Editorial

By Roberto Simanowski

No. 35 – 2005

Dear Readers

Do you remember how, in 2001, scholars announced the death of hypertext and the triumph of multimedia? Just at the moment when the masses became familiar with the new technology, the academic community dumped it for this very reason. But the masses would only have needed more support on how to live with hypertext, argues *Beat Suter* who takes us back in time and shows through "Proustian glasses" what hyperlinks can be about. The link and other non-verbal elements of hyperfictional narrative is also the subject of *Shuen-shing Lee* presenting a close reading of Stuart Moulthrop's "Hegirascope". His reference is Laurence Sterne's "Tristram Shandy", his conclusion: "Hegirascope" is "the most typical hypernovel in digital literature" as "Tristram Shandy" "the most typical novel in world literature." Another close reading is presented in *Thomas Dreher*'s article on Talan Memmott´s "Lexia to Perplexia", which Dreher calls a "hyperfiction combining icons, parts of codes resp. punctuation marks and neologisms via DHTML and Javascript"

Two artists who don't care about links at all are Young-hae Chang and Marc Voge. They tell stories in a linear way without even leaving the reader a chance to click. However, as *Hyun-Joo Yoo* points out in her interview with YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES there are a lot of other links: to concret poetry, literature as movie, life and speed, and even sex in Korea. Concerned with alternative ways of digital poetry are also two authors who speak about John Cayley's work. *Cayley* himself discusses three examples of writing on complex surfaces including his three-dimensional work in Brown University VR Cave. *Marie Engberg* talks about concepts of surface and depth in relation to writing and explains "literal morphing" with respect to Cayley's riverIsland.

Nicolas Clauss' "Art if I want" presents a completely different form of art: a pedagogical and artistic documentary of the perception of art. Clauss discussed with eight teenagers the work of several modern artists and turned the result in his own work of art. *Laura Borràs Castanyer* takes a closer look at this very complex work and reveals tons of important details.

Games may be the most popular and enjoyable genre of digital art. However, the scene sometimes fails to connect games studies with literary studies. *Karin Wenz* holds, with Klaus Walter against Markku Eskelinen, that we must not dismiss

narrative sequences in digital games as a mere additional gift-wrapping for they too require a commitment from the player: an interactive and dynamic process of interpretation. The last hot thing in games is art games: The modding of a game for artistic purpose. You can't play it the way it was intended. It's not about winning anymore but about thinking. There are political and aesthetic art games, as *Kristine Ploug* shows in her survey. You can even create drawings out of games as *Thomas Petersen* knows from his interview with Alison Mealey.

If game art is a new art genre of the 21st century another one is mapping art. One artist in this field is George Legrady whose project "Making Visible the Invisible" visualizes the circulation of books and media at the Seattle Public Library. This piece may be called a sociological study about reading habits. Can it be called art as well? Is it just a revelation and "beautification" of data or does it trigger a reflection one may expect from art? *Roberto Simanowski* discussed this with George Legrady. The general debate of mapping as art includes questions about database and the unity of content and form. *Matthew LeMay* presents his view on these matters and takes issue with Lev Manovich's theorization of the database, which, in his mind, reduces multiple and complex database forms into simple collections of items and does not account for the complex interrelations between data and the database it inhabits.

Due to the overload with work in an academic environment there are, as you may have noticed, only two issues of dichtung-digital in 2005. This possibly will be the amount of issues I am able to produce a year in the future. However, there are always special events and guest editors and thus there will be special issues too. I hope you enjoy the articles this issue presents and stay tuned.

Roberto Simanowski, Providence, December 23, 2005