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CURATING IN PROGRESS. MOVING BETWEEN OBJECTS AND PROCESSES

Annet Dekker

This essay focuses on the practical design and function of computational processes in contemporary art, examining how curators and art institutions are dealing with artworks that are intrinsically processual.

The term 'process' is used to signify the creation or development process of a work, which may or may not lead to a specific outcome. In art history this is known as Process Art, a movement from the 1960s, when artists emphasised the 'process' of making art by stressing concepts of change and transience. In computing, a process occurs when a computer programme is being executed. It contains the program code and its current activity. The process happens in between an input and an output. Simply put, a process is a series of actions, changes, or functions that produce a result. Although there can be an end point, this is not always the case. Furthermore, processes are often unstable. During execution, noise can develop, causing errors, uncertainty and misunderstanding. Nor are processes independent: they address themselves and are connected to other elements and dynamics. As such, the nature and power of processes is graspable in relations.

My main focus here is on the practical design and function of computational processes in art. Therefore, I will examine the creation and development of contemporary art to investigate how computational processes are used and how such examples can influence social and cultural conduct. Examples range from integrating Facebook APIs in gaming, addressing commercial e-book publishing companies like Amazon.com, and using Web 2.0 commenting strategies. Whereas some of these artworks include computing processes, the examples are not restricted to the computational. Often these projects extend beyond the systems they examine and use. In particular, I will consider how curators and art institutions deal with artworks that are intrinsically processual, simultaneously questioning whether dealing with processes requires a different attitude and, if so, how the art world can adapt to the changing requirements of the mutable artworks that it presents and collects.

Continuous process rather than outcome

Art processes are often continuous, and single objects or projects might emerge, but as I will argue throughout this essay, these individual expressions have little value by themselves and only function from and within the larger network. As such, processual relates to a study of processes rather than discrete events. For instance, in their project *Database Documentary* (2009-2011), YoHa (Matsuko Yokokoji and Graham Harwood) set out to investigate the workings of National Health Service (NHS) databases in the United Kingdom. To comprehend how databases change our conduct, they followed the process of modelling, creating, implementing, completing, ordering and using databases – particularly those used by health services. They traced the databases' processes by interviewing midwives, following database administrators and organising workshops. The outcomes revealed specific points of authority and agency, leading to new perspectives on empowerment. As such, the project demonstrated that database processes motivate all kinds of narratives and are connected to histories, economies and ideologies. In other words, while processes can be highly formal, they are also contingent. As such, they are expressive actants that function through systems, designs, and histories, which can simultaneously be influenced and executed through other processes and/or users.

The Project Formerly Known as Kindle Forkbomb (2011-2013) by Übermorgen is exemplary in this sense¹. Übermorgen wrote scripts for bots to harvest comments to YouTube videos, which were then compiled in 'narratives' and uploaded in vast quantities as e-books in Amazon's Kindle shop². In this project, the entire book publishing procedure is the story: from coding and platforms, to writing and distributing texts. The stories are outcomes of relations between

texts and the different context that they are part of; thus, narratives are both human and machinic. The project both illustrates *and* produces reality. Übermorgen makes poetic use of the trappings of systems that produce new literature, while critically exploring the changing process in and infrastructure of the writing, production and distribution of books. Or, as Übermorgen say, a “new breed – humans and algorithms alike – writes within the cloud as the crowd and publishes in the cloud to the crowd”³.

These examples imply that what is most important is the process and not necessarily the outcome. Übermorgen’s books will likely never be read. YoHa’s dialogues with midwives, administrators and participants in the workshops were more important than a final outcome, as these exposed the effects and pitfalls of database structures and systems. A process can be endless, continually moving from one stage to another. Although a process is often made visible through an outcome, or by the actions of users, these are merely (re-) presentations of a temporary state.

Process of making and setting in motion

As mentioned before, the processual is not exclusive to technology. Earlier experiments can be seen in process art, some examples of Land Art, Fluxus, Conceptual Art, and Mail Art, but technologies have made it easier to accommodate processes⁴. Technologies have made whole new spectra of processes possible. Some of these examples have been taken into art history, but most projects that deal with processes do not fit comfortably into art-historical contexts. To an extent this is because they are part of an assemblage of works that can be difficult to read outside their environments. Or, because of the

inclusion of brightly coloured stuffed animals, stickers, magazines, animated GIFs or corporate logos, they are considered to be closer to Pop and mass culture with little 'art aesthetic sophistication'. Another challenge is that a process can continue; it can sometimes evolve into new directions. It is difficult to predict where some processes will end, as others could continue taking specific parts in different directions. The significance lies in the process of the making, instead of what is made, or even by whom. This is not to say that these factors are unimportant, but that meaning, authorship and authenticity extend to a larger context. This method is clearly visible with a new generation of artworks that were made in the late 2000s. To clarify what I mean, I will describe three examples that represent specific characteristics of this kind of processuality, which I distinguish as: using social interactions, distribution and re-use, and recombination and mutation.

Processuality as social interaction is well exemplified by Constant Dullaart's work *YouTube as a Sculpture* (2009). The work is based on his previous work *YouTube as a Subject* (2008), a series of animated videos with the YouTube play button as its subject. Positioned against the black background of a loading YouTube video, the play button icon starts trembling as if suddenly in an earthquake, bouncing from side to side, changing colours, strobing like a mini disco lightshow, and falling down off the screen. Lastly, the icon slowly blurs. Within the spirit of comment culture and its practice of versioning (meaning a change or translation from one thing to another through social interactions) that was prominent with 'surf clubs', Ben Coonley was one of the first to respond with a series of videos that featured the dots that signal loading time as his subject. In 2009, I co-curated the exhibition *Versions* at the Netherlands Media Art Institute in Amsterdam and we asked Constant to translate his work to the physical space⁵. He decided to version the online discussion by

creating a physical copy of the loading dots, *YouTube as a Sculpture*. This time, eight polystyrene balls were hung in a circle against a black background, lit in succession by eight spotlights. Visitors were given the feeling of entering a loading YouTube video, and filmed the balls and uploaded them to YouTube, “thereby completing the circle of production and reproduction” (Thalmair 2011). The dialogue first occurred online, then offline and returned again to the virtual, where yet again new versions of ‘loading balls’ videos were made. The process of versioning continues. According to Dullaart: “The success of the sculpture meant that audience members documented the sculpture and finally became the uploading medium for my participation in the visual discussion set in motion by *YouTube as a Subject* a few years earlier” (Thalmair 2011).

An example that reinforces distribution and re-use is *19:30* (2010) by Aleksandra Domanovic. Domanovic grew up in Serbia when it was still part of Yugoslavia. Surprisingly, the strict regime that controlled the country allowed its national television stations a lot of creative freedom, which resulted in stable, high-quality entertainment and information programmes. Many people watched the news that was broadcast every evening at 19:30 (hence the title of Domanovic’s work). When ethnic tensions intensified in the late 1980s, it became the focal point of the day. Watching the news was part of a routine and a shared experience, which contributed to the omnipresent memory of the musical and graphic introductions to the news. Although the fall of Yugoslavia marked the end of this collective memory, it was music in the mid-1990s, and in particular raves, that created a new shared memory. For a large group of people, raves provided a sense of community. In 2009, Domanovic returned to Serbia in an attempt to connect these different time periods and stress the importance of collective memory. Domanovic learned that many well-known composers had worked on the experimental scores for

the news jingles. She uploaded her assembled archive and encouraged DJs to use them in their music tracks.

The work was first presented as an audiovisual installation consisting of two screens: one shows documentation of techno parties and the DJs using the tracks and the other shows the compilation of news jingles. The research and documentation of the events can be viewed online, where the old jingles and new tracks can also be heard and downloaded⁶. Old memories are triggered through the process of creating different versions that are (potentially) continuously distributed. At the same time, it should be asked whether the video installation is the work, or if the video is just documentation of something that happened (and perhaps continues) elsewhere? For an exhibition in 2011, Domanovic further abstracted the memories by adding stacks of paper with fragments of images from raves printed on the sides of the paper. In the 'paper-stacks', or the 'printable monuments' as Domanovic calls them, the issue of monumentality is as important as the visualisation of content sourced from the Internet: they exist in two states, a virtual one (as an online PDF document) and its physical manifestation. Their subjects, varying from images of football hooligans, the crowds at Balkan raves to the ruins of the former Hotel Marina Lucica situated on the Croatian coast, belong to the symbolic iconography of the new states that emerged after Yugoslavia was dissolved. As such, the stacks signal the monumentality of former Yugoslavia's architecture, while also emphasising the fragmentary nature of the Internet, the place from which the images came, and where they end up because they can be freely downloaded and (re)used. At once resembling the solidness and the instability of monuments and commonality, the stacks mainly symbolise a transience that evokes former Yugoslavia.

Although the stacks of paper, the video installation and the website

can be presented separately, for an understanding of the work it is important to see the connections between the different parts. One way to more easily grasp these links is to move beyond conventional art aesthetics and concentrate on processual (or network) aesthetics. Instead of the material promise of a medium, or its substantial form, such aesthetics should be seen as “a method and a force that, through rules, constraints, and capacities for expression, continually re-negotiates its own structures and existence” (Fazi and Fuller 2015). In other words, a computational aesthetic is an aesthetic that derives from the design of processes, networks and distribution.

Finally, the Facebook game *Naked on Pluto* by Aymeric Mansoux, Dave Griffiths and Marloes de Valk, is exemplary of recombination and mutation. *Naked on Pluto* is a multiplayer text adventure that uses the available data on someone’s Facebook account and constructs a game around it. I will not examine the project’s goals and aims here, but remain on topic and show how it functions with regard to processuality. In addition to the online game, the project can be experienced as an installation that presents certain components of the game, a research blog, books and workshops. For the artists, *Naked on Pluto* is a specific comment on Facebook and the state of social media at the time, but if that context changes the game loses all meaning. So, when talking about future installations, rather than the game play, interface or installation, the artists emphasise the organisation of workshops with the game engine.

The game engine is for them the core of the work – even the most crucial creative part of their work. It is a platform for making new works. This is also one of the reasons why they developed *Naked on Pluto* in open source: all the data and code is freely available for re-use. In other words, following these open-source ideologies, *Naked on Pluto* can be characterised by the processes of distribution and

re-use of concepts and ideas. More importantly, the work can change or mutate into something else.

From acquiring objects to engaging in processes

The idea of materialising Internet processes can be seen as a way to grasp a complex and continually changing world that reveals its fragility and fleeting nature. It can be argued that by creating and at times presenting physical objects, artists – or curators – are attempting to transform the processual into a ‘poetic’ time freeze. However, this sidesteps the notion that these artworks arise from collective processes situated in continuum with other works, references and commentaries⁷. These assemblages are characterised by the processes of distribution and re-use of concepts and ideas. The work, if it can still be referred to as such, only becomes evident through multiplicity, enumeration and evolvment. In other words, the significance of the work does not revolve around one presentation, or even one author.

This does not imply that the earlier mentioned artists do not have a preferred way of exhibiting, or documenting the work. It means that there are no fixed rules. As such, anyone can present, exhibit, preserve, document, or do as they see fit with the project without permission from the artists. Potentially, even an acquisition could happen just as easily, where a gallerist or distributor could sell a work to anyone⁸. However, some of these artists see the acquisition process in reverse: the process and the development is what they are paid for, and the outcome is for everyone else to use. This means that ‘acquisitions’ by institutions are related to an engagement with the practice, and not to the outcome of that process. If adopted, this



Fig. 01 - Dave Griffiths, Aymeric Mansoux and Marloes de Valk, *Naked on Pluto*. Installation at Arco Madrid 2012. Photo: VIDA Team.

would extend the role of the museum to one of being a producer, or facilitator, of artworks.

The production of artworks by museums is not necessarily new; museums already have a tradition of commissioning artworks. However, in most cases these works have a different status. They are not part of the collection archive, which means that the museum is not required to present, take care of, or preserve them⁹. Similarly, museums acquire performance or conceptual artworks, so they know how to deal with fragments or ephemeral 'ideas', 'concepts' or 'instructions' that characterise these artworks. But in most of the examples just described, the institution will acquire a development – and possibly an evolving – process. What are the consequences of this reversed practice for curators? How to present or handle processuality?

Whereas some parts of these artworks can easily be presented – the installation version of *Naked on Pluto*, Domanovic's stacks of paper and videos, or Dullaart's polystyrene balls – such efforts need to recognise their contradictory or paradoxical status. Similar to documentation, these objects are reconstituent traces. Ideally, and to keep to the 'process' or the method of versioning, one should open up to new explorations and discoveries. As such, a museum becomes a place where the old goes hand in hand with the production of the new – in other words, an 'open method', which means engaging with the work on its own terms, and thus following multiple directions.

An open approach and the museum

An open approach (in the sense of re-creation and reinterpretation) to presentation seems to follow perfectly the method and practice

of curating. It would have to be acknowledged that multiple versions – or even parts of a work – exist and are scattered across different platforms. Within certain restrictions, freedom of choice to present any possible construction will likely lead to interesting results.

This is not a new insight or perspective. Examples of curating-in-progress, or even museums-in-progress, can be traced to the early 20th century, for example, to the German curator Alexander Dorner. Dorner began his career as a curator at the Niedersächsische Landesmuseum in Hannover in 1923, and two years later was appointed its director. He was one of the early avant-garde art collectors in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s concentrating on Constructivist art for the collection, focusing on Piet Mondrian, Naum Gabo, Kazimir Malevich, and El Lissitzky. More importantly, Dorner juxtaposed traditional art with other objects from other periods. With these installations he proposed a new method for presentation in art museums, and argued that “the museum would have to be flexible, both as to building and as to inner arrangement; flexible not for the sake of being always ‘different’, offering constant novelties, but for the sake of transforming its own identity under the pressure of life’s continuous and autonomous change” (Dorner 1958: 146). As such, he envisioned a new type of art museum, which “must not only be not an ‘art’ museum in the traditional static sense but, strictly speaking, not a ‘museum’ at all. A museum conserves supposedly eternal values and truths. But the new type would be a kind of powerhouse, a producer of new energies” (Dorner 1958: 147).

An example of this ‘powerhouse’ idea is the commission Dorner gave to El Lissitzky in 1927 in which he asked him to build a modular room for abstract art. The installation was a non-permanent intervention, using the art that was already in the museum as a tool for creating new readings, understandings, or even misunderstandings. Around

the same time, and perhaps not coincidentally, Aby Warburg presented his *Mnemosyne Atlas*, an installation consisting of 40 wooden panels covered with black cloth, on which were pinned and juxtaposed nearly 1000 pictures from books, magazines, newspaper, *et cetera*, that could be re-arranged at will. His method became especially popular in art-historical discourse where he was seen as someone who sought the meaning and the functions of art for various societies, its role for different social classes, and the energy of the cultural memories it preserves. Unfortunately neither of these projects lasted very long. Warburg died just two years after the opening, leaving his work unfinished, and Dorner had to flee to the United States in 1938 because of the National Socialists, who were not amused by modernist methods and approaches.

Nevertheless, artists, rather than museum directors, have usually been the catalysts of institutional innovation. A case in point is the artists who became known for their process art. One of the first curators to bring some of these artists together was Harald Szeemann, in the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969) at Kunsthalle Bern in Switzerland. Szeemann tried to highlight the processual character of the artworks that were being made at the time. Although it can be, and has been, debated whether this staging was successful, more surprising was the restaging of the exhibition in 2013 during the Venice Biennial. Rather than presenting the process in the artworks, the objects became a way to entirely restage the exhibition: a reconstruction of the exhibition space rather than looking at the content of the artworks. Something similar had happened two years earlier, in 2011, at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, where curator Magriet Schavemaker organised a restaging of the 1969 exhibition *Square Pegs in Round Holes* [*Op Losse Schroeven: Situaties en Cryptostructuren*]¹⁰. At the time, the 1969

exhibition by Wim Beeren also focused on presenting Process Art (Beeren's Stedelijk show opened one week before Harald Szeemann's *When Attitude Becomes Form*). Beeren wanted to reflect the spirit of experimentation that informed the works on display, and draw attention to ephemeral performances and conceptual interventions outside the walls of the museum, any of which were intended to critique both art and the museum (Dippel et al. 2005: 282-285 and 473-483). Whereas the press release of the 2011 restaging points to a flexible approach, the exhibition drew foremost on archival and documentary materials that were shown together with some works that were acquired after the exhibition in 1969. In other locations in the museum – the sites of the original exhibition – people could view documentation of the original artworks by using their mobile phone and an AR plug-in. Unfortunately this AR tour cannot be accessed anymore.

Whereas these ideas and exhibitions introduced new contexts and readings of existing artworks, or breathed new life into a collection, the artworks did not change, and when they did, due to material decay, their 'fragments' or documents formed the centre of attention. A more interesting proposal in this sense is made by Rudolf Frieling, curator at SFMOMA. Frieling describes a position where the museum as a 'producer' is able to re-exhibit works via performative strategies, including commissioning other artists to conceive new installations for artworks in their collection. An example is the re-installation of the Internet art project *learning to love you more* by Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher, which was re-interpreted by Stephanie Syjuco, who decided to show all the results of the assignments in pairs in a semi-secluded space. According to Frieling, the museum "understands the term 'production' not just as an emergence of something that is not a 'given', but as the emergence of something that is 'changed'" (Frieling 2014: 147).

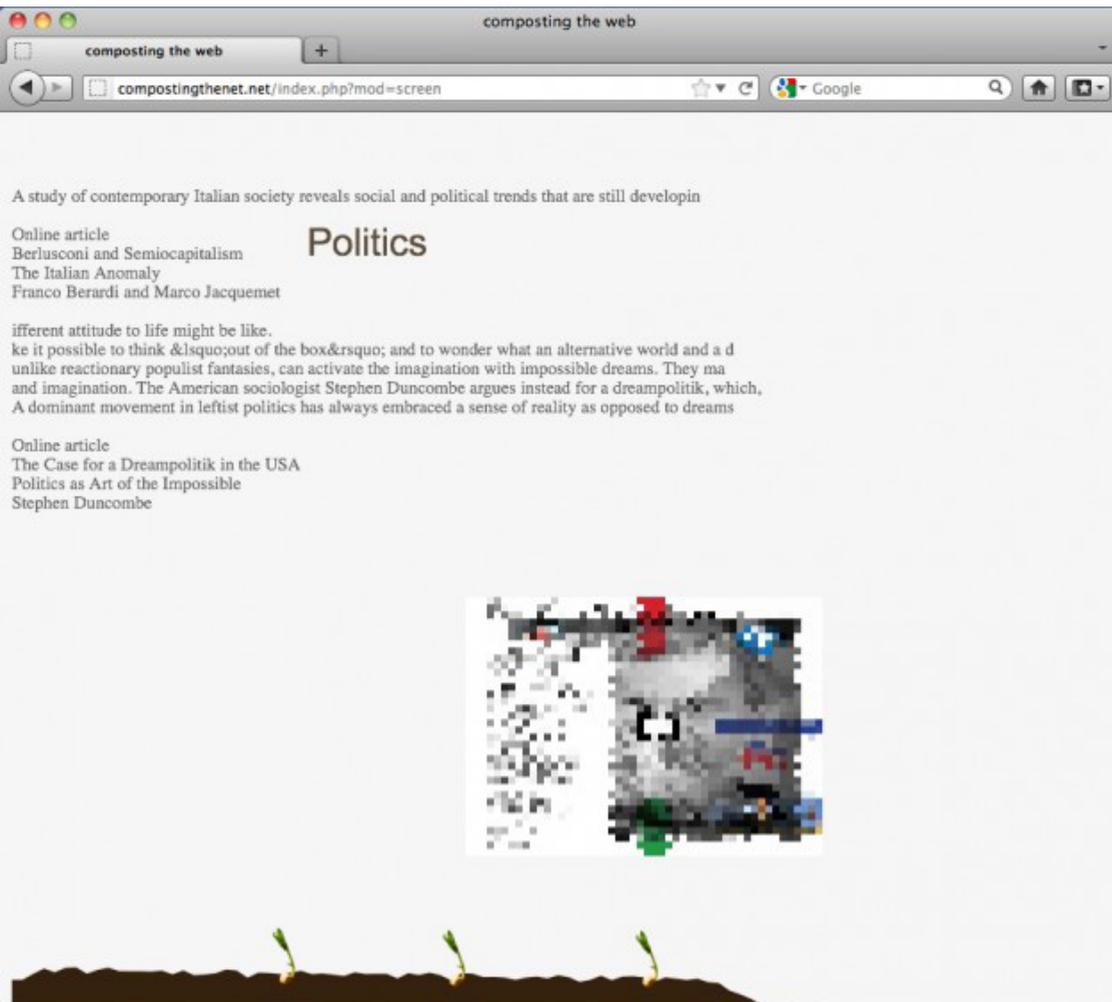


Fig. 02 - Shu Lea Cheang, *Composting the Net* (2012) website screenshot.

It can be argued that these practices imply an endorsement of loss and forgetting. Instead of seeing this as a negative statement, I prefer to embrace the 'art of forgetting'. Such an art of forgetting is demonstrated in the work *Composting the Net* (2012) by Shu Lea Cheang. Whereas most art projects that deal with waste and trash paint a rather negative picture of the present or future¹¹, *Composting the Net* takes all the content of a website or e-mail list and shreds the words and images into 'compost', turning the archives into forgotten instances of history. But, the actions of digital worms generate fresh sprouts that refuse to be trashed and buried. Seemingly, dead data is fertile and open to new perspectives. It could well be argued that allowing things to be forgotten is not a bad thing. What Cheang proposes is a cycle, which "is durational, generative and repetitive. A cycle is a natural process, while 'recycle' implies 'the making of something else', which inevitably generates more waste" (Dekker 2012). As such, a cycle represents a more natural approach to preserving the past, departing from the assumption that without repetition there is no learning, and without learning what remains is a fleeting yet endless desire to get to the next new thing.

A practice of iteration and recombination

Remaining with Cheang's work, let us dig a little deeper into the meaning of waste. The subjects of compost and trash are recurring aesthetics in her work. Here we find die-hard open source coders and circuit benders scrambling through utterances of code, tracing dead links, building something from scattered parts, and trying out endless emulations. This is the scenario of *I.K.U.* (2000), Cheang's movie (which later was cycled into *U.K.I.* (2009), a game and performance depicting an Internet porn enterprise, GENOM Corp., which

introduces orgasm-on-the-go for a mobile phone chip: dumped in an e-trash environment, coders, tweeters and networkers are forced to scavenge through techno-waste to collect old and forgotten human orgasm data. If an artwork breaks, the software could be fixed or adapted to the environment once or twice, or emulated, but in time and after attention fades, it is neglected, thrown away and replaced by a new version. What remains is waste, digital litter, and hardware junk. It has been argued that garbage and waste belong to the domain of forgetting. Archaeology is the prime field that thrives on scattered fragments and perpetuates through assemblages. The trope of archaeologists is that they focus on past artefacts, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs, but according to Shanks et al. (2004), 99 per cent of archaeology depends on looking at traces through waste or refuse¹². A condition of waste is common to all things, and it is through examining and arranging waste that meaning is created (Shanks et al. 2004). Although it can be argued that this is also an archaeological trope, what is interesting is that both of these notions regard waste as the end state of objects. However, emphasising waste as redundant, a residue, a remainder, obscures a potential ongoing status of the object itself. For example, analysing the installation *Tate Thames Dig* (1999) by Marc Dion, William Viney (2010) demonstrates that waste is not a fixed state but continually changes due to the materiality and handling or presentation of the material; a process that is frequently mentioned in accounts of the conservators who worked on the installation. In other words, it denies what objects are yet to become.

Jill Sterrett, head of conservation at SFMOMA, suggests applying the concept of the 'archaeological find' in reverse by using the mechanism as a method to trace the engagement with an artwork and to reveal its life over time (Sterrett 2009: 227). This resonates with the suggestion that an archaeological find does not only

communicate aesthetic values; it also has information potential and semantic values (Berducou 1996: 248-258). Instead of rigid solutions or records, Sterrett advocates 'planting finds' (documents with information value), which account for the variables that are included in the presentation and conservation of many contemporary artworks. This could lead to a new situation where museums would need to re-assess their finds each time from a new context, or as Sterrett says, it will adjust "the burdensome tone of authority that museums inherit as sources of objective truth by actively committing to seeing and seeing anew over time, [and it will] cultivate, among other things, ways of manoeuvring with variable speed" (Sterrett 2009: 227).

By following such an approach, presentation will be a mode of iteration that is underwritten by absence and loss. It shows an intention to reframe discourses and opens up alternative possibilities. Instead of asking what to save, present, or preserve, the first question becomes what to relinquish, erase, or abandon. Rather than relying on a past, the notion of traces relates to a future, the function of a trace being that of a 'carrier' of information whose significance is more appropriately valued in a 'not yet' context. A less permanent and more insecure approach such as this takes into account a future perspective, and leads towards a propensity to change and development. It opens new ways of thinking about what presentation means and leads to new ways of dealing with the structure and function of museums.

To summarise

The examples I have mentioned are recombinations. Parts of a work can disappear, change or mutate over a short time span. Whereas the notion of incompleteness is not new and is reminiscent of, for example,

Conceptual Art, the way material is compiled, found, changed, and distributed has changed. The result is that these works are heterogeneous processes of creation, which act beyond a single object. To achieve any significance, these works rely on an understanding of computational aesthetics. In other words, a physical realisation of the process, a work in an exhibition space, is a derivative of the main core of these works, which are the social interactions that determine their process. Much will be lost if this is not taken into account, especially the energy, surprise effect, fragility of the illusion, and the transience of the moment. So, even for the 'unplaced', a museum can still be an interesting option, but it will succeed best if it adapts itself to the artworks, rather than adapting the artworks to fit its own current structures and systems. As such, a museum shifts from a custodian of 'dead objects' to a 'living space', where presentation, preservation, discussion, and active exploration go hand in hand.

Notes

¹ In 2012, Übermorgen collaborated with Luc Gross and Bernhard Bauch to build the web robot. After they parted, Gross and Bauch released their own version of the project as *Kindle'voke Ghost Writers*, <<http://traumawien.at/ghostwriters/>>. Currently both versions exist alongside each other.

² Amazon Kindle's e-book shop functions through 'Whispernet', a cloud service that stores all reading data, i.e., what, when, where one reads, and potentially which notes and underscores are made.

³ For more information about the project, see <<http://uuuuuuuntitled.com>>. About the infrastructure of digital publishing and its implications, see Andersen and Pold (2013).

⁴ See, for example, Saper (2001) on mail-art, and examples of Fluxus and Conceptual Art in Chandler and Neumark (2005).

⁵ The other curators were Petra Heck and Constant Dullaart. A number of artists were invited, for whom online commenting influenced their work process. We challenged them to temporarily exchange the Internet for the static space of a gallery. Questions about the significance of appropriation,

authenticity and agency in the era of 'comment culture' ran like a thread through the exhibition. <<http://nimk.nl/eng/versions>>.

⁶ For more information see <<http://nineteenthirty.net/>>.

⁷ For more information about these processes on social platforms, see Burgess who described these videos as 'carriers for ideas' that relate to "a 'copy the instructions', rather than a 'copy the product' model of replication and variation" (Burgess 2008: 108).

⁸ Aymeric Mansoux, personal conversation, December 2012 in Eindhoven.

⁹ For more information about these kinds of contracts and the difference between collection and commissioned work in relation to the Whitney Artport, see Verschooren (2007: 5-6). This is not to imply that museums are not trying to change this situation. For example, Whitney Artport (curated by Christiane Paul) is trying to bring the commissioned net artworks into their collection. Other museums undertake similar initiatives, for example, Variable Media Network and Matters in Media Art.

¹⁰ The English title does not really capture the essence of its Dutch counterpart, which much more reflects the instable nature of the artworks – literally the Dutch title translates to "On loose screws: situations and crypto structures".

¹¹ See, for example, Kroker and Weinstein (1994) and Mark Napier's project *Digital Landfill* (1998), which anticipates an exploded digital super-highway that is littered with road kill and taken over by spam.

¹² The connection between archaeology and garbage (archaeologists studying garbage) was made in the 1970s when William Rathje started the science of Garbology at the University of Arizona. For more information, see Rathje and Murphy (2001), and Shanks et al. (2004). 'Waste' as a scientific topic has boomed for about a decade. See, among many others, Scanlan (2005), who examined the language and symbolism of waste as the background to the predominant culture of novelty that is brought to life as the monstrous, the sublime, or simply the eclipse of human endeavour.

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