osage
HKACT!

MAURICE BENAYOUN
PRIMAVERA DE FILIPPI
YUK HUI
HIDETAKA ISHIDA
SCOTT LASH
RONALDO LEMOS
LEV MANOVICH
CHARLES MEREWETHER
JEFFREY SHAW

Act 13

SYMPOSIUM
MULTIPLE FUTURES OF ART AND TECHNOLOGY
藝術與科技的多重未來

AI-aided graphics

Time	Session
9:30	Introduction by Yuk Hui
9:40	**Lev Manovich**
10:10	**Ronaldo Lemos**
10:40	Discussion Moderated by Charles Merewether
11:10	**Maurice Benayoun**
11:40	**Jeffrey Shaw**
12:10	Discussion Moderated by Charles Merewether
12:40	General Discussion
13:00 - 14:50	Lunch Break
15:00	**Hidetaka Ishida**
15:30	**Scott Lash**
16:00	Discussion Moderated by Yuk Hui
16:45	**Primavera De Filippi**
17:15	**Yuk Hui**
17:45	Discussion Moderated by Yuk Hui
18:30	General Discussion
18:55	Closing Remarks

** Hong Kong Time (UTC +8)

28/11/2022

Globalisation has meant, historically, a process of neutralization through economic and technological means by conquering land, sea and air. The invention and proliferation of digital technologies in the second half of the 20th century has accelerated this process. Digital technology has become the most pervasive and ubiquitous medium now indispensable to everyday life. Both the state and capitalism demand and produce techno-social subjects — who are consumers, but not citizens. We recognize that technology is not neutral. It is a new regime of discipline and containment based on computation, which has brought us convenience as well as platform capitalism, enforced surveillance and mass data extraction.

As a way to counter this homogenization, we have to imagine a new form of globalisation, to imagine a techno-diversity or multiple cosmo-technics, by resolving the antinomy of the universality of technology. To include people in different localities to participate in the production and sharing of knowledge, and allowing them to actively appropriate technology instead of being reduced to mere consumers. This is essential to maintaining a local heterogeneity as well as politicizing the innovation and employment of technology, which allows us to resist against a homogenization assumed by capitalist logic and the technocratic.

To bring forward a new phase of globalization means going beyond the previous unilateral process of globalization and the technological dystopia accompanied with it. It requires rediscovering and inventing new configurations between cultures and technologies, tradition and modernism, east and west. It is a call that not only addresses politologists but scholars in art and humanities, as well as those in engineering and sciences. It demands a re-evaluation of the limits and potential of the current algorithmic culture and its algorithmic governmentality from new perspectives.

This Symposium invites scholars and artists to conceive such possibilities by reflecting on the conceptual and practical contributions from both the East and the West. We hope this will contribute in overcoming the universalist and homogeneous idea of technology, which impoverishes our capacity to think and act.

One Billion Rembrandts? Inside AI Image Synthesis Revolution

Lev Manovich

Dr. Lev Manovich is a digital culture theorist, writer, and artist whose work has changed how we think about media and technology today. Currently he is a Presidential Professor of Computer Science at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, and a Director of the Cultural Analytics Lab. Over last three decades, Manovich published 180 articles and 15 books that include Cultural Analytics, Instagram and Contemporary Image, and The Language of New Media described as "the most suggestive and broad-ranging media history since Marshall McLuhan." He was the first to develop theoretical analysis of a number of new topics in digital culture, including computer animation, synthetic realism, cultural interface, database narrative, augmented space, big visual data, cultural analytics, and AI aesthetics. Manovich's digital artworks were shown in 112 international exhibitions many world's leading venues such as Centre Pompidou, ICA London, ZKM, and KIASMA.

In an article about people using AI image synthesis tools, the Financial Times called this "a pivotal moment in the history of art."

(10/27/2022). Wall Street Journal referred to these tools as "full of potential unknowns" (10/19/2022) and also compared their arrival to another major technological revolution in art - the adoption of photography in the 19th century (8/19/2022). The New Yorker magazine stated: "How we work — even think — changes when we can instantly command convincing images into existence." (9/19/2022) The New York Times wrote that "A.I.-based image generators like DALL-E 2, Midjourney and Stable Diffusion have made it possible for anyone to create unique, hyper-realistic images just by typing a few words into a text box." (10/21/2022)

Are we indeed living through a major revolution in visual culture? Is it true that "anybody" can create "unique" images using this technology? In my talk I will critically evaluate some of the claims made about AI Image Synthesis, and suggest alternative ways of understanding it. The talk draws on a chapter in the book "Artificial Aesthetics: a Critical Guide to AI, Design and Media." See Manovich and Arielli, 2021- being published online at manovich.net.

What is the role of developing countries in the search for technodiversity?

Ronaldo Lemos

Ronaldo Lemos is a lawyer specializing in technology, intellectual property, media and public policy. He has twenty years of experience in the private and public sectors. Dr. Lemos was a Visiting Scholar at Oxford, Princeton, the MIT Media Lab and a Visiting Professor at the Columbia School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). He co-created Brazil's Internet Bill of Rights Law (2014) and Brazil's National IoT Plan (2018) and served on the Boards of the Mozilla Foundation, Access Now and other non-profit organizations. He currently serves on Meta's Oversight Board, Stellar Development Foundation, and Spotify's Safety Advisory Council. Previously, Dr. Lemos was Vice-President of the Social Communication Council in the National Congress in Brazil. Dr. Lemos writes weekly about law and technology for Folha de S. Paulo, one of Brazil's most widely read newspapers, and is a member of the editorial council. He was appointed by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader.

At least until 2014, Brazil played an important role in the search for technodiversity. In the 1980s Brazil cooperated with China in the development of satellite technology. It also created its own technology policy, Brazil's "Informatics Law" (which failed miserably). Later, it played an important role in the Internet governance debate and under the leadership of Gilberto Gil, then head of the Ministry of Culture, actively promoted techno-diversity as a public policy, both internally and as foreign policy. The successful approval of the so-called "Development Agenda" at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is living proof of the success of that approach. The approval of Brazil's Internet Bill of Rights (the "Marco Civil da Internet") by means of an online collaborative process is another example.

The question one can ask is: What is the role of developing countries in building technodiversity? Are developing countries locked into technological determinism, e.g., as a source of attention and raw data to be processed elsewhere? This talk will seek to present a modest contribution to that debate. Since 2017 the speaker has produced a documentary series called *Expresso Futuro* ("Future Express") for Brazilian television, currently in its 6th season. One of the main objectives of the series is the search for technodiversity. Two seasons were produced in the United States, one in China, two in Brazil and the latest one in the African continent (Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana). Some of the findings of that search will also be presented in the talk.

Photo by Riddick Douglas Ning

The Promises of the Digital, and their (Un)expected Outcomes

Maurice Benayoun

Maurice Benayoun (aka MoBen, 莫奔) is a pioneering and prominent figure in the field of New Media Art. His works freely explore media boundaries from virtual reality to large-scale public art installations on a socio-political perspective. MoBen's works have been widely awarded (Golden Nica Ars Electronica 1998 and more than 25 international awards) and exhibited in major international museums (2 solo shows at Centre Pompidou Paris), biennials and festivals in 26 different countries. Some of his representative works include The Tunnel under the Atlantic (VR, 1995), World Skin a Photo Safari in the Land of War (VR, 1997), the Mechanics of Emotions (2005-2014), and Cosmopolis (VR, 2005).

MoBen initiated the Brain Factory project in 2015 and then developed it as Value of Values. Through the morphogenesis of thought, this research is an investigation of language, neural design, human values and transactions. Between finance and ethics, transactional aesthetics focuses on the impact of our individual and collective ranking of values on society.

There are seldom periods of disruption in art history, and we only perceive their impact long after. What makes people think that we are now in the middle of such momentum while apparently, it started just a few months ago?

Abandoning the traditional mediums of art, first for the electronic, then for the digital was assumed by some observers as a significant break in a continuum crystalized for centuries around the painting. What artists involved in the early attempts to explore off-track mediums foresaw was not perceived by the art world as significant enough - triggering outcries and despise – probably in relation to the fragilizing of the gatekeepers' legitimacy taken away from their certified knowledge. The magnitude of the shift in art practice didn't affect the art market, so it couldn't be considered bankable. This may explain why the emergence of NFTs and AI, with a strong financial impact, forced media and critics to investigate this newborn chimera. For better or for worse, AI and NFTs seem to complete the promises of the digital. They extend the knowledge, the capacity of ideation, and production, open new distribution models, sublimate the medium, and make sense out of virtuality applied to artistic practice. They widen the artist's reach by allowing production that affects all fields of human activities, from illustration to science, from market to finance, from perception to projection, from ethics to politics, from the intelligible to the sensible, from the reified to the sublimated, from the white cube to the cloud.

It was anticipated, it happens now. Will it durably affect the definition of the artist and practice?

The Multiple Futures and Pasts of Art's Technological Fluorescence.

Jeffrey Shaw

Professor Jeffrey Shaw has been a leading figure in new media art since its emergence from the performance, expanded cinema and installation paradigms of the 1960s to today's technology-informed and virtualized forms. In a prolific career of widely exhibited and critically acclaimed work he has pioneered the creative use of digital media technologies in the fields of expanded cinema, virtual and augmented reality, immersive visualization environments, navigable cinematic systems and interactive narrative. Shaw was the founding director of the ZKM Institute for Visual Media Karlsruhe (1991-2002) and the UNSW iCinema Centre for Interactive Cinema Research (2003-2009). In 2009 Shaw joined City University of Hong Kong as Dean of the School of Creative Media, and currently he is Chair Professor at the Academy of Visual Arts Hong Kong Baptist University. Shaw's awards include the 2015 Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica for Visionary Pioneer of Media Art, Linz, Austria and 2020 ACM SIGGRAPH Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement in Digital Art.

Art constantly re-invents itself as a self-generating and world-building Venture that both reflects and instigates the cultural conditions of its time. It answers to the needs of immediate and anticipated existential exigencies by having to re-examine and re-formulate its identity, purpose, and courses of action. Art that takes place there is the Vanguard, announcing new truths, re-vitalizing old truths, speaking all languages that Brightly includes Science and Technology; it speaks of No Thing and everything, of No Body and everybody, and of being No Where and everywhere.

The archeology of media art, its History and on-going expressions, embody two coextensive streams of consciousness – one that simply gives innumerable forms to humankind's ludic agencies, and another that delineates often elaborate Cosmologies of shape and meaning. These bifold compulsions and ambitions engage with all possible resources: stone, paint, wood, metal, light, shadow, electronics, computation, etc. In today's world painterly illusions morph into virtual reality, and sculptural presences become the avatars of augmented realities – a *Weltanschauung* that is expanding into the expanse of the metaverse while necessarily disavowing its plundering principals. Because, as it always was and must always be, the place of art is the Social - a well spring of Well Being, spawning forms and experiences that invigorate the Present and predicate the future.

Subtracting the Modern
Art in the age of postcyber society, an Asian paradigm..

Hidetaka Ishida

Hidetaka ISHIDA is Emeritus Professor the University of Tokyo. Philosopher semiotician and theorist in media studies.
Docteur en sciences humaines de l'Université de Paris X. He served as Dean the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies the University of Tokyo.
He edited the Japanese translation of Dits et Ecrits de Michel Foucault (10 vol. Chikuma Shobo, 1998- 2002) and of Bernard Stiegler La Technique et le Temps (3 vol. Hosei University Press 2009-2013).
His works in Japanese language include, The knowledge of Sign / the knowledge of Media (The University of Tokyo Press, 2003), Contemporary Philosophy (Chikuma Shobo, 2010), Media Theory for adult people Chikuma Shobo, 2016 , The New Semiotics (with Hiroki Azuma, Genron Publisher 2019), Cours de sémiotique : leçons pour la critique de la vie quotidienne (Chikuma shobō, 2020).

History moves forward in a spiraling regression.

The Delos Conference, convened by Doxiadis, who proposed the Ekistics a 'human settlement science ', was attended by Margaret Mead and McLuhan, and the 'human expansion' theory would have been discussed in the context of cybernetics. Eiichi Isomura participated from Japan, followed by Kenzo Tange at the third conference in 1965. In A Plan for Tokyo 1960, the network city was already being planned as a metaphor for the organism, the 'information society' was being discussed, and 'metabolism' of the proliferating organismic city was being designed. In Tokyo in the 1960s, the cybernetic city was already in view.

The deconstruction in Japan in the last decades of the last century can be interpreted in this context as a questioning on the interface between cybernetics and cultural semiosis. Arata Isozaki, the leading figure of Japanese postmodernism, proposed a Computer Aided City, a kind of stack of information complex; the city should have been 'simulated' through an abductive progression of 'symbol-studded schemes'. If Western deconstructionists referred to the Platonic KHORA, the Japanese relied on the MA (間 spatio-temporal spacing or supplement of differance (derridien).

The question of art was not absent, far from it, in this research on the invisible city. At Osaka Expo 70, Fujiko Nakaya introduced the first series of her Fog sculpture, an experimentation on medium-interface of the cybernetic city. Research on another aesthetic paradigm that could be related to Qi (気) entered into the conception of environmental art.

My topic will be to revisit and deepen further this philosophical and cultural transformation in art and aesthetics to speculate on the condition of possibility of Art in a post cyber-society.

The Anti-Algorithm: Organic Materialism and Chinese Technics

Scott Lash

Scott Lash was born in Chicago. B SC Psychology University of Michigan, MA Sociology Northwestern University and PhD London School of Economics. He was founder director of the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London and now Research Affiliate Dept of Anthropology, Oxford University. He has also taught at Chinese University of Hong Kong, City University HK, Nanjing University and Shanghai University. His books include The End of Organized Capitalism, Economies of Signs and Space, Sociology of Postmodernism, Reflexive Modernization, Global Culture Industry and Critique of Information, all translated into Chinese editions. From the past twenty years he has been working in connection with Chinese thought, language culture and economy. He participated in bid for conceptual master plan of the Shanghai Expo 2008 and the West Kowloon culture District. His more recent books include China Constructing Capitalism: Economic Life and Urban Change and Experience. He is now completing a book Infrastructure Power: Cultural and Logistics in China and starting a new book called Intentional Matter: Terramorphoses, dealing with biome politics in China and the symbiotic forming of Earth.

The problem with digital technology is its very abstraction from social and cultural life, and its abstraction even from natural life. That is because of algorithmic culture's physical and mechanistic objectivity: its non-engagement with any ecology. To counter this, technics must break with the non-historical phase space of the physical and enter instead the historical time and ecological space of the biological, that is, the bio-geological historic space of the organism. This is the bio-geo organism and its milieu.

There are perhaps some clues towards this in Chinese notions of science and technology, which partake, as Joseph Needham observed, of not a mechanical materialism but rather an organic materialism. This also presumes, with for example the poet Goethe, breaking with objectivity for the subjective, with causality for intentionality, but above towards an imbrication in an ecology, a milieu. This is also a direction for any possible AI, that deals with semantic, with the bio-geological of Earth. This includes also primarily not so much cognition as an ethics, a *de* (德), also possibly a variation on *liyi* (禮義), that imbricates finally technology into forms of cultural and natural life.

Primavera De Filippi

Primavera De Filippi is a legal scholar at Harvard University, as well as an Internet activist and artist exploring the intersection between law and technology, focusing specifically on the legal and political implications of blockchain technology. Her artistic practice instantiates the key findings of her research in the physical world, creating blockchain-based lifeforms that evolve and reproduce themselves as people feed them with cryptocurrencies. Her works have been exposed in various museums, galleries and art fairs around the world including Ars Electronica (Austria), Furtherfield Gallery and Kinetica Art Fair (UK), Centre Pompidou, Grand Palais, Gaité Lyrique, and Le Cent Quatre (France), Fort Mason Center For Arts & Culture (San Francisco), as well as festivals such as Burning Man (Nevada) and Fusion Festival (Germany)

There is a new artistic movement that is progressively emerging, but because it has not yet been named, it is difficult for artists to recognise themselves as being part of such a movement. This movement —which we will refer to as the "protocolism movement" is an artistic movement that can be characterized by the following aspects:

1.   *The artist is the catalyst who defines the protocol that others will use to produce new art pieces.* The protocol must be sufficiently distinctive to incarnate the author's "personality". Yet, the protocolist artist is not the actual producer or designer of the final artwork, but rather the creator of the protocol that makes it possible for such artwork to exist.

2.   *The artwork is the abstract protocol,* defined as a set of rules and guidelines, which must be sufficiently recognizable as an artwork on its own, so that it can subsist independently of its execution or performance: *i.e.* for a protocolist artist, the artwork is the recipe rather than the actual execution of the recipe.

3.   *Whoever executes the protocol to generate a new work is the co-author of that work, along with the protocols artist.* In other words, the agent instantiating the protocol into a new artwork is not a mere "technician" or "tool", but rather an artist that inject a new layer of creativity into the final artwork. Every work produced by the protocol is a work in its own right, but also contribute to expanding the body of work of the original protocol artist.

4.   The final artwork is necessarily a co-creation between the protocolist and the instantiated of the protocol. Indeed, the protocolist's creativity (or "aura") is incorporated into the protocol and is thus reflected into every art piece generated through that protocol, independent of who (or what) has produced these pieces.

5.   The protocolist does not have a copyright claim over the resulting works, although she may claim some attribution over the protocol used in their production thereof. The protocolist has no control over the way people execute the protocol: no one can be prevented from employed the protocol (although attribution may be required).

This session will discuss the notion of *protocolism* and compare it with other artistic movement, such as relational art, process, art, generative art, etc. in order to reflect on whether it can be qualified as a new artistic movement.

Augmentation of the Senses (or The Machine Becomes an Idea that Makes Art)

Yuk Hui

Yuk Hui is a philosopher and university professor. He obtained his PhD from Goldsmiths College and Habilitation in Philosophy from Leuphana Univeristy in Germany. He is author of several monographs that have been translated into a dozen languages, including *On the Existence of Digital Objects* (2016), *The Question Concerning Technology in China:-An Essay in Cosmotechnics* (2016), *Recursivity and Contingency* (2019), and *Art and Cosmotechnics* (2021). Hui is co-editor of *30 Years after Les Immatériaux: Art, Science and Theory* (2015) and editor of *Philosophy after Automation* (Philosophy Today, Vol.65. No.2, 2021), among others. Hui has been the convenor of the Research Network for Philosophy and Technology since 2014 and sits as a juror of the Berggruen Prize for Philosophy and Culture since 2020. He currently teaches at the City University of Hong Kong.

This talk starts by raising a general question: What is the relation between digital art and its medium? We know that art is highly dependent on its medium, as historians and artists have been telling us for centuries. We also know that advances in technology are changing art media all the time, and that this will only accelerate in the future. The relation between digital art and its medium, however, remains unquestioned. In the future, academicians might have conferences called 'Digital art in the age of x' almost every year, or even every few weeks, because 'x' will be changing rapidly. If this is true, how then can we address the relation between digital art and its medium?

Medium specificity is self-evident, but it doesn't tell us much about digital art, it only returns us to a nominalism of art. For example, the kinetic artwork and computerized music created in the 1950s and 1960s have largely been lost as there are hardly any machines left that can play them. Similarly, if you were today given a floppy disk containing a digital artwork from the 1980s, you would have difficulty finding a drive or computer capable of reading it. Because digital art is so dependent on its medium, it is always already dead. Medium specificity is the name of the cemetery. Looking back, we don't see many cadavers of digital arts because their deaths are silent. They disappear into a black hole of information: the faster the media develops, the quicker it will head towards death. New mediums arise and new works appear in the same way that gadgets update every season. Is this the destiny of all digital art?

Curatorial Advisor / Moderator

Charles Merewether

Dr Charles Merewether is an art historian, curator and author of books and many articles about contemporary art. He has taught at Universities in Australia, the Americas, Asia, Western and Eastern Europe and curated in Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Mexico, Barcelona, and Georgia and. His books include: Art, Faith and Healing: Sunsook Roh, (2022, forthcoming), In the Sphere of the Soviets: Essays on the Cultural Legacy of the Soviet Union, (2020); co-editor of *Art in the 21st Century*, (2020); *State of Play*, (2017); *After Memory: The Art of Milenko Prvacki*, (2013); co-editor of *After the Event*, (2010); *Under Construction: Ai Weiwei*, (2008); co-editor of *Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art: Experimentations in the Public Sphere in Postwar Japan 1950-1970*, (2007) and editor of *The Archive*, (2006). Merewether worked and lived in Tbilisi, Georgia between 2016-2020 and is currently Senior Honorary Fellow at the University of Melbourne. He has recently finished a book manuscript on European wunderkammers, museums, collecting and plunder ca.1550-1900 and is currently writing a book on Ukrainian modernism and contemporary art.

About Osage Art Foundation

The Osage Art Foundation (OAF) was established in 2004 as an international not-for-profit philanthropic organisation devoted to building creative communities, cultural cooperation, and creative capacity. OAF saw a need to offer more support in the development of the arts in Asia and an opportunity to address this need. With fostering deeper regional consciousness of the Arts within Asia in mind, OAF programmes are distinguished by their focus on cultural exchange, educational outreach, and knowledge building. Correspondingly, OAF exhibitions aim to make strong statements about significant as well as emerging artists and provide platforms for innovative curatorial perspectives.

OAF recognises that more needs to be done to develop the cultural conversations happening within Asia and beyond. To better address this, OAF launched the exhibition series Regional Perspectives more than a decade ago. Each instalment expands the cultural conversations happening within Asia and the rest of the world. This platform offers artistically creative individuals the opportunity to collectively present their views to a regional and global audience through objective analysis and interpretations their perspectives.

In 2015, OAF began HKACT! - Hong Kong Art, Culture, and Technological Innovation -, a series of cutting-edge technological arts and cultural projects that articulate an interdisciplinary future and fuels growth in the creative and cultural industry. It is a platform that celebrates art and ideas by bringing together visionary thinkers and innovators to help chart the future of a better and cultural society.

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Event Collateral

HKACT! Act 11
VoV:
MORPHOGENESIS OF VALUES
by Maurice Benayoun
29.10. - 30.11.2022
@Chantal Miller Gallery, ASHK

HKACT! Act 12
VoV: HKRUNWAY
29.10.2022
@ASHK

www.hkact.hk

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