
La_Fabrique

1999-2001

Project by fabric | ch

Client: CANAL+ (Paris, FR)

Location: Internet

Workshop @ CAAD / ETHZ (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zürich)

Workshop @ ECAL (University of Art and Design, Lausanne)

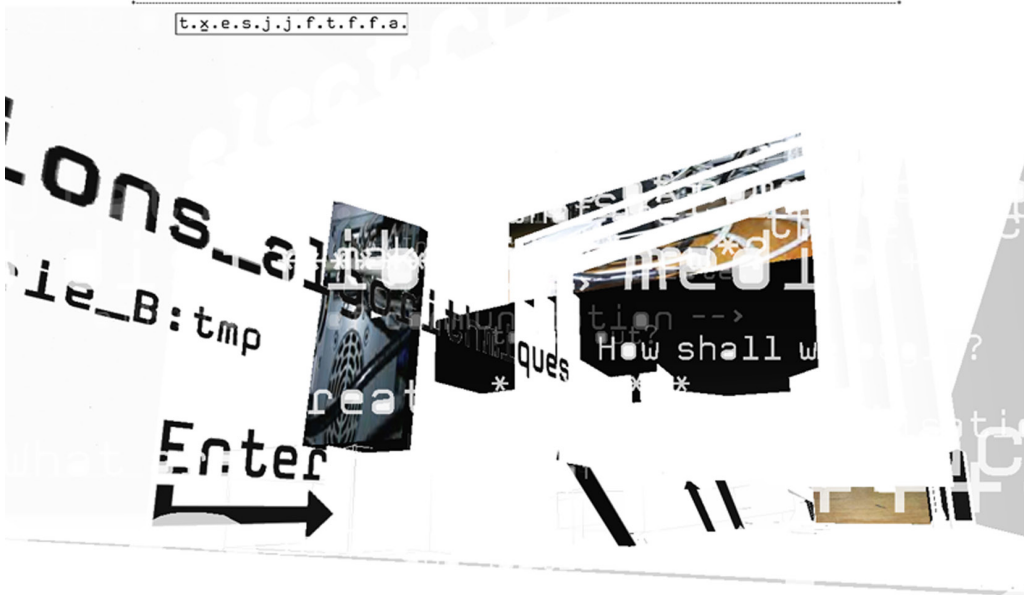
Exhibited during Web3D RoundUp 2000 (Monterey, USA), ISEA 2000 (Paris, FR), Art Gallery Siggraph 2000 (New Orleans, USA), Numer 2002 in Beaubourg (Paris, FR), Web3D Art 2003 (Los Angeles, USA), ICA (London, UK), Siggraph Art Gallery 2010

- 3D online museum
- Museum installed in a multiplayer, game-like environment (MMO, "2nd World" of Canal+ between 1997-2001)
- Shared creations, with selected artists and students, around the "Recombinant Realities" paradigm
- Prospective collaborative study



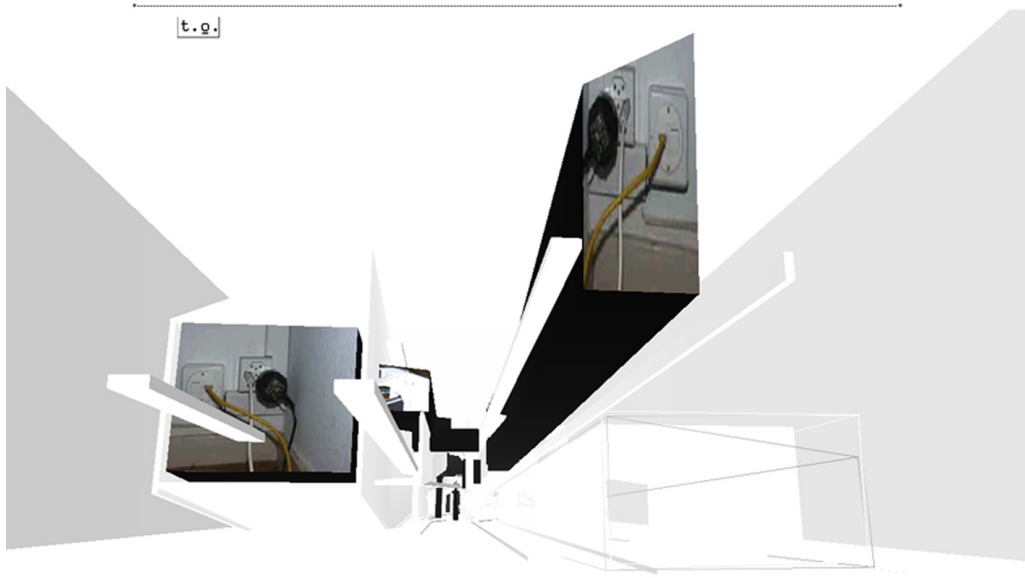
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[Img. 1]

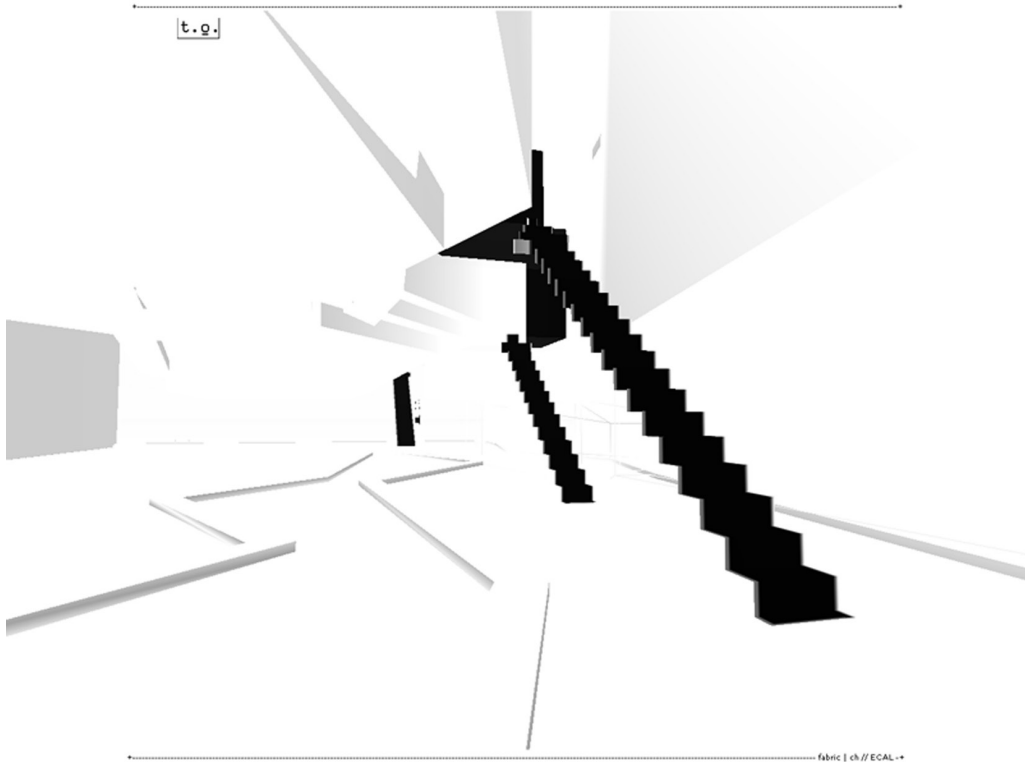


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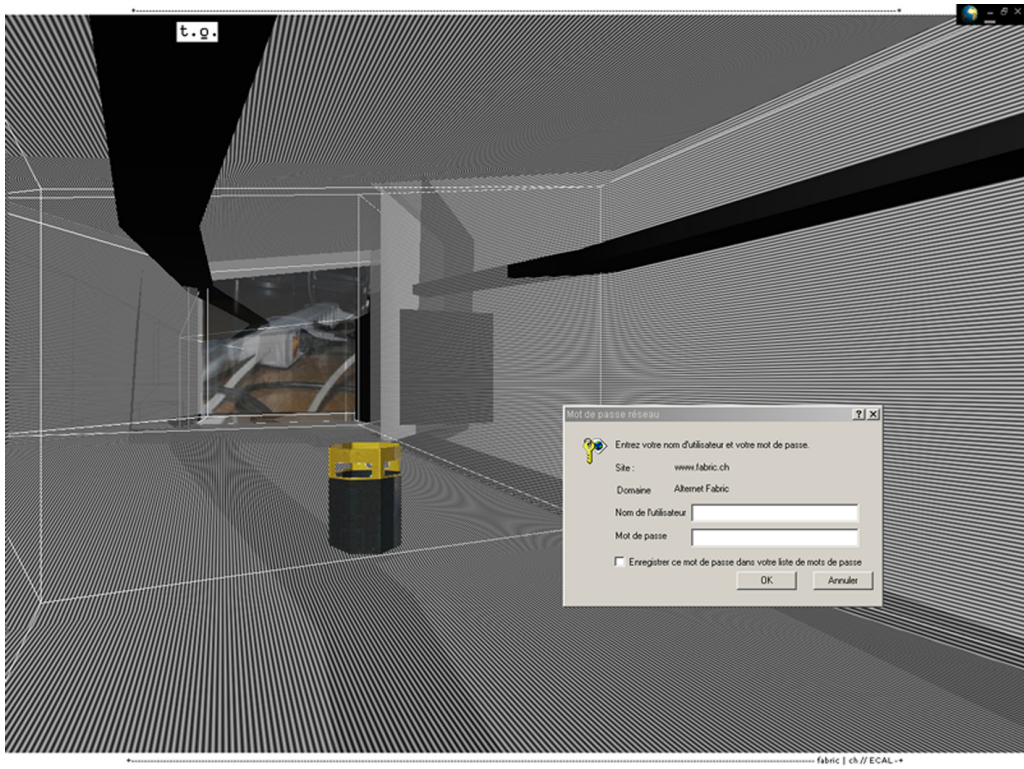
[Img. 2]



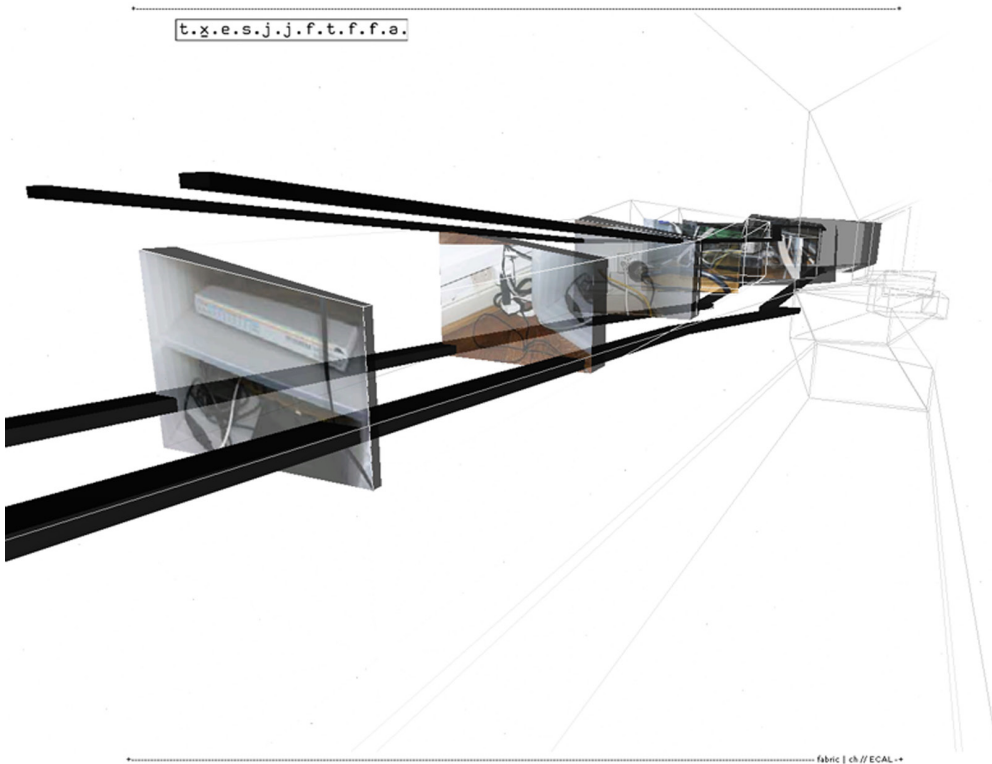
[Img. 3]



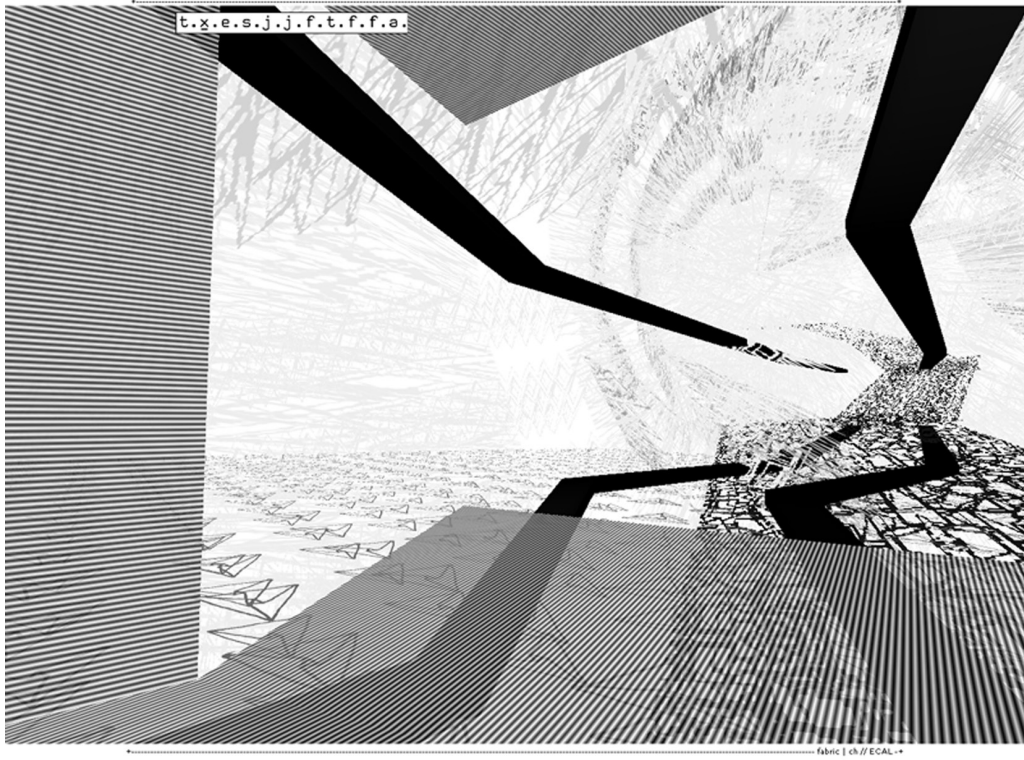
[Img. 4]



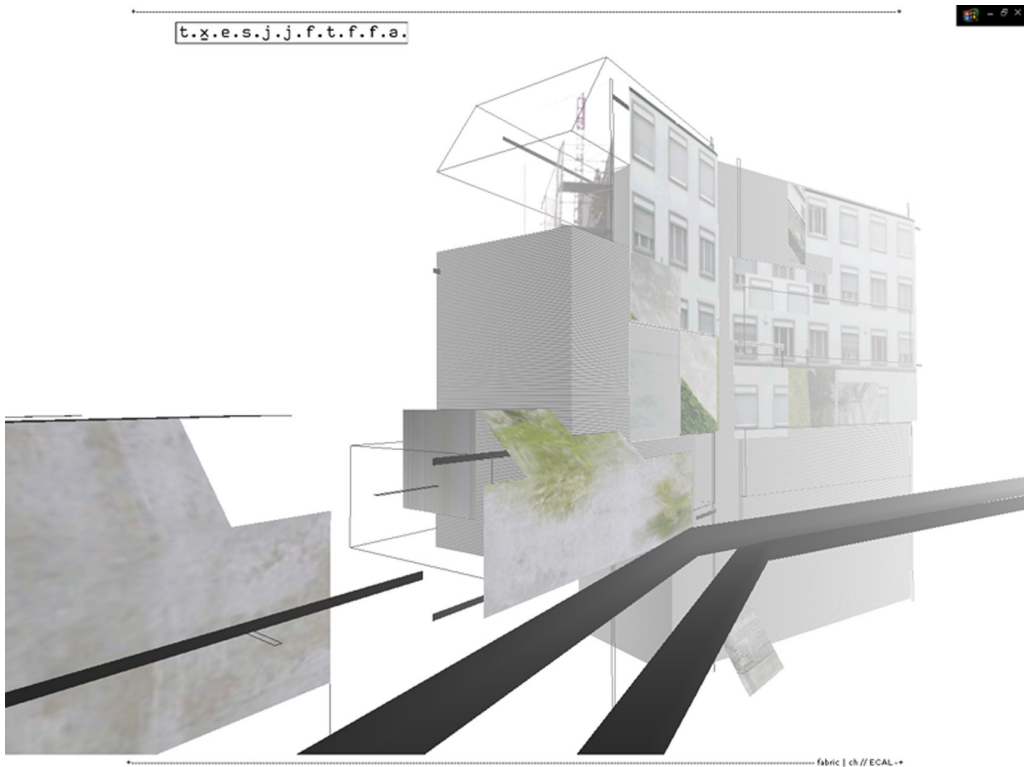
[Img. 5]



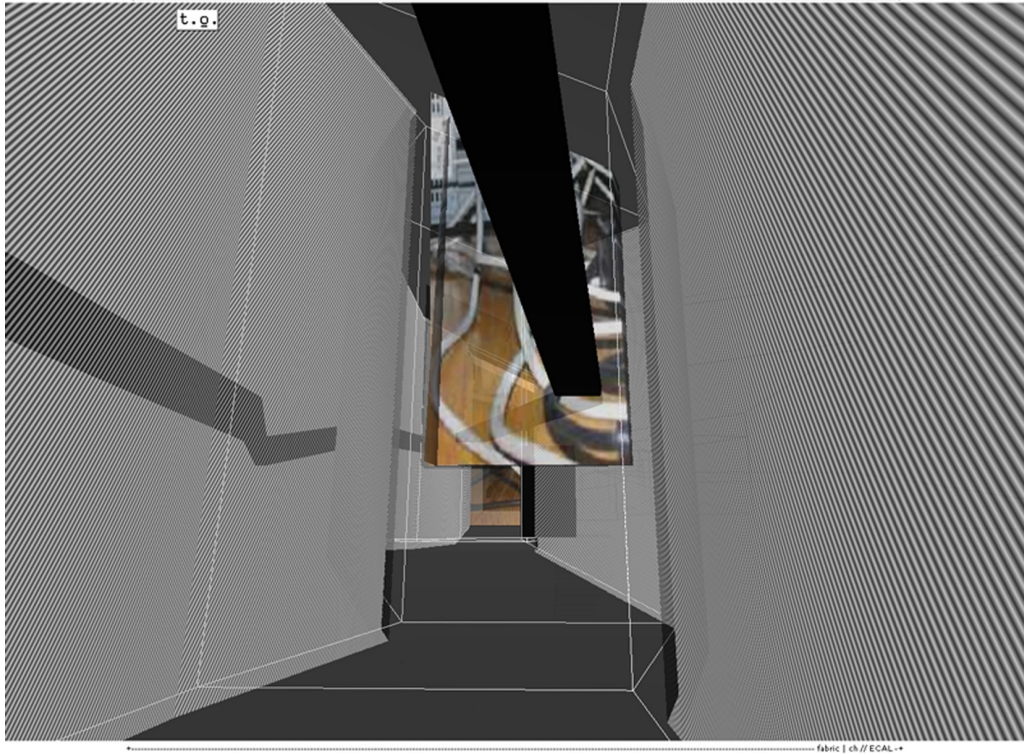
[Img. 6]



[Img. 7]



[Img. 8]



[Img. 9]

Image captions:

- [Img. 1] Main access to the gallery: a space in between white flatness and volume, written the-
matics of the exhibition floating.
- [Img. 2] Thematic texts (project's subject for the workshop) floating on the screen at the en-
trance of the online gallery.
- [Img. 3] The back side view of the same structure.
- [Img. 4] Access points to the exhibition spaces: in between arrows and stairs.
- [Img. 5] Inside n°1: a limited intervention in this part of the gallery and a user/password require-
ment to access the hidden part / work by Emilie Renault.
- [Img. 6] Inside n°2: an unmodified part of the space with a real space image sequence.
- [Img. 7] Somewhere in the space of La_Fabrique / work by Jérôme Rigaud.
- [Img. 8] Somewhere else into the space of La_Fabrique / work by Franz Hoffman.
- [Img. 9] Inside n°3: another unmodified part of the space.

Txt

La_Fabrique (1999)

A certain conception of the network will lay in the background during the two-year-long creation process for the electronic gallery/file system La_Fabrique. The involved artists and students may take a position on this conception. The precepts are the following: the network and the digital spaces represent the emergence of a mutating reality. This reality is a deformed expression, an accelerated evolution of our society and our physical world. A (new) world submitted to near natural and neo-Darwinian processes of evolution and (technological) auto-selection, inside of which the values are melted and mixed (human, nature, machine, and information). It is, in fact, a world that becomes more and more complex and that informs itself: a mutating reality or a recombinant reality.¹

We could describe this as a new layer (of information: the noosphere²), that adds itself to the already existing one, the biosphere.

Context

New or transformed landscapes and territories are emerging. Modified architectures are emerging as well, along with new social relations and transformed forms of communication. Our physical body and identity, the relations we have with the outside world, human beings, machines, things are modified, altered.

Background

We are here close to the basics of the information theory by Claude Shannon³ and Norbert Wiener's writings on the cybernetic.⁴ These theories describe physical and energy relations between nature and machine, man and machine and, in particular, man and computer. These theories consider everything as information/entropy, even man.

The notion of energy as well as information exchanges between the physical world and machine world (in our case, computers) will interest us in thermodynamics.⁵ These scientific and philosophical theories and essays, these links, could serve as a theoretical background to the exhibition as well as for the elaboration of the project. The mailing list that we will set up during the elaboration phase of each exhibit will be used, hopefully, as an exchange area between the people involved.

¹ <http://www.google.com/search?q=recombinant+reality>

² See P. Th. de Chardin and Vladimir Vernadski.

³ <http://ink.yahoo.com/bin/query?p=%2Binformation+%2Btheory+%2Bshannon>

⁴ <http://ink.yahoo.com/bin/query?p=%2Bcybernetics+%2Btheory+%2Bwiener>

⁵ See, i.e., J. de Rosnay, in L'homme symbiotique, ed. Seuil, Paris 1995 or Le macroscopie. ed Seuil, Paris 1992 and also <http://194.199.143.5/derosnay>

Intentions

As a project that will find its main context and "landscape" implanted into a chat room and an MMOG, we wish to stay really anchored into what constitutes the main substances of the web: interactivity, interfaces, images, sounds, lights, pixels, bits, programs, ... Displaying galleries of paintings or sculptures in 3D which are the immediate and literal transcription / (bad) representation of a pre-existing reality is of no real interest in our eyes.

The gallery / file system is looking to create "actual and discursive thinking," a chat and/or a polemic exchange around the domain of electronic and networked art-work/architecture.

Recombinant Reality

Note: recombinant is a biological term; it describes a genetically modified organism or cell.

Recombinant reality: the term commits us to look at the binary worlds as a digitally transformed reality, recombined, mixed and manipulated. A kind of electronic extension of our reality with which information exchanges are continuously going on - i.e., the 2nd World of Canal+⁶ could be already considered as a "mutant," a recombinant Paris, even if, in this case, the types of exchanges between Paris and Virtual Paris are limited.

Recombinant reality: the term lets us think that an evolution is going on that will bring us to an unknown place. In this process, the constituent matters will interest us as much as the process itself. In fact, "matter" is part of the process, and we will be interested in the light transportation, screen emissions, consumed energy and electromagnetic waves that are necessary to the life of the global information system. We will be interested as well in the amount of information that the system will return. This material, or physical side of the recombinant reality roots it surprisingly in a strong manner to our sensitive world. Like light or sound waves, there are now a large amount of electromagnetic waves dedicated to carrying human- or machine-based information.

In summary, we will think with the artists as much on the semantic side as on the material one of the Recombinant Reality during this first year (La_Fabrique00) of the digital exhibitions.

Architecture

The gallery / file system, La_Fabrique, consists of three different and distinct spaces/file systems. In principle, two of them don't evolve. The third one, dedicated to temporary exhibitions, evolves for each new exhibition depending on the themes. According to the needs of Canal+, these three distinct spaces/file systems are dedicated to the following "functionalities": an access street-hall, a gallery dedicated to temporary exhibitions (modified for each exhibit) and a link gallery giving access to some online works of the invited artists.

Spaces

- Access: the access street-hall to the electronic gallery/file system. Maybe one or two permanent electronic artworks will be displayed. There will be "switch nodes" on top of the stairs/arrows to go directly in the gallery/file of each exhibiting group.
- Thematic gallery: the temporary thematic rooms are for displaying the works of professional artists. Each creator will have the benefit of up to 250K gzipped of

⁶ <http://www.cplus.fr/lab> -- no longer accessible.

disc space (including everything - sounds, environment, work, textures, ... - the gzip format compresses approximately by a 1/3 factor the ASCII or WRL files). Of course, in this case, less will be more ...

Each artist gets his own file/room/world in which to produce his work. This part is a fragment of the whole gallery/file system and/or a copy/paste of another file.

The way to go from one artist's room to another will be managed via "doors/boxes/switches" and "switch nodes," maybe Level Of Details. Five to eight artists will exhibit their works during each exhibition in this space.

— Urls' gallery: the link room, a room in which we will find links to some of the artists' online works and maybe as well to some online theoretical references.

Process(-es)

Fragments (cut parts of gallery A, cut and pastes of those different parts to create the right number of files corresponding to the number of artists) of the gallery/file system are given to the artists so that they can produce in it/with it/against it their work of electronic art/architecture.

At the end of the process of creation, where a strange/accomplice relation between electronic artworks and gallery/file system might emerge, fabric | ch will collect all the pieces/files to produce the final file.

Some points of connection between the different parts of the gallery/file system cannot move or be renamed because they mark the way to go from one file to another. These parts are being told to the artists.

Each part of the gallery/file system received by each artist could be made of geometries, sounds, textures, links, lights, texts, ... These data; their hierarchies, real and virtual; the way they appear on the hard disk and their relation to the complete gallery/file system constitute the context of intervention.

The overall process of the La_Fabrique experiment will consist of four steps (steps 00, 10, 01 and 11).⁷ These four exhibitions will take place between the years 2000 and 2001 to map the creative situation within the field of digital arts, architecture and media design.

fabric | ch, June 1999

⁷ Note inserted afterwards: La_Fabrique11 has never been produced due to the collapse of the "Dot-com bubble" in early 2000. The 2nd World of Canal+ was closed short after that.

Txt

La_Fabrique10 / Algorithmic Manipulations, 2001

With the students of MID-ECAL, Dpt. of Visual Communication & Prof. Patrick Keller

Manipulations algorithmiques

" (...). In contrast, the computer media revolution affects all stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulation, storage, and distribution; it also affects all types of media -- texts, still images, moving images, sound and spatial constructions. How shall we begin to map out the effects of this fundamental shift? What are the ways in which the use of computers to record, store, create, and distribute media makes it "new"? "

Lev Manovitch, The Language of New Media, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001, p. 19-20.

Manipulations algorithmiques

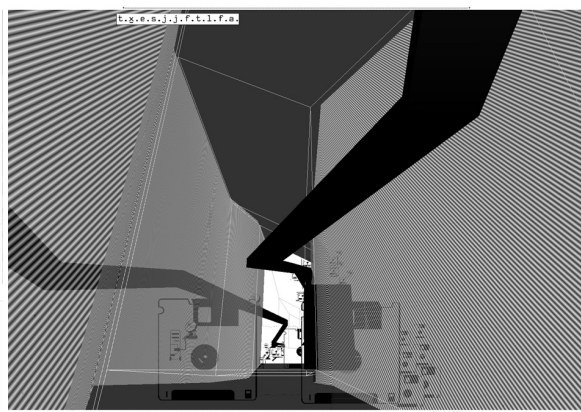
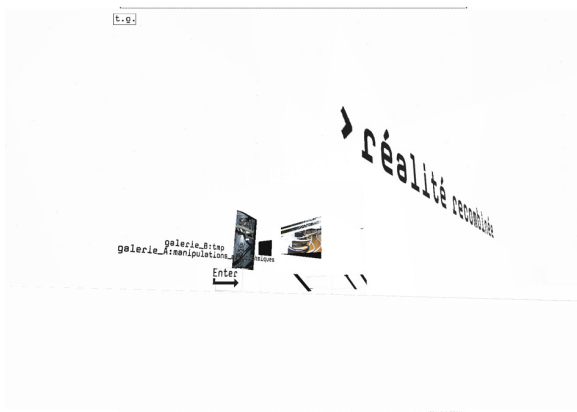
Dans ce qui (peut-être) constitue une révolution, selon les termes de Lev Manovitch, 4 mots semblent jouer un rôle fondamental : l'ordinateur, la digitalisation, la programmation et les algorithmes. La digitalisation du signe a fait passer celui-ci d'un statut physique (sur support matériel, figé) à un statut binaire (décrit par des nombres - 0 et 1) et dès lors manipulable par réorganisation et permutation de ces mêmes nombres. Le signe peut donc être décrit de manière mathématique, programmé et surtout manipulé par un ensemble de règles opératoires propres à un calcul (un algorithme). Cela peut s'effectuer durant un laps de temps, ou immédiatement, en temps réel. Le signe est devenu littéralement évolutif.

Dans le cadre de l'univers digital en trois dimensions de La_Fabrique et de son "exposition virtuelle", nous vous proposons d'expérimenter et d'exposer cette manipulation, de la mener un pas plus loin : faire muter la 2d vers la 3d, le réel vers le virtuel ou encore le physique vers le binaire.

Autour de cette problématique de la "manipulation algorithmique", vous devrez investir une des "pièces d'exposition" de La_Fabrique. L'environnement de base fourni par cet espace virtuel 3D devra alors être lu, analysé puis modifié par vous-même et par votre projet.

(...)

fabric | ch, Lausanne, October 2001



http://www.fabric.ch/La_Fabrique10

With: ECAL-MID, Prof. Patrick Keller & Students: Emilie Renault, Stéphane Perroud, Jérôme Rigaud, Franz Hoffman, Thomas Eberwein, Laurent Emmenegger.

Txt

La_Fabrique01 / Recombinants Interiors, 2000

With the students of CAAD-ETHZ & Prof. Maia Engeli

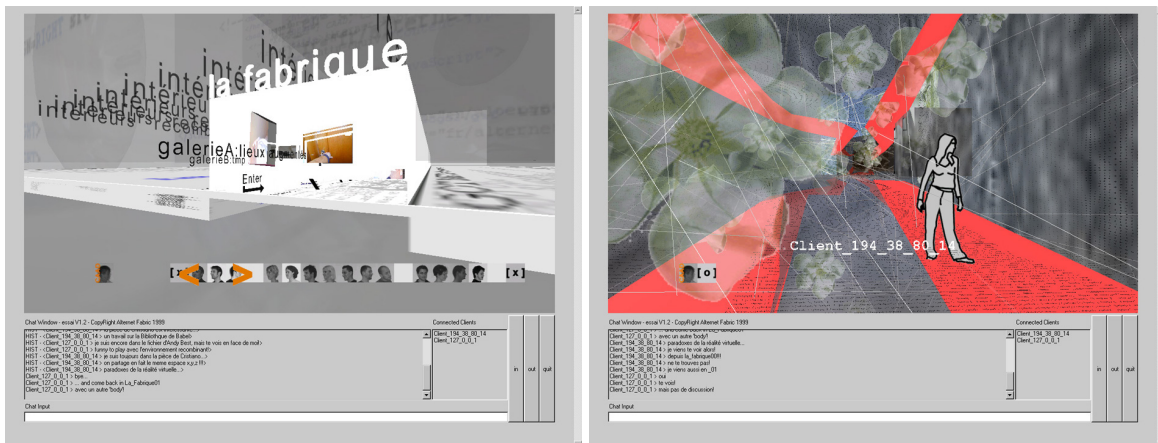
"Intérieurs recombinaants"

Information reality or electronic reality infiltrates the pre-existing and physical one, the sensitive world, and vice versa. An information process is going on. A change seems to happen in our living. The inside space(s) finds its/their expansion(s) and extension(s) on the networks as well as in the real time virtual spaces/files systems. Seen from the data side, these extensions can be considered as an electronic prosthesis of our built environment. Or maybe the physical environment can be considered as a prosthesis to the electronic world.... Those spaces can also be seen as 'augmented architecture' or interfaces between themselves and the digitally networked world. The informed extensions and the displacement of spaces into virtual/informed environments lead us to new/altered types of contexts and situations. Imbricated/deformed spaces, mixed realities, augmented realities and informed architecture: the space (inside, outside) is getting more complex and is certainly sometimes totally paradoxical (collapse of situations, distances, time, seasons, ...) As a result, these electronic extensions/prostheses inform and transform the physical world in return: it might be an information process that goes in a circle.

Influences

Telepresence, teleworking, shared work or creation, 3D collaborative space, digital communities, mailing lists and forums, chat and 3D chat, private rooms, online sex and e-commerce, 'voyeur' cams and live cams, telepresence, distant learning, and so on.

fabric | ch, Lausanne, March 2000



http://www.fabric.ch/La_Fabrique01

With: ETHZ-CAAD, Prof. Maia Engeli, Prof. Andrew Vande Moere and students Bence Szerdahelyi & Oliver Schwartz, Natalie Strohmaier, Lucas Elmiger, Maïke Schneider, Sigrun Gudjonsdottir, Ben Hendriksen, Jan Gloeckner, Nick Thanasis, Dimitri Kaden, Adrienne Fonys, Giovanni Mammone.

Txt

La_Fabrique00 / Digital Prosthesis, 1999

With the artists

Digital Prosthesis

The body seems today to have reached its limits, and we can see several attempts that try to improve it or to duplicate it (clone). From the "doctor & sportsman" duet to the man genetically modified through the "man-machine," everything leads us to think that a mutation is ahead. Tackle the notion of the extension/reduction of the reality in the electronic universe. New prosthesis for space and body. Humans wishing to extend and modify the functionalities of one's body understood as a mixing of man and machine in the binary and information universe.

Influences

Avatars, mutation, exoskeleton, mixed-media spaces, computed and genetic manipulations, information manipulation and manipulated reality, man-machine interfaces, implants, softbots, sportive/doctors, data suits, I.A., robots and diverse prosthesis.

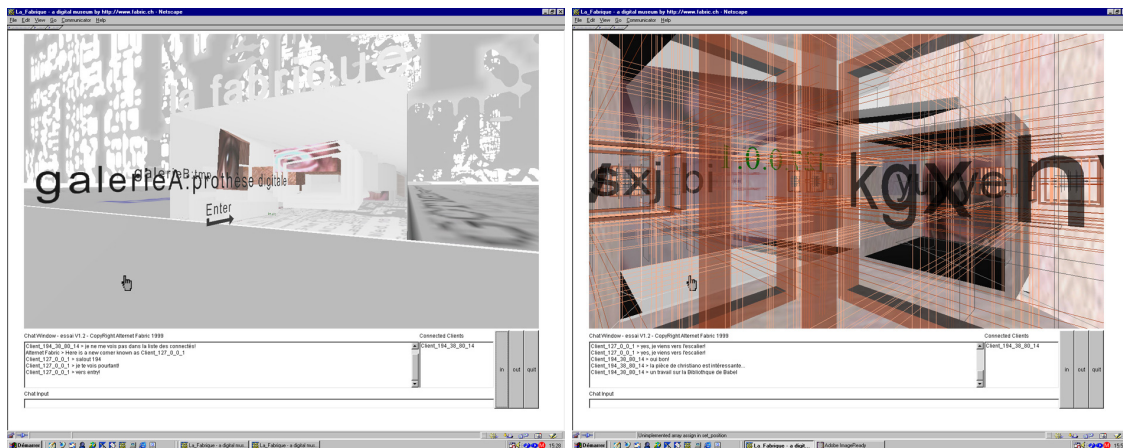
Readings

La révolution biolithique, H. Kempf, éd. Albin Michel Sciences, Paris 1998

Babylon babies, M. G. Dantec, éd. Gallimard, coll. La Noire, Paris 1999

Les particules élémentaires, M. Houellebecq, éd. Flammarion, Paris 1998

fabric | ch, Lausanne, June 1999



http://www.fabric.ch/La_Fabrique00

With: Andy Best, Cristiano Bianchi, Jacques Perconte, Maurice Clifford, Patrick Keller & Christian Bab-ski, Steve Guynup, Victoria Vesna & Craig Brown.

Contact

fabric | ch (97-26)

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