



RHIZOME.ORG - THE NEW MEDIA ART RESOURCE

[Art + Text](#)[Calendar](#)[Opportunities](#)[Services](#)[About Rhizome](#)[Community](#)

Art + Text

[Fresh Art](#)
[Submit Your Artwork](#)
[Browse Art by Artist](#)
[Browse Art by Title](#)

[Fresh Texts](#)
[Post a Message](#)
[Browse Texts By Keyword](#)

[Net Art News](#)
[NAN Syndication](#)

[Rhizome Digest](#)

[Rhizome Commissions](#)

Text Object

11.8.2002

Report from Electrohype

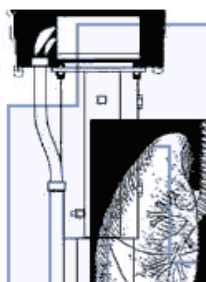
Andreas Broegger <broegger@hum.ku.dk>

Place: [Malmö, Sweden](#)

Keywords: [digital](#), [art world](#), [conference](#)

Genre: [show](#)

Type: [review](#)



A report from Electrohype Malmö, Sweden October 23-27 (exhibition) October 24-25 (conference) Although one of the most advanced regions in the world in terms of digital infrastructure, providing its 23 million inhabitants unprecedented access to digital services, Scandinavia is also characterized by a significant lack of conferences, festivals, and exhibitions dealing with digital technology in explicitly artistic terms. Being both conference and exhibition, "Electrohype" is a welcome exception to this rule. Based in the Swedish city of Malmö, the first Electrohype took place in 2000, and the organizers are now upgrading Electrohype to a regular Scandinavian biennale for digital art.

The exhibition provided the opportunity for Scandinavians to visit Marek Walczak and Martin Wattenberg's Apartment (<http://www.turbulence.org/Works/apartment>), observe John Simon's algorithmic art up close in his Every Icon and Color Panel v1.0 (<http://www.numeral.com/>), and get a sense of Lisa Jevbratt's data package-measuring work Out of the Ordinary (<http://dma.sjsu.edu/jevbratt/ooo>).

Of work and artists perhaps less familiar to rhizomers, it is worth mentioning Spanish artist Federico Muelas' installation "Dripping Sounds", experimenting with a translation of the flow of ink in water into sound (<http://www.sva.edu/mfacad/featuredstudents/fede.html>). Quoting J.W. Goethe, and comprising an old-fashioned water container and ink dripping device, lighting and lenses for projection, a flushing system, photosensitive modules, and a loudspeaker system, Muelas' installation attempted to link digital technology to the technology of centuries past in both philosophical, technological and stylistic ways. Although the installation was beautifully executed, the visual side of Muelas' "Dripping Sounds" unfortunately did not translate into a very interesting audio experience. In itself leaving a lot up to the synaesthetic imagination, I suppose.

Swedish artist Thomas Broomé presented his AI and biosensor-based projects at the conference, many of which appropriate medical, surveillance and military technology for creative or playful purposes, although maintaining a sense of edginess (<http://www.interactiveinstitute.se/>). In the Electrohype exhibition, Broomé displayed his tongue-in-cheek "HellHunt" project (<http://www.lordsflegacy.com/hellhunt>), searching the web for any occurrence in pictures of a diabolic symbol (the reversed pentagram). Finding evil axes in even the most innocent corners of the web, Broomé's algorithm combines the absurd with disturbing perspectives.

Among the projects involving the spectator in a more direct way, "Rekyl" by Danish collaborators Oncotype, Subsilo, Dinesen and Christiansen (<http://www.oncotype.dk/noodlefilm.phtml>), exemplified the give-and-get condition of interaction. By speaking into a microphone in front of a video image projecting statistical information about the Danish population you could break through to the other side of this monotonous surface, to a place where individuals told stories about personal experiences. At the same time, however, your voice was distorted by the system, an interesting if highly frustrating "recoil" making listening and speaking at the same time very difficult. For every word spoken, more seemed lost to the ear.

C. Anders Wallén's video installation "jour et nuit" was another example of interaction where a "meeting" is made difficult (<http://www.vis.se/caw>) As you entered the installation, a man in the video would leave his room. Leave, and he would re-enter. You could subject your own body to digital displacement in Norwegian Ellen Røed's installation "Feedback", employing delayed video projections of visitors' shadows on the walls mixed with the actual shadows of their presence...

Community

Welcome

http://rhizome.org/member.rhiz?user_id=1016506

[Edit Preferences](#)

[Log Out](#)

[Help](#)

25 online / 20553 total

[Roopesh](#) (MY)

[John](#) (US)

(Plus 23 anonymous users)

The two-day long Electrohype conference tried to follow up on the recent trend of "software art", as evidenced in recent festivals like Transmediale 2001 (<http://www.transmediale.de/01/en/software.htm>) and Readme 2002. As one of the organizers and jury members of the latter event, Olga Guriunova mainly argued for the critical possibilities (even responsibilities) of alternative software production. By contrast, John F. Simon Jr. aligned his creative programming with modernist icons like Mondrian and Stuart Davis rather than revolutionary forces opposing software giants.

Taking the example of artist Graham Harwood's modification of a poem by William Blake (<http://www.scotoma.org/lungs>), Josephine Bosma argued for the relevance of looking at code and programming on several levels. Code as perhaps the vehicle of some sort of artistic "style", as investigated by the Whitney Artport's CODEDOC project (<http://whitney.org/artport/commissions/codedoc/index.shtml>), coding as a way of "thinking" (as John F. Simon Jr. also talked about), but first of all code as a processor of cultural and poetic content and form as in the work of Graham Harwood. Bosma also expressed a skepticism towards the trendiness of the term "Software Art" (as in: the next big thing after net.art), but also an interest in the more narrow term "code art" (as promoted by Florian Cramer).

In a flashback to curator Jack Burnham's show "Software" at the Jewish Museum in New York in 1970, I gave a talk comparing today's software art to the art and technology projects of an age where they did not speak of "software art" in literal terms, but rather metaphorically of art as a kind of "software". Many questions remain to be answered in relation to the idea of software art, and perhaps some answers can be found by looking back to Burnham's views in 1970, and his later disillusion with a fusion of art and technology.

One question is definitely how to bridge the gap between an allegedly revolutionary, critical software practice, and the mainstream usage of software (that is, if you really take the idea of "revolutionary" or "critical" seriously). Or how to bridge the gap between artists creating with software and the art world which has long since forgotten about exhibits like Burnham's from 1970.

In this respect, software artists and software art curators have not yet moved from their own little ivory tower to the control tower of society, to quote McLuhan. Certainly, Scandinavia could be the ideal region for implementing software changes on a larger cultural, aesthetic and economical scale, with the Scandinavian governments traditionally emphasizing "functional design for every citizen". For that, however, we will need more electrohype.

Andreas Brøgger

Copenhagen, Denmark

broegger@hum.ku.dk

[POST A REPLY ↗](#)

[printer version](#)

+ + +