FRED FOREST: INTERFACE AS UTOPIA

Sociological Art, The Aesthetics of Communication & The Invisible System Work

Public Seminar and Conversation
February 3, 2007, 5:30pm

Assisted by Michael F. Leruth and Jean-Michel Rabate

http://slought.org/content/11348
Forty Years at the Forefront of Communication Art Worldwide

left: “Tableau–écran,” abstract canvas and image projection (1968)

SOCIOLOGICAL ART (Sociological Art Collective, 1974-1977)
THE AESTHETICS OF COMMUNICATION (Manifesto, 1985)
THE INVISIBLE SYSTEM WORK (Book, 2006)
Retrospective Held at Paço das Artes, Sao Paulo, 2006
Interview in Contemporary French & Francophone Studies, 2006
The Art of Political Provocation

left: “The City Invaded by Blank Space” (Sao Paulo, 1973)
top right: military police patrolling Forest’s installation (Sao Paulo, 1973)
bottom right: “For a More Nervous and Utopian Form of Television” (Bulgaria, 1991)
Sociological Art
The Introduction of Parasitical Pieces of (*non*) Information in the Mass Media System:
“150 cm² of newspaper,” *Le Monde*, 1973
Parodying the Speculative Practices of the Art Market:

“The Artistic Square Meter”

*left: first ad in Le Monde (10 March, 1977)*

*right: second ad in Le Monde (20 September 1977)*
Fred Forest’s Video Art in the 1970s

Right: “Restany Dining at La Coupole” (1974)
The Aesthetics of Communication: Alternative Interfaces as Subversive and Whimsical

left: “Learn How to Watch TV by Listening to the Radio” (1984)
right: “Telephonic Faucet” (1992)
Experiments in Metacommunication: Time and Space in the Information Environment I

Experiments in Metacommunication:
Time and Space in the Information Environment II

Fred Forest and the Fête de l’Internet I

Fred Forest and the Fête de l’Internet II

Fred Forest
THE OPEN SYSTEM WORK

“After working with matter and light, artists are starting to make systems of meaning and “consciousness raising” events out of waves, frequencies, radiation, sensors, magnetic fields, nanotechnologies, and mental images. We are entering the era of a dematerialized form of cognitive art whose sole and unique platform is the mind.”
The Invisible System Work in Historical Perspective

top: K. Malevich, "White on White" (1918) ● M. Duchamp ● “Large Glass” (1915-1923) ● Yves Klein, “The Void” (1958)

The Characteristics of the Open System Work

- **Invisibility:** the work pertains to phenomena beyond the realm of the five senses (information, waves of energy, mental images...). The work takes shape and acquires meaning only in the mind of the spectator/user.

- **An information system:** the artist creates an original interface. This interface, which may be a hybrid of multiple media and/or technologies, is not the work itself; it is merely an infrastructure in which information pertaining to the phenomena in question is produced and exchanged.

- **A relational dynamic:** the work is created by the users of the interface or system, who piece together the information on their own. The esthetic, epistemological, and political content of the work resides in the unique relationships the users are able to discern among the pieces of information generated, amongst themselves, and between themselves and their environment.
FRED FOREST

“The Golden Number and the 22,000 Hz Force Field”

Documenta VIII – Kassel (1987)
left: floor plan of the Fredericanium showing the zone to be covered by the ultrasound transmission

right: one of the transmitters
Forest places transmitters inside the exhibition hall
left: press release announcing the existence of Forest's invisible work
right: news of the work alongside Forest's article the social responsibility of art in the August 20, 1987 edition of the *Kölner Stadt Anzeiger*
Other Examples of Open System Works in the Art of Fred Forest

Bibliography