberg and Stefan Beck behind the info desk at Tate Britain.

Detlev Fischer: Stefan, this sounds as if it has already been established that PA is the way forward. For me this is only true to the extent that the concept of autonomous art is dubious and difficult. However the term PA does not say more than »we are past this stage«. I feel that anything after autonomy (or its horizon) is equally difficult, and more dodgy perhaps politically. Heteronomy? Surely not. Co-opting other things outside art? This has been happening for most of the nineties (research + science, fashion, business, political activism, social work, conversation etc., with ironic or not so ironic variants).

In any case, I am not sure how the indicated questionnaire might help people getting into the idea of PA. Can you indicate how you would evaluate it?

Stefan Beck: We have to see Post Autonomy in the context of Luhmann's concept of the 2nd level observer, like:

- observation of observation
- collection of collection(s)
- production of production
- distribution of distribution
- information of information
- desire of desire
- autonomy of autonomy.

We enter the stage of re-production and re-processing.

Stevan Vukovic: Autonomy is a British corporation selling software under the same name.

The software is a pattern-recognition tool that sorts and structures large amounts of unstructured data, utilizing a 18th century old mathematical theorem by Thomas Bayes.

The company is based in Cambridge, UK, and was founded by Dr Mike Lynch in 1996.

Stefan Beck: Autonomy develops software which enables the automated personalization and categorization of text sources. <http://www.autonomy.com/> - 17k - 6 Oct 2005 - Cached

Similar pages: Autonomy - Downloads - Video Case Studies General Privacy Policy - Request Information. More results from <http://www.autonomy.com>

Institute for Applied Autonomy Institute for Applied Autonomy - Welcome - New Video: Synopsis: A 7 minute, 47 second introduction to IAA research. QuickTime Video: Small (117 megs) | Large ... <http://www.appliedautonomy.com/> - 10k - Cached - Similar pages.

Visitors trying to understand the idea of Post Autonomy.

Personal Autonomy Survey of philosophical theories about what it is to govern oneself, by Sarah Buss. [plato.stanford.edu/entries/personal-autonomy/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/personal-autonomy/) - Similar pages.

Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy. In the realm of moral theory, seeing autonomy as a central value can be ... Autonomy is connected, for example, to moral and legal responsibility. [plato.stanford.edu/entries/autonomy-moral/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/autonomy-moral/) - Similar pages.



Stefan Beck: It's worthwhile regarding the thoughts of Boris Groys concerning the concept of the »new« (novelty) in context of Post Autonomy. Groys thinks both modernism and post modernism under the dogma of innovation. (Either you innovate in art or you're nothing.) At the first glance Post Autonomy fits with the dogma of innovation. As Post Autonomy comes after Autonomy it is thought as a new innovative concept, overturning the old notion of Autonomy. So Groys states that we would be truly free, if we could both engage in the old and the new.

Reading Lingner's version we possibly learn that art was not really free to skip the concept of Autonomy. Instead it had to give up Autonomy because it had come to an end. There simply wasn't anything left art could declare its Autonomy against. To get rid of Autonomy as the last act of Autonomy was the last chance for art's evolution. My question: does Post Autonomy allow us to work both under Autonomy and Post Autonomy as well?

Jim Costanzo: I am having the same problem with the concept of Post Autonomy. What are we going to substitute for Autonomy? Does this mean we are to reinvent Autonomy or give up on the possibility of true Autonomy? Does this imply that the internet's electro-magnetic network will replace the electro-chemical community of the beehive? If this is true then the internet either destroys Autonomy or creates another structure which consists of a large amorphous population who is inextricably connected yet independent.

Stefan Beck: I think that Post Autonomy should allow the use of autonomous structures/practices as well. Imagine PA as a sort of meta language. Or if you stick to Wittgenstein an extension of the old game some new rules.

Detlef Fischer: I agree, but then it sounds like the concept of PA is mainly a brand in the theory market and a speculation on institutional rewards.

Stefan Beck: Are you negative about »institutional rewards«? If PA really means something, a position in an institution would be an achievement, because something else would disappear.

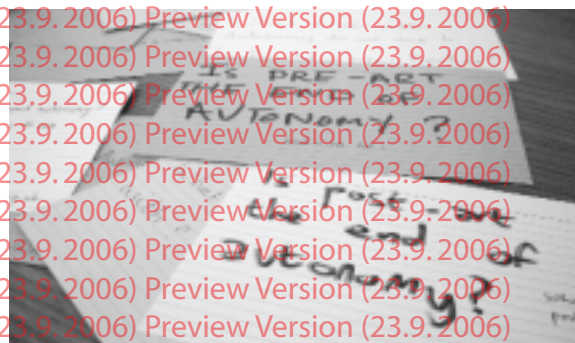
Detlef Fischer: No – I am the first one to take a paid position where I can deal with things that I find more interesting than the things I currently do for a living (of course I am way back in the queue and don't try hard). But I am a bit disillusioned about theoretical terms like PA – asking whether »it really means something« seems futile - you invest it with meaning, and I am sure, given enough conferences, publications etc., it will get its niche in art history.

For me, clearing some theoretical playing field does not amount to that much if this field remains unused. I keep suggesting to someone playing scrabble in order to win the least points but never got her to actually trying it. I have had so many discussions about dialogical art, participation, net art, etc. The common experience is that it always remains a meta-discourse, artists clearing their tools or tuning their instruments. The theoreticians of course are then already in full swing, they don't want more than this. Perhaps this is all that is needed, and an artistic practice in itself. But I personally don't find it that satisfactory anymore. (Some self-censoring here.) My experiences with more immediate collaboration / participation have demonstrated to myself that for whatever reason I am either unwilling or unable to commit (or submit?) to the flow. I turn wary and step back. I have experienced this in the rhyming and haiku oriented chats organized by Kurd Aisleben and Antje Eske years back. I could not participate, the happy rhyming made me mad. I am beginning to suspect it has something to do with age, and arrogance.

David Goldenberg: Many projects, particularly the recent projects with Wim Salki, that have looked into constructing a Post Autonomous Practice are available on the Post Autonomy website. These include the project »How to be a perfect guest?« (Version 2) for the Middle East Biennial, TT2030 shown as part of STRUKTUR, New York, the launch of the era of Post Autonomy shown at »the Marvels of the World«, Dunkirk Museum of Contemporary art this year, not to mention the inclusion of diverse material on Post Autonomy included in touring shows in Norway, Sweden, Germany, UK etc. Prior to that we also worked on a six months project »A dictionary of Post Autonomous Terms« for Begone Grand, Utrecht, The Netherlands, and a lecture/performance »Developing a Post Autonomous Practice« for the Museum of Modern Art Arnhem, The Netherlands!



David projecting some info material to a curious couple.



Questions left by the visitors.



Stefan Beck: Post Autonomy in the context of Knowledge:

Autonomy: »I'll tell you, what I know.«

Post Autonomy: »I'll tell you, what I know, that you know.«

See: Luhmann's 2nd level observer and as well Gotthard Guenther's three value logic. It's third stage: reflection in itself in others.

Stevan Vukovic: Post Autonomist struggle against knowledge:

One can either strategically take the position of the »one that is supposed to know«, in order to capitalize on the supposition that there is always an Other supposed to know the truth of my communicative acts, even down to the most apparently meaningless »slips« and symptomatic behaviours, and intervene into the domain of someones »intimate« and »autonomous« phantasies, or stick to oneself and try to »arrive at the unknown through the disordering of all the senses« (Rimbaud), living it through everyday artistic social praxis.

Stefan Beck: History:

Already Hegel criticized the concept of history as being without history itself (eternal?)

Will Post Autonomy free us from a history without history?

Or is there a Post after Post Autonomy?

David and Stefan looking at the projection. Internet chat, maybe?

Re-processing normally takes us to a higher level of insight.

Example: Information is any difference which makes a difference.

Post-Information is any difference which makes a difference a difference. And so forth.

Will Post Autonomy lead to an infinite regress like the above example?

a question by our guest Lubna: How can Post Autonomous Practices be used in various realms such as:

- hospitals

- blue chip corporations

- primary schools

- manufacturing

- public transport

etc.

David Goldenberg: Suggestions for improving the event:

If any one has any suggestions about the Tate event and how you think it can be improved I would like to hear from you.

What is important at this stage is that if you are interested in staying with the project then it would be useful to find out from you how we ought to go about communicating with each other? Is email the best way to do this, is there any other preferred means, and how often?

What I was interesting in establishing during the Tate event was a form that mirrored a participatory practice as an entry point into a discussion/event leading into a Post Autonomous Practice. Do you think this was successful or can you think of a better format?

Do you think the overall wording outlining the intention of the event was clear enough?

What did you think of the wiki page? Did you find it easy to use? Did you find the material well designed and presented on the page? Did you find it easy to navigate?

If you didn't find the wiki easy to use, or the right platform for the project, what other platform would you recommend?

Do you have suggestions how to develop the project in the future?

And what to do with the current material?

A list of issues that came up during the event at the Tate which we can put under the label of FAQ on Post Autonomy

What is Post Autonomy?

Post Autonomy has existed since the early 1990's so why bother about it now?

What do we replace Autonomy with?

How do we understand Autonomy now and what examples can we point too?

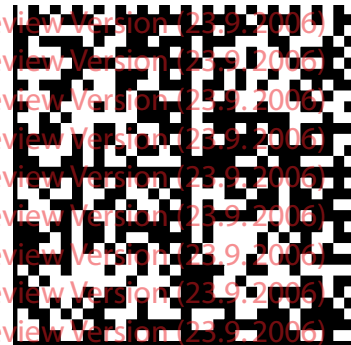
David filling the website with results from previous discussions.

Why are we bothering to look at Autonomy again when there is such a large historical baggage?

If Autonomy itself is not so clear or simple to locate today, how do we go onto locate an Autonomy we can use, or go about reinventing Autonomy?

What form of Autonomy do we use?

Since the idea of Autonomy has collapsed we are living in a period of Post-Autonomy. However, if we decide Autonomy is no longer present or necessary as a notion that defines the core of a contemporary cultural practice, then what else do we pinpoint to constitute its core? Any understanding of Post-Autonomy remains contingent on systems theory, particularly the texts of Lingner and Luhmann. Lingner's texts can be seen as an expansion of the idea of Post-Autonomy. Post-Autonomy is exclusively a theoretical and intertextual discourse and a branch of Conceptual art. All thinking leading to this historical moment can be seen to be transitional and doesn't help us in understanding what is happening now, so we cannot resort to previous conceptual models and tools to understand what is taking place now. Post-Autonomy is a type of Autonomy that we use to replace Autonomy. Post-Autonomy is just a label, a slogan and not a real practice. Post-Autonomy isn't a legitimate term or category so it doesn't exist. Is the idea of Post-Autonomy only understandable within Lingner's and Luhmann's texts or can we point to other sources? Post-Autonomy doesn't exist outside Lingner's theory. The entry points into a Post-Autonomous Practice are through participatory practices and communication. All participatory practices can be said to be Post-Autonomous. But if you are talking about a participatory practice which participatory practice are we referring to? Post-Autonomy can be said to refer to any practice that questions the role of autonomous art. How does Post-Autonomous practices coexist with Museum and gallery bound practices. Post-Autonomy is concerned with breaking away from gallery art. Post-Autonomy is simply another example of a break and innovation so it is another example of a Modernist tradition. Post-Autonomy is simply another name for public art and Context art practices. Post-Autonomy is just another theoretical practice.



**Interactingarts**

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[http://interactingarts.org/wiki/doku.php?id=post\\_autonomous\\_practice](http://interactingarts.org/wiki/doku.php?id=post_autonomous_practice)

Aharon

## No art – No future – No football

If you lived through the 70's, even as a child – as I was – 1000's of km away from Baader-Meinhof's area of activities, chances are that the group portrait resonates with you. One might not exactly know who the group was, but chances are that looking at the group's portraits, you know its some sort of a terror group. »Terrorism« is hard to eradicate because it lives in the territory that's between an expression of popular aspirations, and the insertion of popular fear within the minds of possible opponents. Terror groups, institutional or otherwise, require a network of tacit supporters. As is the case with today's al-qaeda, yesterday's IRA & ETA, the groups/networks agenda, aims and aspirations, have to be shared in parts, with the wider and wide sections of society. The group has to maintain a discourse that by its nature is beyond the group's autonomy. Indeed, the discourse has to be with elements that aren't inherently part of the group/network. It can be argued that the relatively autonomous way of work, aims and agenda, by groups such as Baader-Meinhof, contributed to the relatively short life of their operations – and members. Their longevity, as symbolic of a certain era, notions, and indeed, a type of romanticism, comes about from elements outside. This longevity comes from activities which are beyond the group's autonomy. For example, Gerhard Richter's work in 1988, »18. Oktober, 1977«. The work, 15 paintings based on photos of and related to Baader-Meinhof group, are evocative to look at on the screen – as I haven't seen the exhibition – and certainly seem to bring out emotions of »horror, compassion, fear and mourning« [1] among others. These emotions are a part of an historical dialogue that the artist opens, as well as an internal dialogue which, as a viewer, I produce within myself when I make up and experience the images in mind. Dialogue is what violent terror activities, whether socially autonomous or non-autonomous, ultimately do away with.

Duchamp noted that »it's the beholder who makes pictures«, a notion that was expanded upon throughout, mainly, the late 20th century. Godard postulated that »it takes two to make an image«, a notion similar to Duchamp's, however with an arguably greater emphasis on the »dialogue as the actual origin of image making process«. [2] The dialogue, in this case, is symbolic of the notion that parts of the creative process lay beyond the confines of an independent entity which has no relationship with »external« forces. In other words, that the creative process is non-autonomous. As a full blown form in art, one might want to consider works by Eduardo Katz, Sal Randolph, Rirkrit Tiravanija, among others. [3] Working in different forms and materials, which include performances, prints, food, light and plants – to name a few – the common thread among the artists and projects is that works explicitly require a process of dialogue. This often breaks into the perceived autonomy of the art product, hence, for example: »This is not an art work until you do something. Copy this page freely. RECIPE 06 Sal Randolph <http://salrandolph.com>«. [4] Or Tiravanija's implicit invitation in '93 Venice Biennial for people to make soup of/in his work.

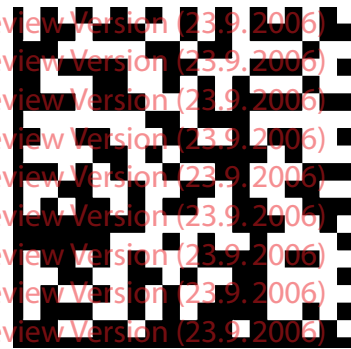
The practice of interactive, bi-polar, emphasis in the process of creativity, using relational, »non-autonomous«, dialogue based works, comes of course well within the traditional postmodern discourse. However, I think it also signals a postmodern weakness which is illustrated by the observation that from a society of spectators, we have turned into a society of extras. [5] Being a participant in someone's work, game, website, marketing/political strategy can, in my view, hardly be described as an inspiring place to be since being an extra is akin to being a puppet on a string. This puppetry can be seen by contemporary affinity for instrumentalism in arts funding. Many funding organisations require artists to produce social »aware« works that contain interactive elements and, at the same time, suppose to »deliver« clear »social messages«. [6] From the idea, maybe ideal, of opening up a context or a dialogue, the emphasis has gone, somehow ironically, full circle with the practice that seeks to define contexts and dialogues. These are, I think, partial consequences of the fact that as well as non-autonomous elements such as contextuality and dialogue, creativity contains processes such as self inspiration, meditation, finances, etc. – and seemingly there's a clash. However, does creativity have to be confined within the non-autonomous/autonomous binary relationship? I think the Baader-Meinhof episode illustrates a deadly extreme, much as a »society of extras« provides a cynical extreme – both mediated by the prevalence of a binary relationship and world view.

In this writing, was I too autonomous in the manner in which the examples were chosen? My personal hunch is that indeed I was, but who's to say/know? Although I didn't intend to, I suspect the dissemina-

tion process of writing in this form, maybe of writing in general, makes me feel as if tied to autonomy's binarism — and I might not be neither skillful, intelligent or creative enough to overcome certain borders or limitations. Were the examples too autonomous to the point of being too cryptic or plainly annoying? Should I have chosen a different way to explore these subjects within this format of one A4? I think that there are interesting areas to explore in venturing beyond autonomy/non-autonomy binarism. Do binary relationships end where the scattered, distributed and/or educational begin? Maybe on a different A4.

Annotations

1. A quote in <http://www.portikus.de/ArchiveA0014.htm>
2. The paragraph and the quote is based and taken from N. Bourriaud's »relational Aesthetics« p. 26. Bourriaud, Nicholas (1998). Relational Aesthetics, France: les presse du réel.
3. Read the above book for more examples.
4. A quote of a line at the end of each of S. Randolph's recipes.
5. Based on a notion mentioned in N. Bourriaud's »relational Aesthetics«
6. <http://elpcp.net/policies/2016>. Offers a view into an instrumental future.



Sal Randolph

Tag this with your mobile phone to go to »Sal Randolph«.

»Wenn die Kunst nach der Analyse von Niklas Luhmann zu einem System in der Gesellschaft geworden ist, können nicht mehr als dessen eigentliche Grundelemente und als ontologische Träger des Ästhetischen die Werke angesehen werden. Wie das Wirtschaftssystem nicht von Waren, sondern von Zahlungen lebt, und das Rechtssystem sich nicht auf Gerichte, sondern auf normative Erwartungen stützt, so besteht nach Luhmann auch das Kunstsystem aus besonderen Kommunikationen. Diese haben den Charakter von Ereignissen und nicht von Objekten, denen dann die Funktion zukommt, Kommunikation zu initiieren, in Gang zu halten und ihr einen gemeinsamen Bezugspunkt zu geben. Sie organisieren die Beteiligung an der Kommunikation, reduzieren deren Beliebigkeit und regulieren die Erwartungen der Kommunikationsteilnehmer.« Michael Lingner

aus: Die Kunst der Gesellschaft 1992 | Perspektiven postautonomer künstlerischer Praxis  
[http://ask23-hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml\\_publicationen/kt92-10.html](http://ask23-hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/ml_publicationen/kt92-10.html)

## **Autoren | Authors**

### **Aharon**

From Brighton, UK. Has been a member and contributor of the Post Autonomy Website in spring 2006.

### **Kurd Alsleben**

Kurd Alsleben (\*1928) was professor for theory of communication at Hamburg Academy of Fine Arts and is considered a pioneer in computer graphics. His recent work »Netzkunstwörterbuch«, written together with his wife Antje Eske, is focused on telecommunications and dialogue art.

[www.netzkunstwoerterbuch.de](http://www.netzkunstwoerterbuch.de)

### **Stefan Beck**

Stefan Beck (\*1965) is media artist from Frankfurt/Main, Germany. His work is focused on participatory practices in the internet and real space. The Thing Frankfurt, since 1992, is an example of an information architecture for art, critique and new media outside galleries and institutions.

multi.trudi, since 1997, is a model of an alternative artspace without exhibitions, where visitors are considered as collaborators.

Stefan Beck also performs as turntable artist and noise propagator.

[www.stefanbeck.de](http://www.stefanbeck.de)  
[www.thing-frankfurt.de](http://www.thing-frankfurt.de)  
[www.multitrudi.de](http://www.multitrudi.de)

### **Detlev Fischer**

Detlev Fischer (\*1961) studied art at Hamburg Academy of Fine Arts and at Coventry University, School of Art & Design. After focusing on experimental film, he developed 'Schwamm' (sponge), an extensive open-ended interactive and collaborative project including texts, drawings and scripts. Schwamm was included in several exhibitions, for example, Weh als Schrift (Literaturhaus Hamburg, 1990), Interface 1 (1990, International symposium for electronic art and creativity, Hamburg), Wörter brauchen keine Seiten (1993, Literaturhaus Wien), and Künstliche Spiele (1993, Literaturhaus München).

[www.oturn.net](http://www.oturn.net)

### **David Goldenberg**

Lives and works in London, UK.

David Goldenberg has been active as a conceptual artist in the international art scene since the early 1990's. Exhibitions include among others: Century City, Tate Modern, London; Open Congress, Tate Britain, London; Super store, Laurie Genillard, London; Charlie's Place, Annelly Juda, London; Miniatures, Milch, & the agency, London; Curating post institutions, ICA, London; Dive into deep water, Shedhalle, Zurich, Switzerland.

Work can be found in the following publications: New Media in late 20th Century Art, Thames & Hudson; Installation art, Thames & Hudson; 100 reviews backwards, Pub Alberta Press; Netzwerk annual; 6th Sharjah International Biennial, Team Compendium, Pub Kellner; Whose afraid of red, white and blue, Pub Article Press; Art Anthology, Du Mont Literatur und Kunst Verlag, Cologne. White window, Shared work, Pub KIAD.

[www.postautonomy.co.uk](http://www.postautonomy.co.uk)

Post Autonomy website  
[www.postautonomy.co.uk](http://www.postautonomy.co.uk)

## Interactingarts

Interacting Arts, from Stockholm, is one or all of the following; a group of cross-disciplinary artists, media critics, an activist network, a conspiracy, a brand, a think-tank and/or a magazine which is circulated both on the web and in print.

[www.interactingarts.org](http://www.interactingarts.org)

## Michael Lingner

Michael Lingner (\*1950) is artist/theorist and professor at Hamburg Academy of Fine Arts.

[www.ask23.de](http://www.ask23.de)

## miss.gunst

Since the Mid-1990ies, miss.gunst acts as medium in and for a variety of media. She represents Verena Kuni on mailing-lists and in net-communities, launches projects, writes weblogs for her and whispers footnotes into her ears while Verena Kuni broadcasts a monthly radio show for miss.gunst (GUNST since 1997) and hosts several web pages for her. Or maybe it's just the other way round, who knows?

[www.kuni.org/v/](http://www.kuni.org/v/) | [verena@kuni.org](mailto:verena@kuni.org) | [www.gunst.info](http://www.gunst.info) | [miss.gunst@gunst.info](mailto:miss.gunst@gunst.info)



Interactingarts website  
[www.interactingarts.org](http://www.interactingarts.org)

## Further reading

Boris Groys: Über das Neue | Carl Hanser Verlag, München/Wien 1992.

Kurt Aisleben/ Antje Eske: Netzkunstwörterbuch | Edition Kleeckocoklee, Hamburg 2001

Aisleben/Eske: Mutualität in Netzkunstaffären | Material Verlag Hamburg 2004.

Nicolas Bourriaud: Postproduction | Lukas & Sternberg/Frankfurter Kunstverein, New York 2005.

Gotthard Günter: Beiträge zur Grundlegung einer operativen Dialektik | Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 1976.

Clémentine Deliss: Magnetic Speech | Metronome No. 7, London Paris Oslo 2001.

Alexander Garcia Düttmann: Kunstende | Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 2000.

Oskar Bätschmann: Ausstellungskünstler | Dumont, Köln 1997.

## Websites

[www.postautonomy.co.uk](http://www.postautonomy.co.uk)

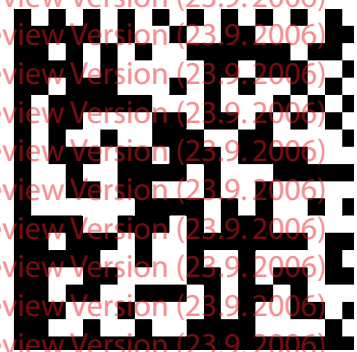
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[www.multitrudi.de](http://www.multitrudi.de)

[www.netzkunstwoerterbuch.de](http://www.netzkunstwoerterbuch.de)

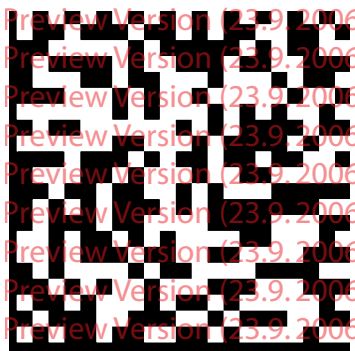
[www.sallrandolph.com](http://www.sallrandolph.com)

[www.basekamp.de](http://www.basekamp.de)



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