

Editorial

By Roberto Simanowski

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Dear readers,

Welcome to Dichtung-Digital 2/2003

This issue is the first issue co-produced and co-published with other online-journals. It is also the first issue devoted to a specific group of artists, entitling it Paris Connection. Finally, this issue is the first issue entirely made possible by sponsorship: dd 2/2003 is virtually owned by ZKM (Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany) which now and for the future provides all articles of this issue free to the net community.

Paris Connection considers the work of six fascinating French artists working with Macromedia Director. Some of these pieces are quite popular such as Nicolas Clauss' ballets, whose digital dancers and cello music can be choreographed by the user or Jean-Luc Lamarque's Pianographique, an interactive visual music instrument that one plays with the keyboard. Other, lesser known pieces are equally or even more interesting for their conceptual depth such as Antoine Schmitt's digital creatures, Nicolas Clauss' moving still life Mechanical Brushes, "a provisory goodbye to painting", or Frédéric Durieu's Puppettool where the user can morph animals into grotesque bodies. Or take Servovalve's audio-visual minimalism and Jean-Jacques Birgé's fascinating sound design for many of the pieces of Durieu, Clauss, and Schmitt.

Paris Connection introduces these six artists from Paris. It also discusses some examples of their work in detail and within a broader perspective, which takes other representatives of digital art into account as well as theoretical discussions on cyberculture and its predecessors in art history. The unifying element of these pieces may be that all are programmed with Director and that their authors all live in Paris as the title suggests. Another connection may be their specific approach to digital art: the combination of sophisticated programming, design and meaning. These pieces are of great audio-visual pleasure and still propose deeply philosophical questions about art, media, and life. It is a combination one often looks for in vain with respect to digital literature. Why this was to be expected, how digital art can be read, and, finally, to what extent the pure technical effect can be seen as the updated version of the "pure visual" the formal aesthetic tried to archive

a century ago, will be discussed in the introductions, interviews, reviews and theoretical contributions in this issue.

Roberto Simanowski

Berlin, April 19, 2003