

### **The new media artist as critical producer of public/private media**

In his seminal essay on “The author as producer”<sup>1</sup>, Walter Benjamin (1934) addressed the question of (artistic) commitment under certain social conditions. He wrote “the rigid, isolated object (work, novel) is of no use whatsoever. It must be inserted into the context of living social relations.”<sup>2</sup>. The political situation has changed a lot since Walter Benjamin wrote his essay, but his ideas are still current and should be elaborated upon. Since the dramatic changes in the 20th century in regards to authorship (on the example of Media Art<sup>3</sup>, Remix Culture<sup>4</sup>) and the rise of digital information and communications technologies (as outlined by Manuel Castells<sup>5</sup> and many others), the methods of production, dissemination and availability of content have multiplied. In the 21st century, data is the "grease" of the network society, a pervasively mediating and interconnecting element. Everything is data and can be represented through data analysis, or can it?

Although new media usage and consumption is further on the rise and became widely accepted in everyday use, the pioneering and (critical) production fields of the network culture (new media arts) - are said to be non-existent anymore. Stefan Heidenreich proclaimed that “there is no media art”<sup>6</sup>, others see no “cultural urgency”<sup>7</sup>. There is much talk of the crisis of media art, and it can be debated if practices and processes that were uniquely located in the new media arts are now present in other artistic disciplines and production cultures. Besides all the crisis-talk, still new appliances for technology first intersect with the spheres of producers (new media artists, maker and hacker contexts) before they become a wider cultural phenomenon that are even implemented into business models (as Mirko Tobias Schäfer noted<sup>8</sup>). This is evident in examples such as the *DSLR revolution*, *post-industrial design* methods, the alternative currency *Bitcoin*, debates on data accessibility (often dubbed as *open data*) and the politics of data leaking.

Recent information leaking scandals (Wikileaks, Edward Snowden, etc.) brought with them a huge public interest of data collections, the daily creation of unique encryption keys of the software *OpenPGP* tripled<sup>9</sup>, and the number of global *Tor* users doubled<sup>10</sup> since Snowden's leaks first became public. Although the availability of encryption has been given for a long time and also obfuscation methods are well known to technically educated people as well as researchers in computer and communication science<sup>11</sup>, leaking scandals have transported the issues much faster to the attention of the public than could ever be achieved with scientific papers or critical (media) artworks.

In recent years a trend of commodification of culture and "tethered appliances"<sup>12</sup> became evident. The question is, where critical production happens today - "If you want to criticize a religion, write a book"<sup>13</sup> is written in Apple's *App Store Guidelines*, which make it clear that 'critical software' is not wanted there.

Contemporary "new media arts" that are information savvy, research driven and follow the current discussion on the ethical use of Big Data<sup>14</sup> as well as outlining the future challenges of technology development have the possibility to transport issues to larger audiences and reach the information society with their critique. In this paper I will discuss different approaches in contemporary new media arts that are integrating critique on new media developments, data gathering and showcase emancipatory/empowering technologies in hybrid cooperations with diverse fields of the (digital) humanities.

## Bibliography

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- Zittrain, Jonathan L. "The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It.", Yale University Press, 2008. Accessed August 25, 2013. <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4455262>

## Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer."
2. Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer.", 87
3. Eduardo Costa, Raúl Escari, Roberto Jacoby, "A Media Art (Manifesto)."
4. Lawrence Lessig, "Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy"
5. Castells, "The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture Volume I"
6. Heidenreich, "Es gibt gar keine Medienkunst!"
7. Dieter Daniels: "Whatever Happened to Media Art?", 1pp
8. Schäfer, "Bastard Culture! How User Participation Transforms Cultural Production."
9. O'Neill, "After Snowden leaks, daily adoption rate of PGP encryption triples."
10. Tim Sampson, "Tor usage doubles after Snowden's surveillance revelations."
11. Nissenbaum and Brunton, "Vernacular Resistance to Data Collection and Analysis: A Political Theory of Obfuscation."
12. Zittrain, "The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It."
13. Tarasiewicz and Schaefer, "Exit through the App Store."
14. Boyd and Crawford "Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon."

## Images for the Publication (for the works discussed)

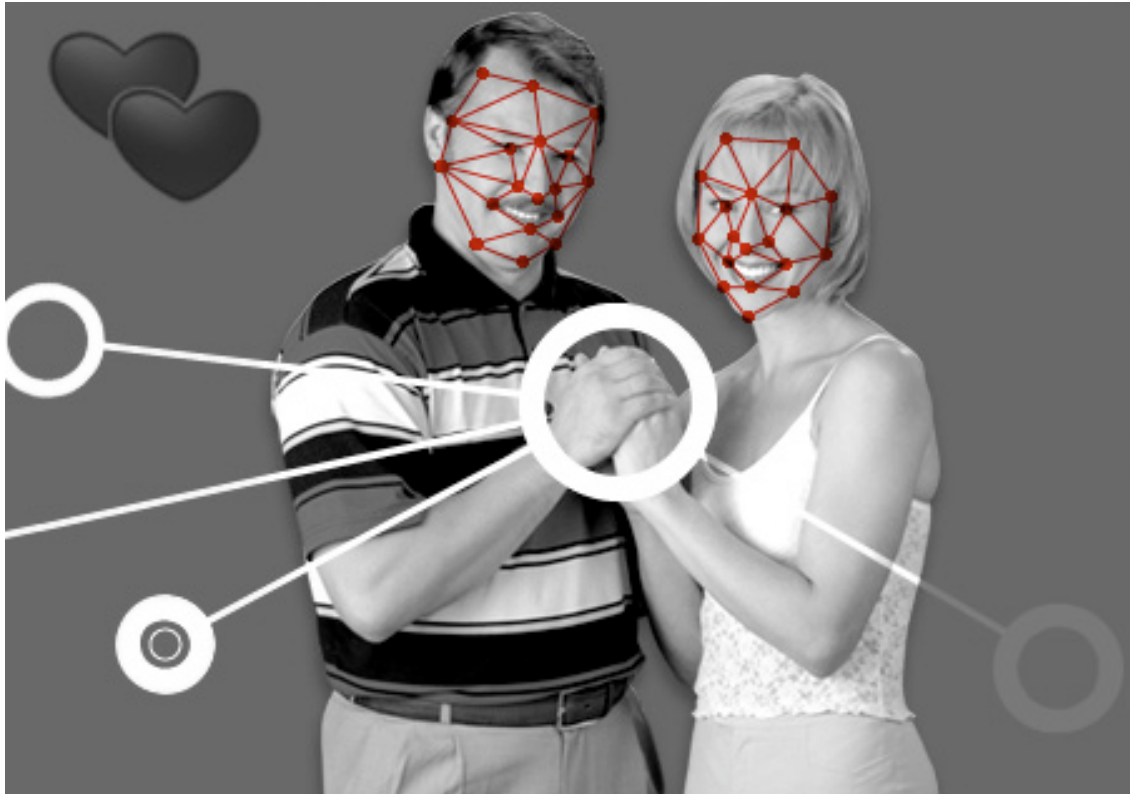


Image #1: Alessandro Ludovico, Paolo Cirio: “face2facebook”

“Stealing 1 million Facebook profiles, filtering them with face-recognition software, and then, posting them on a custom-made dating website, sorted by their facial expressions characteristics.”

<http://www.face-to-facebook.net/>



Image #2: Addie Wagenknecht and Stefan Hechenberger: asymmetric love #2

The installation >Asymmetric Love Nr. 2< by Addie Wagenknecht and Stefan Hechenberger was created to mimic a familiar and comfortable iconic baroque chandelier composed out of surveillance cameras.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/artisticbokeh/sets/72157634440642553/with/9190519391/>

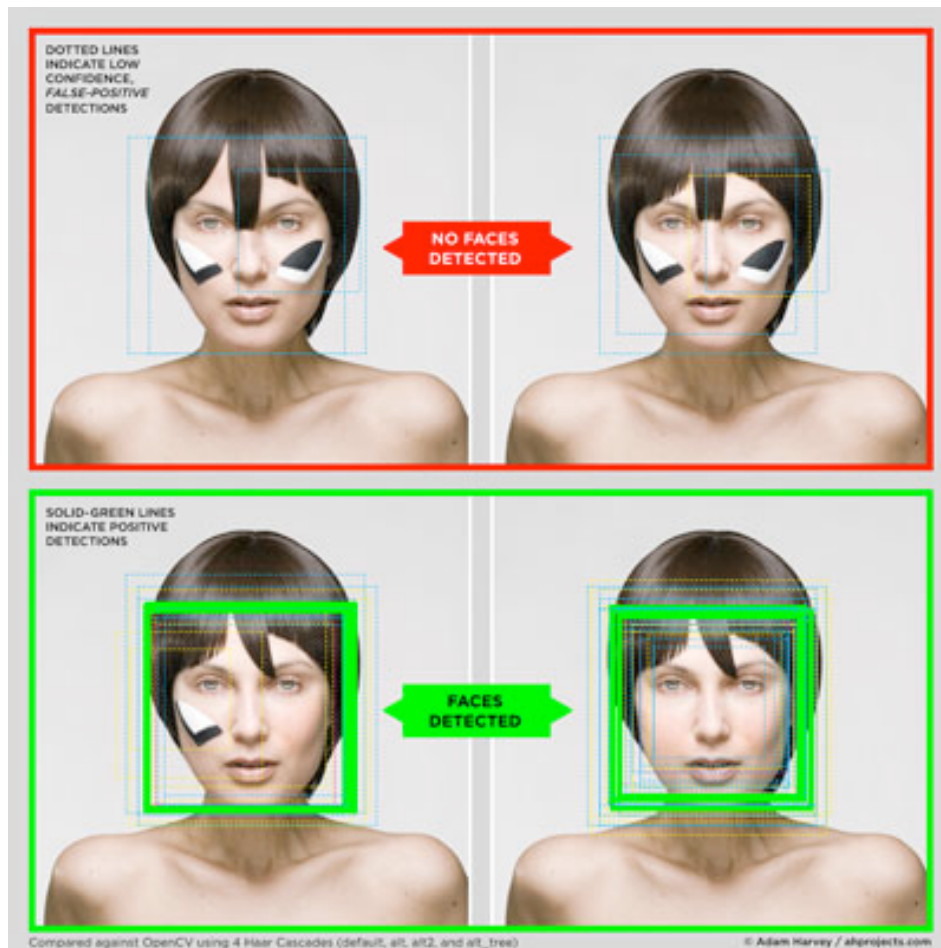


Image #3: Adam Harvey: CV Dazzle

<http://cvdazzle.com/>

CV Dazzle™ is camouflage from computer vision (CV). It is a form of expressive interference that combines makeup and hair styling (or other modifications) with face-detection thwarting designs. The name is derived from a type of camouflage used during WWI, called [Dazzle](#), which was used to break apart the gestalt-image of warships, making it hard to discern their directionality, size, and orientation. Likewise, the goal of CV Dazzle is to break apart the gestalt of a face, or object, and make it undetectable to computer vision algorithms, in particular face detection.





Image #4: KATSU: Status Update

[Mark Zuckerberg, Pummeled and Posterized](http://gizmodo.com/5993320/mark-zuckerberg-pummeled-and-posterized)

<http://gizmodo.com/5993320/mark-zuckerberg-pummeled-and-posterized>

*Citizens of the Internet just don't seem to like what Zuckerberg and co. are doing with our personal data and the insights gathered from things we say and like and share on Facebook. Any change—small or large—ignites a fury amongst the Internet that draws the virtual pitchforks and torches. With privacy as one of the key driving forces behind his latest creation, which went live last night in various parts of New York City, KATSU tells me his motivation for "Status Update" is all about personal data and the future (implied [sic] throughout).*



## **CV AND BIO: Matthias Tarasiewicz**

Matthias Tarasiewicz co-founded the artgroup 5super.net and the CODED CULTURES initiative (media arts festival and research platform). Being active as a digital bricoleur / coder, researcher and technology theorist since the last millenium, he is developing experimental media prototypes and creating projects on the intersections of media, arts, technology and science. Recent publications: Coded Cultures (Springer, 2011); Exploring Creative Emergences (5super.net, 2009). He is project lead of the "Artistic Technology Research LAB" at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, Austria. Recent projects include the cryptocurrency Bitcoin ("BitCoinCloud"), DIY-video (Artistic Bokeh Initiative) among mapping research methods of artistic production cultures.

Born 5.8.1979

- \* Coordinator Coded Cultures Festival of New Media Arts
- \* Board Member 5super.net incorporated society to promote, research, develop and interlink media, art and technology
- \* Researcher at the University of Applied Arts, Center for arts and knowledge- transfer. Project Lead "Artistic Technology Research"
- \* Board Lead of ArtisticBokeh: initiative to qualitatively explore, map and extend the electrosphere with parameters of artistic research and development.
- \*Member of the EMAC (european media arts cluster)

### **Academic**

- \* study of visual media arts and digital arts at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna (Master degree) Peter Weibel and Karel Dudesek
- \* study of architecture and computer science (Technical University Vienna)
- \* currently employed at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna as Project Lead

### **Experience**

- \* development, planning & organising of numerous artistic/technological projects as well as projects in the creative sector
- \* years of experience as independent journalist, blogger and new media designer
- \* years of international experience (Europe: Spain, Italy, Germany, UK, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary- Asia: Japan, China, Thailand, Indonesia and India; South America: Brazil)

### **Publications (selection)**

- \* Tarasiewicz, Matthias and Mirko Tobias Schäfer, 2013. Exit through the App Store. Revisiting Art on Mobile Devices, In Peter Weibel (ed.) App Art (forthcoming)
- \* Tarasiewicz, Matthias and Mirko Tobias Schäfer, 2013. Artistic Technology Research. Springer (forthcoming)
- \* »Artistic Technology Research« as [dispositif] and synergetic discipline for the agency of research and development in next (media) cultures "A Peer Reviewed Newspaper for BWPWAP", Transmediale Berlin & Aarhus University Denmark  
ISSN: 2245-7593 (PRINT) ISSN: 2245-7607
- \* Artistic Technology Research (World of the News Vol.01) peer-reviewed newspaper for in/compatible research, transmediale 2k+12, Berlin 2012

- \* Coded Cultures - The City as Interface, Editor, (Super.net, 2011)
- \* Coded Cultures - New Creative Practices out of Diversity, Edition Angewandte Springer Wien New York (Editor), 2011 <http://j.mp/codedbook>
- \* Transmediale 2011: Beitrag zur Kooperationsreihe Insecure Territories mit Michal Wlodkowski, Berlin 2011
- \* ISEA 2010 Katalog: Coded Cultures - Exchange Emergences, International Symposium for Electronic Arts 2010
- \* Coded Cultures - Exploring Creative Emergences, Eigenverlag (Super.net, 2009)
- \* Are you Game?: Playfulness - Beschreibung einer kontemporären Medienkunstpraxis, thegap 090, 2009
- \* Copy and Paste: Bio-Arts und Bio-Bending, thegap, 2009

### **Curatorial and artistic practice (selection)**

- \* Founder of the Group Super.net, 2003
- \* concept and development "MMM Moving Media Multiplier" (curated big-screen projection of "web-submitted video-art" Karlsplatz, Künstlerhaus Vienna, 2003)
- \* concept and development of "Coded Cultures - decoding digital culture" Exhibition, Symposium, Workshops (MuseumsQuartier Vienna, 2004)
- \* concept/production "21st CENTURY ART PRACTICES" (exhibition, medien.kunstlabor, Kunsthaus Graz, Austria)
- \* production of "Vizinhos - Brazilian Networked Arts" Exhibition (MQ Wien, 2006)
- \* concept and planning of Cuisine Digitale (2005-2006, 40 Exhibitions in MuseumsQuartier Wien)
- \* production and concept "Open Knowledge Architecture" (2005, MuseumsQuartier Vienna)
- \* concept and organisation of "Playfulness" - symposia and workshops of prototypical artistic practices in new media arts (2008, DAAL- Digital Arts und Architecture Lab, University of applied Arts)
- \* concept + curation "Coded Cultures - Exploring Creative Emergences", 2009 (Museum of Modern Arts, Vienna)
- \* concept and curation of "Coded Cultures - Japan", Tokyo/Yokohama 2009
- \* partner with ISEA 2010 (curation) "Coded Cultures - Exchange Emergences", ISEA Ruhr 2010
- \* panel "Critical Aspects of Media Arts in Japan and Europe", ISEA 2010
- \* "Insecure Territories" development of workshop&presentation formats, cooperation with Transmediale Berlin, 2011 \* Curator: Coded Cultures 2011: The City As Interface - new media arts festival, Vienna/Austria, 11/2011
- \* Artistic Bokeh Research +LAB (Hacker/New Media Space, MuseumsQuartier Vienna) 2012
- \* cooperation/Partner Transmediale 2012 (Kristoffer Gansing, Tatiana Bazzichelli) in/compatible research (panel and workshop), Artistic Bokeh Research (Interviews & experimental video production); Panel: Subcurationship Beyond New Media Arts
- \* Participation at the IFK Sommerakademie 2012 (IFK Summer Academy, [www.ifk.ac.at](http://www.ifk.ac.at))
- \* Curator and Designer of the Exhibition: Documentation of Artistic Research + Development & Mapping Artistic Technology, MuseumsQuartier Vienna (20.11.2012)

### **Artistic work and exhibitions (selection)**

- \* exhibition of the work "shoppink.org" (Generali Foundation Vienna, 2000)
- \* video "the solar box cooker" (Screening at Diagonale Film Festival 2000, Graz, Austria)
- \* exhibition of the video works "0rf" (Künstlerhaus Vienna khaus 2000)
- \* 0rf.at anti-monopoly - alternative television programme for Ars Electronica 2001, Linz, Austria
- \* video work and performance "bottleturning uwe kroeger" (tele(visions), Kunsthalle Wien, 2001)
- \* cooperation and web-concept for Christoph Schlingensief, enactment of "the church of fear": cntrcpy and Christoph Schlingensief (la biennale di Venezia, 2003)
- \* performance and screening "meine mutter der computer, mein vater der ordinator" (ADD-ON, temporary architecture in public space Wallensteinplatz, Vienna, 2005)
- \* physical computing installation "9am3", diploma at the Universität für angewandte Kunst, 2007
- \* 2012: BitCoinCloud, media art installation (concept, planning, development) with Damian Stewart, Max Gurreesch, (exhibition in Künstlerhaus Vienna, metamART - art and capital)
- \* 2012: Contaminate NYC Special Mention for BitCoinCloud (onehundreddays.us)

### **Products (selection)**

- \* production of the cd/vinyl "Amocco", Karate-Joe Records, 2002
- \* DVD production voteauction.com – „die aktion – the movie", DVD for ubermorgen.com, 2005
- \* concept and development "TV Station in a Box", Open Workflows for Open TV Stations, 2006 Okto.tv
- \* maintainer of the open-source wiki software "instiki", and rubyosx, (Ruby for Mac OS X), 2007
- \* concept and project leadership "indies workbench", Open-Tools für independent-producers and labels in austria, VTMÖ + AUME collecting society, 2007
- \* production/ cooperation with LBI media.arts.research: See This Sound; archive and text-engine for scientific publications and historical reprocessing of audiovisual media arts (technical concept and development; exhibition design in Lentos/Linz, Austria), 2009
- \* "basis.wien collector", project planning and head of development (contemporary arts database) basiswien, Austria, 2011