
Electroscape 002

2002-2003

Project by fabric | ch (the project evolved into MIX-m.org in 2005)

Funding: Swiss Federal Office for Cultural Affairs (CH), Centre pour l'Image Contemporaine (CIC), Genève (CH)

Locations: Internet, Geneva (CH)

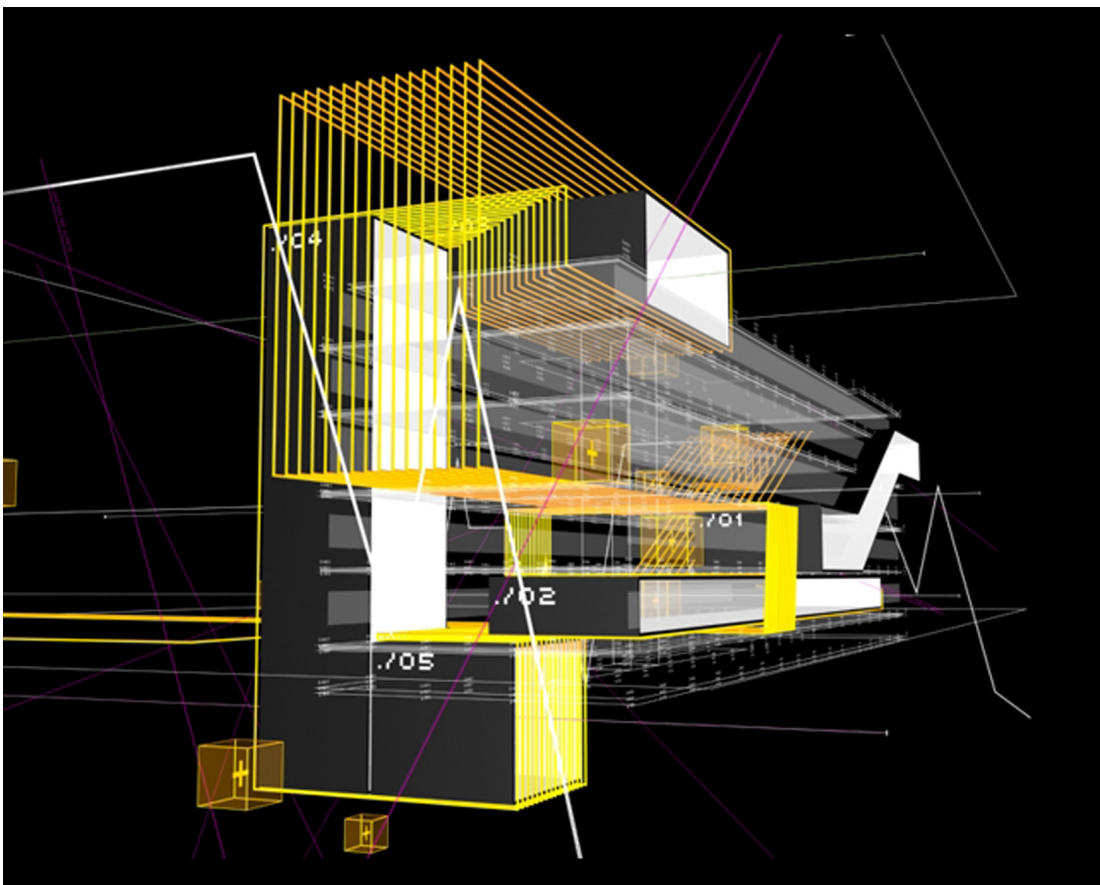
Exhibited during "Version habitable" (Version biennale, Geneva, CH) at MAMCO, Geneva (CH)

<http://www.electroscape.org/002>

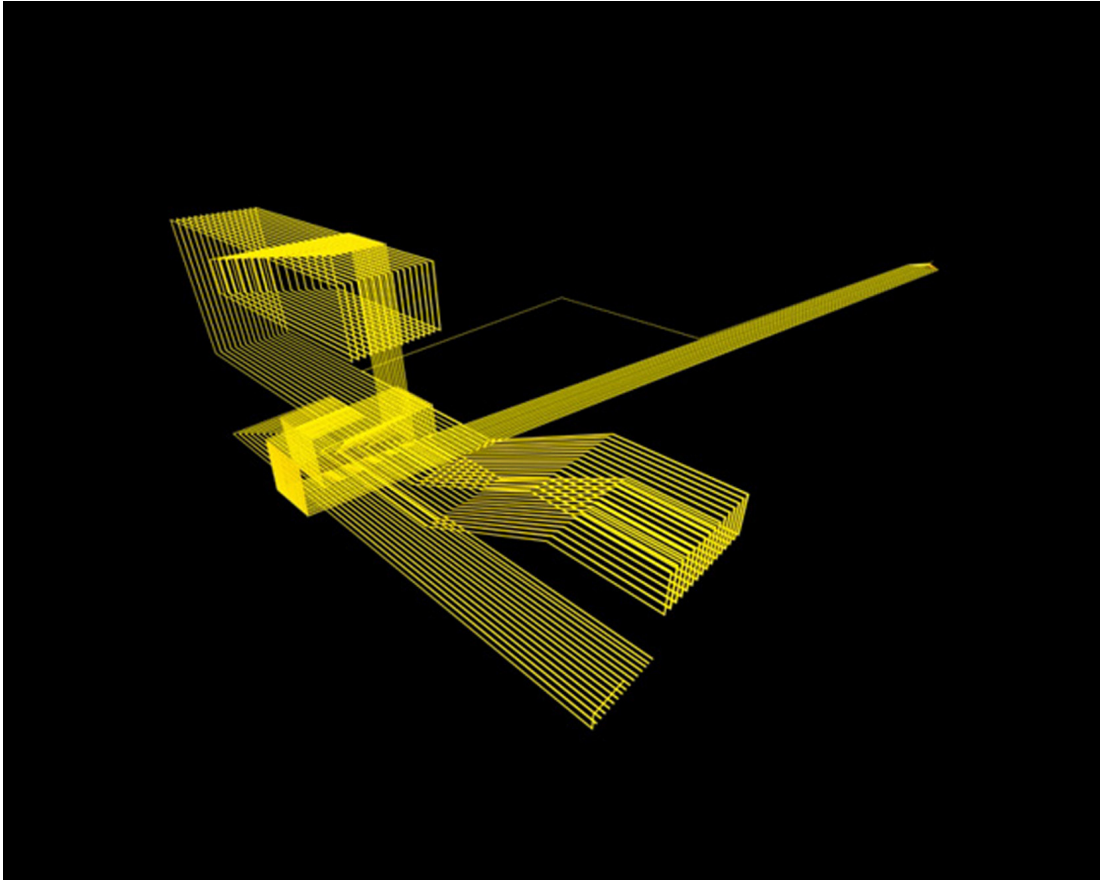
- Digital extension to MAMCO (Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art, Geneva)
 - Physical & digital museum
 - Information flow into architecture and artificial lights
 - Combined space
-
- Installation by artist Heimo Zobernig



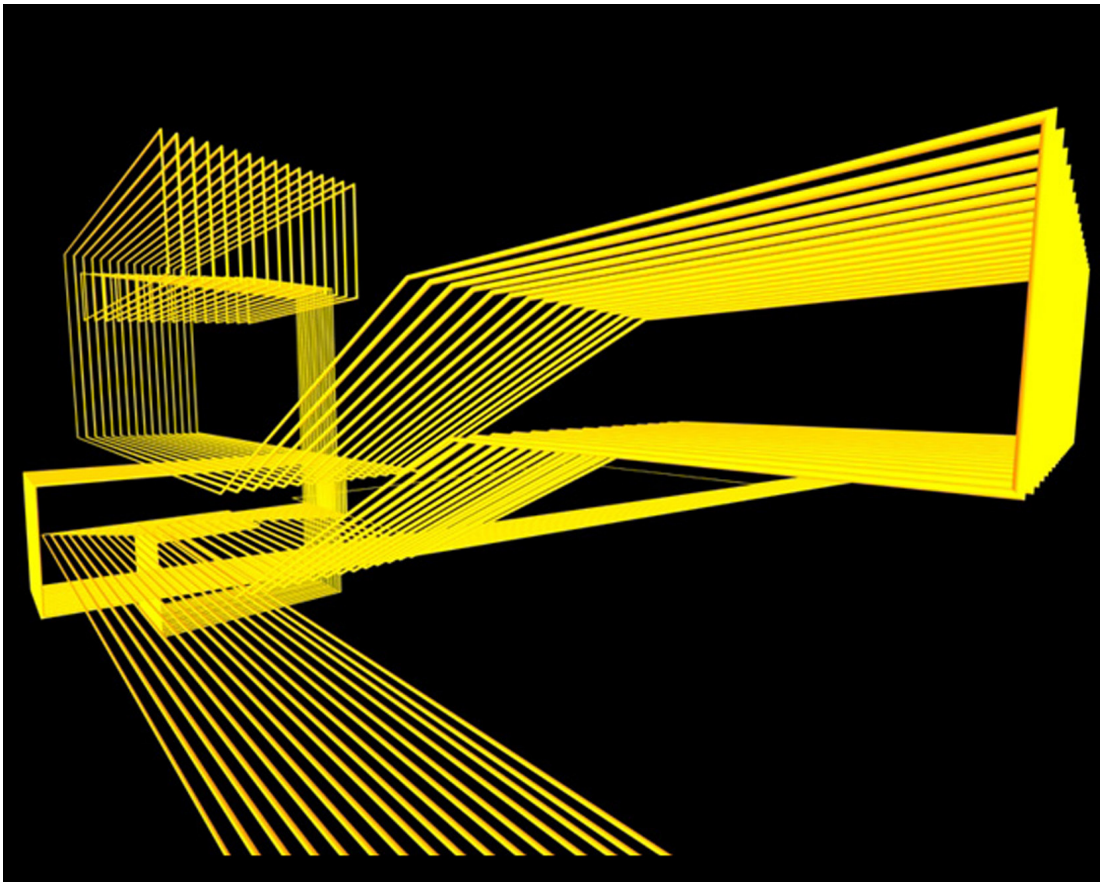
[Img. 1]



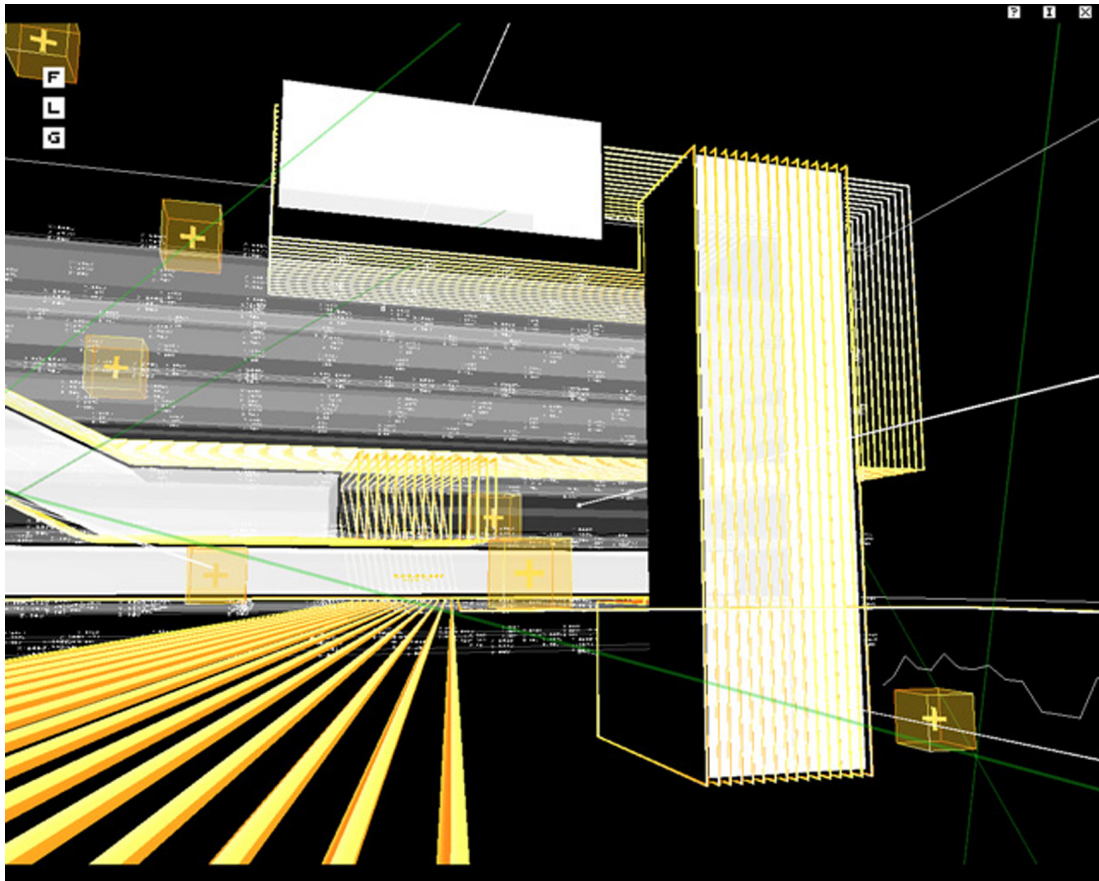
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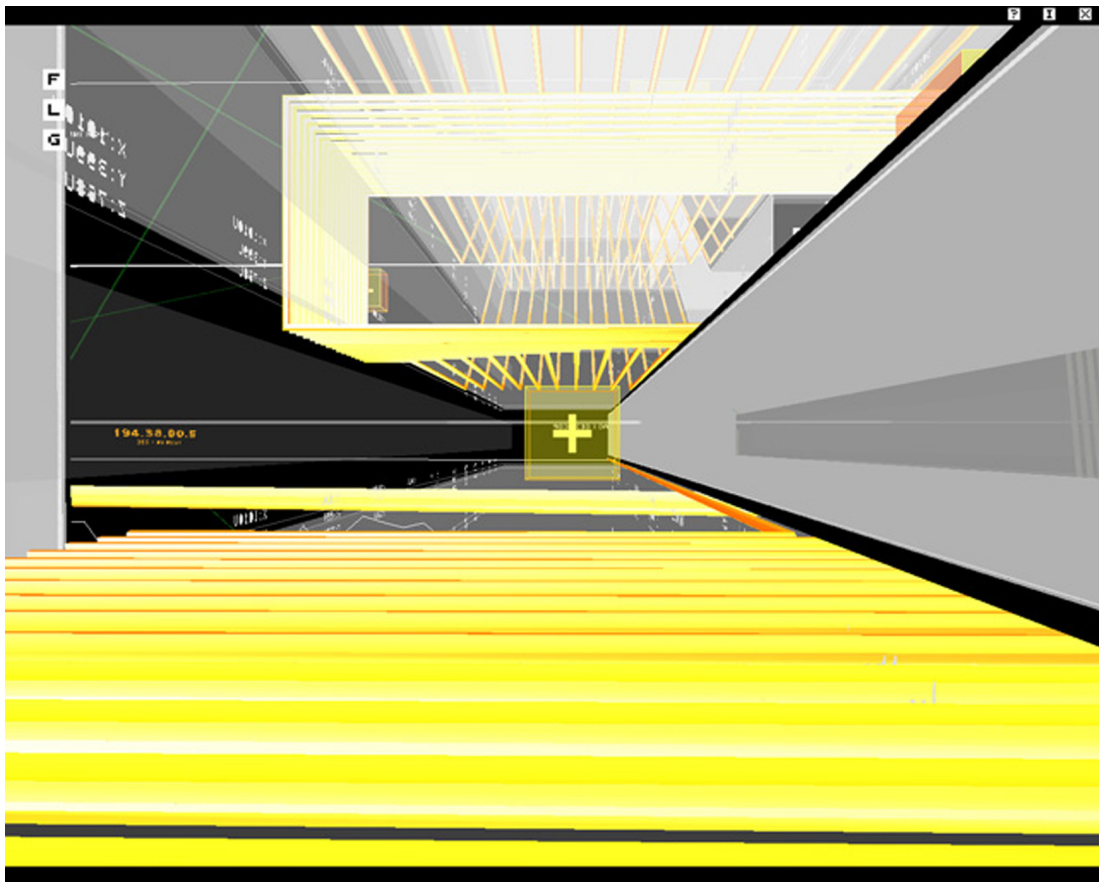
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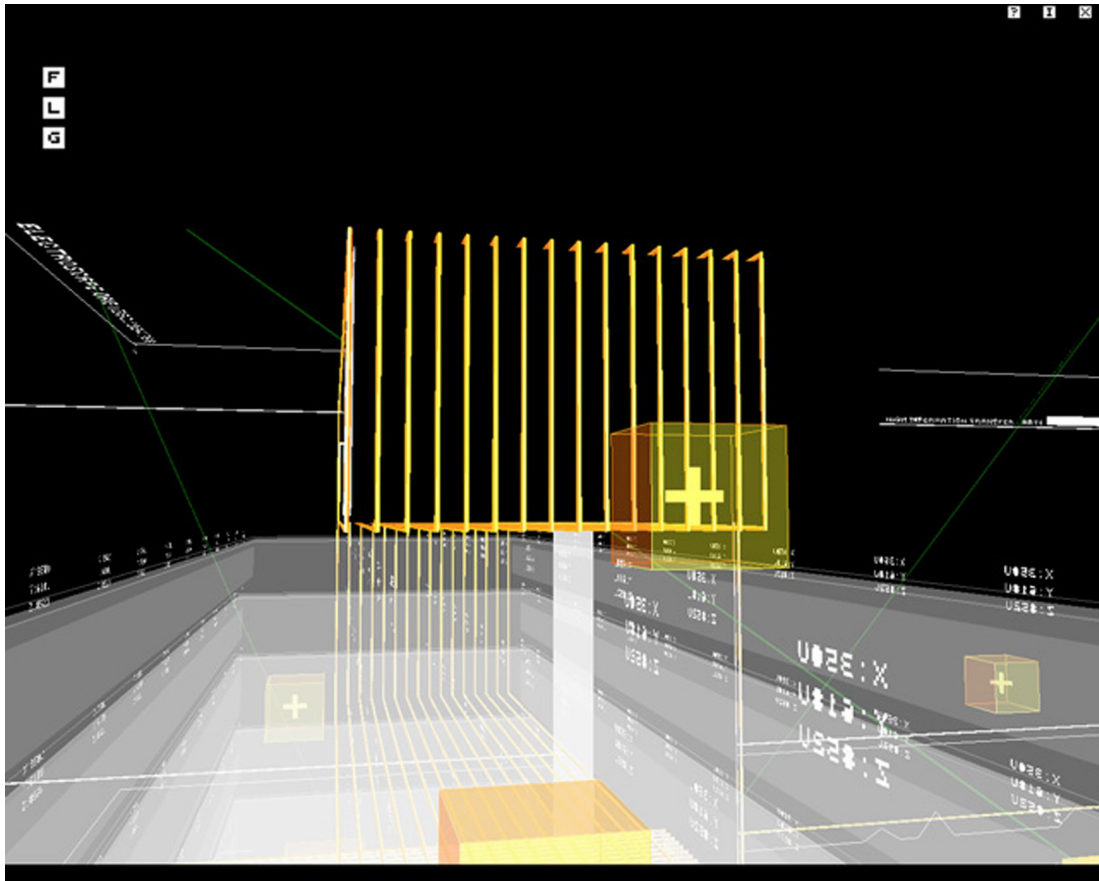
[Img. 4]



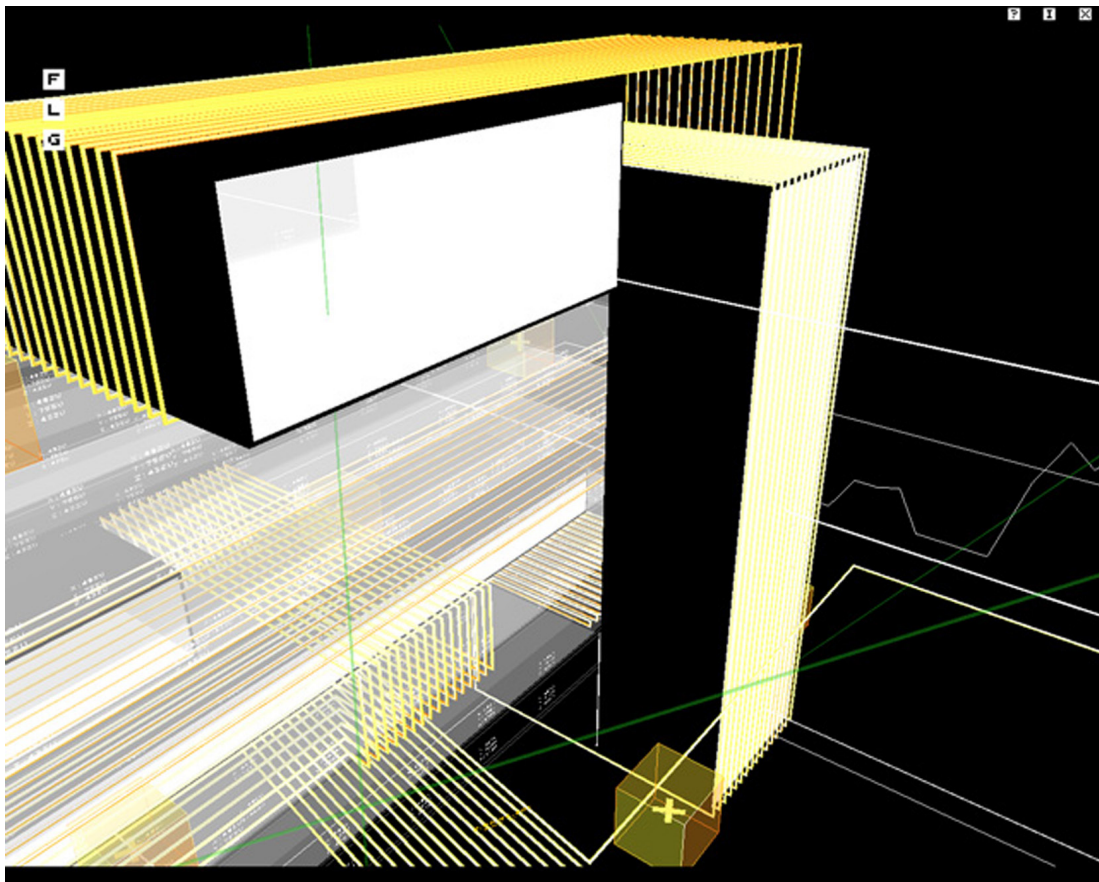
[Img. 7]



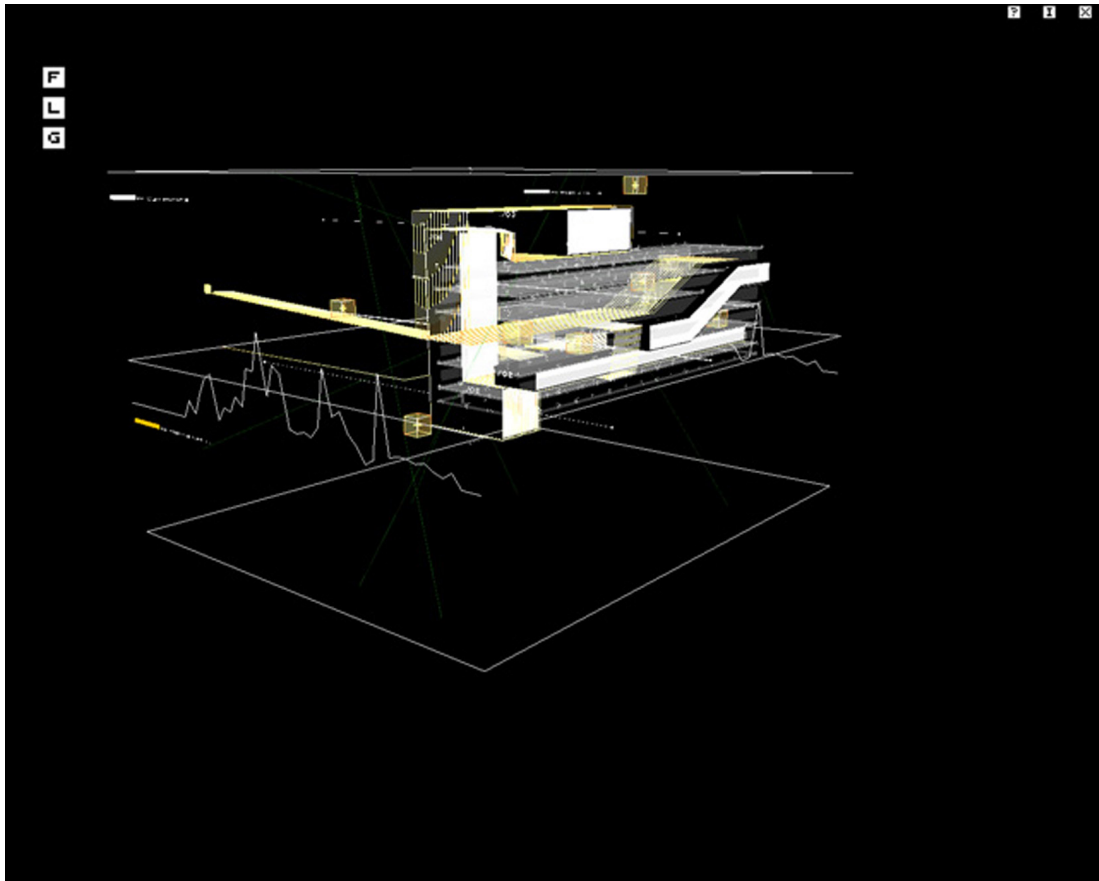
[Img. 8]



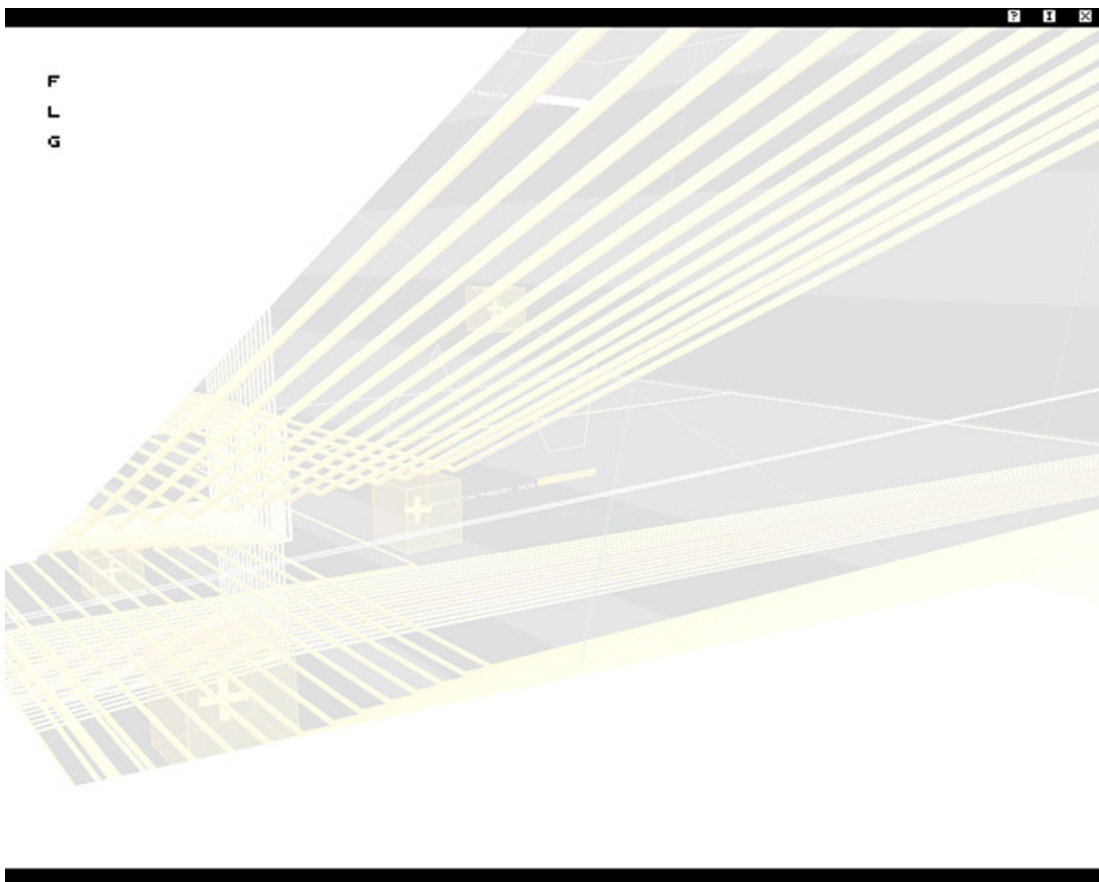
[Img. 11]



[Img. 12]



[Img. 13]



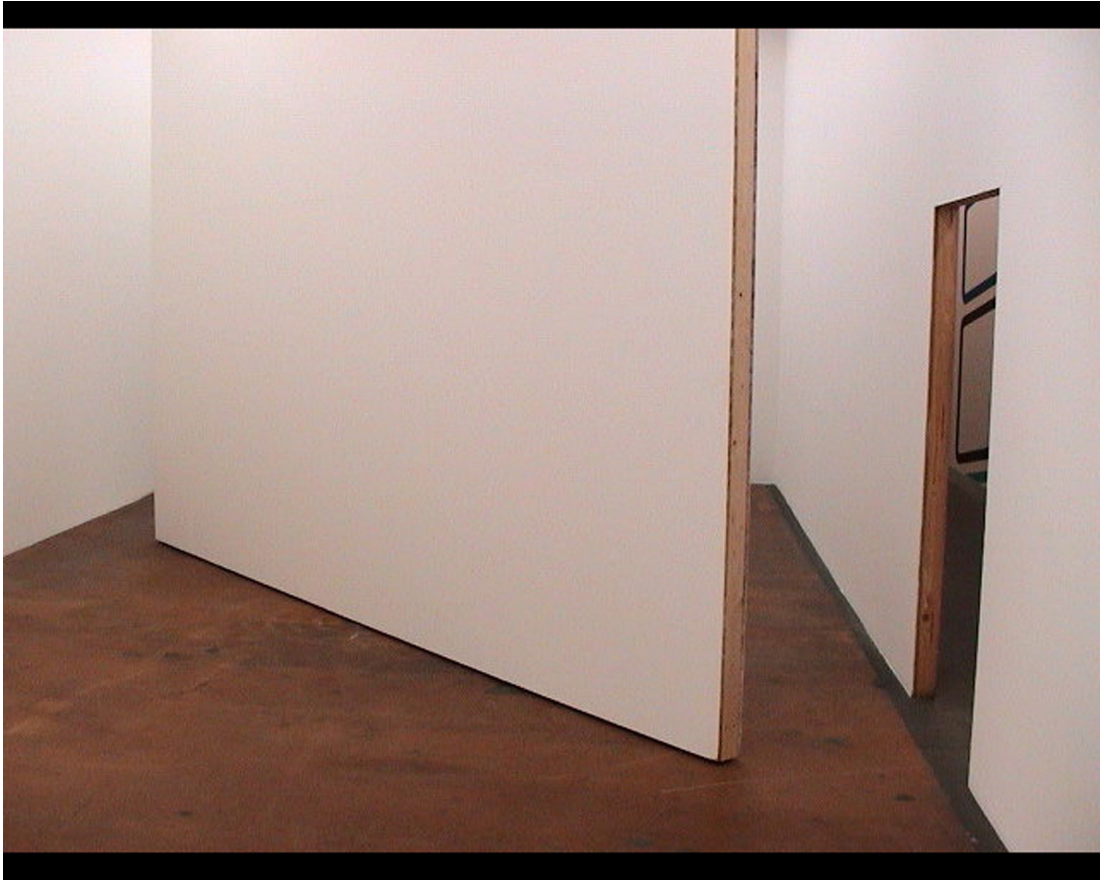
[Img. 14]



[Img. 17]



[Img. 18]



[Img. 19]



[Img. 20]



[Img. 21]



[Img. 22]



[Img. 23]

Image captions:

- [Img. 1] The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Geneva (MAMCO): physical building.
- [Img. 2] The developed digital extension: the multiplied and extended space that exists in parallel and in complement to the physical building.
- [Img. 3] The main digital space structure for the electronic extension of the MAMCO: the "light beam."
- [Img. 4] The "light beam": a continuous structure that induces transversal/oblique spaces. A structure based on lighting that transcripts the amount of information flow within the main server of the project.
- [Img. 5] The physical entrance to the museum.
- [Img. 6] The digital entrance to the museum, web access on www.electroscape.org/002.
- [Img. 7] Entering the digital MAMCO: between white cube and black box, between 2D and 3D.
- [Img. 8] An inside view of the main level. Main "floor" structure and morphology of the physical building are conserved.
- [Img. 9] Side view n°1: included in the space is a dynamic graph of information flow from the main server.
- [Img. 10] Side view n°2: exhibits' volumes are inserted into the "light beam." Extended and transversal new spaces.
- [Img. 11] A digital detail on what is the roof of the physical building.
- [Img. 12] Two new digital spaces for exhibitions: one on the roof and the other as a vertical space covering five levels.
- [Img. 13] The digital extension fits into what is the exact same volume as the physical MAMCO building. Two structures co-exist now in parallel: a digital and a physical one.
- [Img. 14] A detailed view from within an exhibition room: in-between flat 2D and 3D.
- [Img. 15] Deeper into the levels of the digital structure: the reference to the physical volume of the MAMCO building is starting to vanish.
- [Img. 16] Artist Heimo Zobernig's work as perceived in the digital architecture.
- [Img. 17] Physical access to Heimo Zobernig's installation on the right (wall painting by Stéphane Dafflon on the left, furniture by Alexis Georgacopoulos).
- [Img. 18] Heimo Zobernig's piece in the real building: hybridization of parallel spaces.
- [Img. 19] A big rotating wall in the white space of the museum, located in the exact same place as the digital piece in the 3D world.
- [Img. 20] On the other side of the tilting wall: just a computer and its screen on the wall.
- [Img. 21] Another configuration of the physical room.
- [Img. 22] The computer and screen display the digital work of Heimo Zobernig. Online users and the museum's visitors can meet in the same physical-digital space.
- [Img. 23] The physical and the digital space, combined view, at the same coordinate (furniture by Alexis Georgacopoulos in the front).

Txt

Electroscape.org

Electroscape.org is a new place/space/network, an open project through which digital and mutated landscapes, mixed and enhanced reality, "infoscape" and electromagnetic territories are questioned.

What are the new memes, the new schemes? What are the new possibilities for architecture?

The idea is to share on Electroscape.org some concepts, prototypes and designs with other digital designers, programmers, and contemporary thinkers. Electroscape.org is also a digital experimentation and exhibition structure, a kind of new (movable, downloadable) gallery, both micro- and macro-architecture at the same time.

Spatial context

Architecture in technological times and in networked, recombined spaces and territories. Landscapes of information and energy, (dynamic) cities of bits and data. Leisure-game environments and hybrid/multiplied fictions. Chemically stimulated spaces: electroscape.org considers that we don't live in the same environment anymore, that our physical reality is getting more and more modified/transformed by fictional, conceptual (and often) digital information, that our bodies have more and more extensions and prostheses linked to them to offer them new functionalities and possibilities of interaction and presence.

We are quitting the old land and era of the industrial territory, society, and architecture to enter a new one, not yet well-defined (could we call it, one more time, "recombinant?"), but where the complexity of the space around us has increased and is now multi-(de)structured? Where no piece of untransformed "nature" seems to remain and where everything is an artifice? One can now see a space and/or its functions being simulated/stimulated by a technological device as well as by a chemical pill (what about pharmaceutical- and drug-stimulated spaces?), one can also manipulate physical space by transforming (through technology) its quantity and type of information.

All day long, we can witness these new conditions: people on the streets hanging on their cell phones or sending short messages and being part of a virtual-mental space, people playing "massively parallel" games, online networked communities, televisions in the house, doping, (...). Differently said: inside into outside, public into private into public, media architecture, simulated spaces and stimulated urbanism, augmented reality and body, multi-fictional spaces, information architecture, global/transversal action, ubiquity of space and presence, ...

But this artificially informed and modified space, this technological environment, offers probably offers as many possibilities as it asks questions or defines new stakes for contemporary architects: how do you "upgrade" a space and on what frequency? Do you have to pay Microsoft for it? Which leads us to: to whom does it belong? To a company or to a public service? And if, for example, a "physical public space" is mixed/upgraded with a technology, does it need to be an "open source/public li-

cense" one? A GNU space? Probably it does, which is often not the case yet... Further into these questions: does someone track space information, does he produce a profile of the users? And, if yes, again, for what purposes? To whom does air and wave information belong? To a telecom company or to the state? Is it public or is it private? Is it both?

These are now real questions on space for today's architects, questions on the public vs. company presence in the technological environment. Even if this "space" is not visible, it is a question of territory. It's a question for electronic architects.

Microarchitecture

Electroscape.org is a downloadable architecture, a downloadable softspace/conceptware located in this contemporary western space. But electroscape.org is also a "digital gallery" or an "electronic performing architecture," depending on the context. In this digital space, questions around contemporary and 21st century mixed-space will be asked, experimented upon, in a kind of open source/minded, shared and critical creation process with other architects, scientists, visual artists, industrial-visual-sound designers.

Electroscape.org is defined by fabric | ch as a micro-architecture, an architecture within and around architecture, at a variable scale: a space, an information, a computer-generated and screen-based structure/architecture that surrounds its members, that makes possible certain types of spaces and not others, that allows certain types of behaviors and functions. It is an electronic architecture without physical boundaries.

Electroscape.org does structure network-based spaces by adding/removing information/energy to/from it. It diffuses or emits downloadable mobile space. Adding/removing information/energy: a very basic, essential and primitive action in a technologically plentiful and copious technological daily environment. A less {and/or} more attitude...

This architecture can be trans-territorial; its presence can be "infra" or "ultra" depending how one "customizes" the way in which it appears and the manner it informs or gets mixed with physical spaces. It is our shared conceptual, experimental, critical, digital and software mobile space. It is "micro-architecture n°01: mobile space." fabric | ch is now mixed, hybridized, extended with *yet another* (after an [e-body], La_Fabrique, _knowscape, i-weather.org) of its architectural prostheses: Electroscape.org

fabric | ch, July 2002

Txt

Electroscape 002

002 // BAC +3 Digit // Multiplied Space

Architecture in the technological age, the age of Internet spaces and territories, recombined and mixed. Landscapes of information and energy, (dynamic) cities of bits and data. Virtual or heightened reality. Chemical spaces stimulated or simulated, artificial or reproduced climates. The piece takes cognizance of the fact that we no longer live in the same daily environment, that our physical and material reality is increasingly modified/transformed by the information that is (often) digital, fictional and/or conceptual.

The same holds for the space of the museum today, which is plunged into this new everyday landscape. Confronted with both the profusion of new media and new modes of disseminating information, and the rapidity of their evolution, the contemporary museum must face the predictable redefinition of its exhibition and/or archival space. We have evoked here the transformation of the museum brought about by the appearance of projects created in the media that did not exist ten years ago. But we are also dealing with the necessary permanent evolution of contemporary artistic structures for conserving and displaying art, either as a premise of or as a response to the evolution of societies in which they have their place and their mission.

However, it seems that our Western society is definitively leaving behind its former (post)modern territory, its old and henceforth decrepit white architecture. Our bodies, also worn, are likewise poised to evolve. We are turning our backs on the age of the model and its identical reproduction thousands and thousands of times over to enter a landscape that is recombined, hybrid, mixed, customizable, evolutive, in which architecture now seems to be able to exist both in concrete and in the form of electromagnetic waves. It is a territory that is certainly in transition, but which we might qualify once again as recombinant, a reference to genetically modified organisms. It's an environment whose growing complexity we can already grasp, and in which we can sense its ongoing de/structuring-re/structuring. It is a daily reality in which the presence of intelligent, generative machines is becoming ever more pronounced: today, prostheses for our bodies and psyches, but tomorrow, probably an alter ego. It is an "informed" landscape, finally, one that is filled by humanity, where there remains no residue of nature that has not been transformed or manufactured and in which its "densification" and "multiplication" are starting to be sought, where livable, inhabitable space will eventually prove wanting. Multiply space? Inhabit the image? Colonize new territories that are real and/or virtual? These questions remain open to contemporary architects.

The project that has been developed as part of "Image Habitable - Version B" (The Livable Image - Version B) offers two distinct parts. First, there is an architectural piece by fabric | ch that is devoted to the museum and the new technological, mo-

bile, "downloadable," "virtual," and digital spaces. The piece is concerned especially with developing a prototype of a "virtual museum" or a "real-virtual museum," a hybrid located in several territories and the veritable extension of the "physical" museum that is Geneva's Bâtiment d'Art Contemporain (Contemporary Art Building). The second part involves the Austrian artist Heimo Zobernig and a piece created specifically for this new (experimental) condition of the museum. Zobernig's contribution is itself a work in two parts, an aspect that is no less important. These parts are intended for, respectively, the "virtual" and the physical museums, such as the front and back of a sheet of paper. Given that Zobernig often practices a minimal tautological reworking of some reality in his work, a highlighting of the architectural characteristics that are peculiar to a site, we can expect a radical, clear-sighted piece on this ambivalent situation.

Reappropriating the heimozobernig.com homepage created by a student, the artist intends to display it as a magnetized surface in the museum's pared-down, virtual architecture. In the museum itself, a computer hidden behind a movable wall will allow one to access the site. In short, whether in terms of the real or the virtual, Zobernig acts in a minimal, highly conceptual way since he treats each space according to its intrinsic qualities.

Created as part of the group exhibition involving five major institutions in Geneva's Bâtiment d'Art Contemporain, Version B will serve as a forerunner of that structure, a preliminary diffusion of information and content for a project in progress. Meant to be considered as a prototype and scheduled to go online in late October 2002, the piece is supposed to continue to develop progressively with respect to new exhibitions and new Internet projects. The Electroscape website, an electronic architectural research project developed by fabric | ch, as well as the Version site, will serve as the Internet face, electronic access, and online welcome desk of this multi-site venture.

Thus, Version B is the chance to develop such an architecture, a hybrid museum that is half physical and half digital, half localized and half delivered, while questioning both its potential and its limits.

fabric | ch, November 2002

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