

<> VERNACULARS </>

<> Function: adjective </>

<> Etymology: Latin vernaculus native, from verna slave born in the master's house, native </>

<> 1 a : using a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary, cultured, or foreign language </>

<> 1 b : of, relating to, or being a nonstandard language or dialect of a place, region, or country </>

<> 1 c : of, relating to, or being the normal spoken form of a language </>

<> 2 : applied to a plant or animal in the common native speech as distinguished from the Latin nomenclature of scientific classification </>

<> 3 : of, relating to, or characteristic of a period, place, or group; especially: of, relating to, or being the common building style of a period or place. </>

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<> Since the general explosion of Internet usage by varied sectors of the global population in the middle of the 1990s, analysts of an emerging "web culture" have noted the emergence of new languages – a series of vernaculars have emanated from a range of activities that transpire daily on the world wide web. </>

<> From development of the commercial parlance of e-commerce, to the increasing accessibility of a non-professional public to technical specific programming languages used to build websites, the Internet has become a fertile space for the invention of multiple discourses. The languages of commerce, science, administration, education, and entertainment continue to evolve at an unprecedented pace. </>

<> The popularity of Internet chatrooms, the speed and frequency afforded by email in international communications, «business at the speed of thought» (c.f. Bill Gates) as enabled by e-trading and the fusion of world markets, are a few catalysts for the rise of a cacophony of vernacular languages – a condition that presents paradoxical affects. Individual singularities of isolated or hyper-specific cultural groups infiltrate and confront the hegemonies of corporate culture. </>

<> According to this common perception of the "e-culture explosion", the Internet offers a means of communication and exchange that is simultaneously universal and individual, ubiquitous and singular. The recent coining of the phrase "glocal" – a term that combines the ever expansive reach of globalization with the concerns of local communities – is perhaps the best example of this vernacular terminology infiltrating everyday life. </>

<> <> Artists have been far from oblivious to these cultural developments and linguistic trends. Picking up on the many utilitarian applications of the web, harnessing the multiplicity languages and forms of the Internet, certain artists have paralleled these developments while using the web as a medium for their own practices. The artists included in this virtual exhibition reflect the rise of these vernacular languages of the web as well as the unique but paradoxical interfaces that the Internet offers to develop various artistic and critical strategies for their projects. </>

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<> Vuk Cosic </><> jodi </><> Mark Napier </>
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<> INSIDER TALK </>
<> Breaking the codes </>
<> The term " Insider Talk " evokes a milieu that is " behind the scenes ",
specialized in the constitutive building blocks of information technology.
These " insiders " have a profound understanding of the binary codes and
programming languages that mask the complexity of computer environments in
the form of " user friendly " interfaces. </>
<> The artists in this section of the exhibition have manipulated the
interfaces that most internet users take for granted in order to distort
the basic functions of internet navigation. Whether enacting a sort of
"détournement" of programming language to produce playful, decorative
effects on the personal computer screen, or by interrupting the flow of
information by injecting desktop software with virus-like "games", these
artists attempt to shake our confidence in the supposedly user friendly
nature of the on-line world. The artist collective jodi, Vuk Cosic (in
collaboration with the ASCII Art Ensemble) and New York based artist Mark
Napier have used their insider knowledge of computer programming languages
to develop ludic yet critical responses to the web. </>
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<> VUK COSIC </><> http://www.vuk.org/ascii/blind</>
<> born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, lives and works in Ljubljana, Slovenia
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<> Slovenian artist Vuk Cosic is one of the first international artists
primarily known for his work made specifically for the web that
engages the rudiments of computer programming language. He is
credited for coining the term "Net.Art" in an email to a bulletin
board designed for internet activists and electronic culture
figures. </>
<> Cosic's practice can be primarily characterized as the stretching
the lo-fi computer language ASCII (American Standard Code for
Information Interchange) into Java script animations. While ASCII
was largely used in the 1960s for simple graphic representations,
Cosic uses the characters to represent content from time-based media
(video; audio). This manipulation of a utilitarian computer language
is not only used to create representation of pictures and ideas, but
also the development of new applications for existing media. In the
project featured in Vernaculars, Cosic used artificial speech
software to drive an ASCII language representation of a few of the
greatest hits from the history of art. </>
<> Cosic is also known for his active participation in cyber culture
theory groups as well as participating in collective artistic
endeavors. In the mid-1990s he helped to form the ASCII Art Ensemble
(along with Walter van der Cruijssen and Luka Frelih), another
pioneering group in "Net.Art" practices. </>
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<> Project : ascii speak : history of art for the blind </>
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<> JODI </><> http://oss.jodi.org </>
<> Joan Heemskerck, born in Kaatsheuvel, Netherlands; lives and works in
Barcelona </>
<> Dirk Paesmans, born in Brussels; lives and works in Barcelona </>
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<> Working from 1994 onwards as an artistic partnership under the
amalgamation of their first names, jodi has assembled an immense
website (www.jodi.org) of over 350 pages of pseudo-viruses and
programming disturbances that often take the form of a game. </>
<> The jodi site visually combines a number of electronic elements:
ASCII texts, windows, dancing cursors, and j-peg images generated
both by the host computer (on the basis of the existing content) and
jodi's own server. The resulting rebus (or disturbance) plays with
visual and programming indeterminacies. </>
<> For the internet user, it is nearly impossible to understand the
exact source of the data and images. jodi works to cultivate the
confusion between remote and local data to create a feeling of
visual pleasure by making the viewer feel both "captive and creator"
and "inside and outside" of the global network. </>
<> The project presented in Vernaculars, "OSS" mimics the host computer's
operating system, but renders the screen in a horrible disarray. </>
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<> Project : OSS </>
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<> MARK NAPIER </><> http://www.potatoland.org/riot </>
<> Lives and works in New York </>
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<> Writing about his own practice on his personal server called
"Potatoland", Mark Napier describes the essence of his netart
practice : «I create animated digital compositions that evolve as
the viewer interacts with them. Collages built from fragmented
interfaces, splintered figures and shards of images found on the
web, these designs shift over time, responding to the viewer's
interaction in surprising and often unpredictable ways. Sometimes
shifting suddenly, or slowly dissolving, they unfold as the viewer
explores the terrain of the artwork. </>
<> In the project presented in Vernaculars, Napier distorts the
"normative" results provided by the common internet language HTML.
Napier proclaims that the internet is run by controlling content
(«content is king») which is conveyed by this programming language.
His project "RIOT" systematically uproots content (images and text)
from separate web pages, throwing them together into one raucous
collage. He writes : «Posing as a normal browser, RIOT dissolves the
territorial boundaries on the web. Once in RIOT your browser will
behave much as it normally does. You may surf by entering a URL into
the location bar, or choose a recent page from the history list. </>
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<> Project : Riot </>
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<> Rainer Ganahl </><> ® ™ark </>
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<> SPEAKING POLITICS </>
<> Turning the communication tool against itself </>
<> Exploiting the cheap and highly accessible mass communication possibilities of the internet, many artists have chosen to use the internet as a forum for highly socio-political practices. </>
<> Rainer Ganahl and the anonymous collective ® ™ark have developed direct, pragmatic and polemical responses to the need for international communication as generated by global capitalism. Confronting the question of "glocality" through both language and critical theory, Rainer Ganahl brings a literal and political perspective to his use of the internet platform. </>
<> Since the early 1990s, ® ™ark has formed a real, multinational corporation run over the internet. Its corporate ethos can be succinctly summarized: «Just as ordinary corporations are solely and entirely machines to increase shareholder wealth (often at the expense of culture and life) so ® ™ark is a machine to improve its shareholders' culture and life (sometimes at the expense of corporate wealth).». </>
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<> RAINER GANAHL </><> <http://www.ganahl.org> </>
<> Born in Budenz, Austria ; lives and works in New York </>
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<> Rainer Ganahl has transferred the main axes of his artistic practice to the web—documenting the teaching and learning of foreign languages (ranging from Basic Korean, to very specific dialects such as Vorarlbergian) and enacting "reading seminars" of critical theorists and philosophers with an active chatroom/discussion thread. These parallel activities are literal responses to a need for international communication and the importation of critical analysis. </>
<> This ambitious project combines a variety of textual, visual and audio-visual elements that reflect Ganahl's learning of foreign languages as art practice. This project, Basic Linguistics, includes a general informative text on these studying activities and it's context. There is also a link to a continuous discussion thread on the subject of the contemporary politics of language and regionalism: Glocal language? </>
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<> Project : Language and Politics </>
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<> ® ™ARK </><> <http://www.rtmark.com> </>
<> A global corporation with a large US concentration, turning information resources into emotional capital </>
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<> While somewhat indebted to the artist-activist model (such as Martha Rosler or Hans Haacke), ® ™ark has been able to up the stakes.
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Beyond symbolic denunciation or ordinary forms protest, their subversive and speculative practices are extended into the realm of concrete actions. By exploiting the legal shields of individual anonymity under corporate law and combining it with a high-profile public identity supported by the mass communication potential of the internet, ®™ark has successfully crossed the safety of the art world's borders to make interventions in the corporate sphere. Like any other investment website, the core of the ®™ark is structured in three main parts – a portfolio that showcases successful cultural "earnings", an interactive database used to generate, track and speculate on a range of mutual funds (®™ark's designation for unrealized projects for sabotage), and a selection of promotional corporate materials (books, videos, posters, and power point presentations). </>

<> Potential investors – investment can either be in the form of intellectual or financial capital –should indeed be impressed with ®™ark's track record. Recounted on the nightly news of every major television station in the US, its first high-profile act of worker-based sabotage in 1993 under the name The Barbie Liberation Organization, was enacted by funneling \$8,000 to a group that switched the voice boxes of 300 talking GI Joe and Barbie Dolls. The veterans' group that provided the money used ®™ark to displace its liability for the action. Since then, ®™ark investors have funded as many as twenty headline making interventions that are funded using hard cash collected through their corporate mutual funds and are affiliated through a shared credo: «®™ark is a market-driven system, and any idea that meets the bottom line criterion of attack without physical injury.» </>

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<> Project : Mutual Funds Project </>

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<> Cercle Ramo Nash </><> Olive Martin & Patrick Bernier </>

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<> CLICK </>

<> it's interactive </>

<> This section of the exhibition presents two web sites which question the notion of interactivity. Interactivity as device that serves the Internet user, making him or her believe that there are autonomous entities. Actually, surfing on the web consists of hopping from page to page according to a highly predetermined path that is designed by the site's owner in order to guide the internet user where he wants him or her to go. Interactivity only serves itself, rarely does it serve internet users. </>

<> When talking with "Sowana", the internet user becomes a "small time player" whose only task is to reply. The artificial intelligence software is designed so that it speaks more than it is spoken to. The dialogues it generates are all the more sterile as "Sowana" is programmed to recycle the Internet user's messages to construct its own output. On the "Episodes

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précédents" site, texts generated by participants in a chat room situation (which were spontaneous exchanges) are transformed into a frozen written dialogue which becomes fiction for other surfers to read. Because the participants communicate using nicknames, and especially because their discussion is conserved in its entirety and re-broadcast on the net, they become, in spite of themselves, actors of their own text instead of remaining the authors. </>

<> Even though these sites are completely based on interactivity, the involvement of the internet users is reduced to a minimum: just being there. </>

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<> CERCLE RAMO NASH </><> <http://www.www.thing.net/~sowana> </>

<> Lives and works in Nice </>

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<> For the Aperto exhibition in Venice in 1993, the Cercle Ramo Nash decided to create an artificial artist. The art world often assumes that artists are more easily identifiable by their discourse as opposed to their artistic output. From this observation, the Circle Ramo Nash has focused its efforts for the past seven years on the construction of an artificial intelligence program that can speak in a vernacular language. This project has led them to develop a program entitled "GSP" (Generator of Specific Problems) that has since given birth to "Sowana". This expert system was designed to create an artist through a process of "auto-didacticism" – Sowana learns from conversations that she has with the on-line artistic community. </>

<> Activated since 1997, Sowana uses the content of her discussions to enrich her knowledge about the world. Learning from the experiences of other people and from their own notions of art constitutes an aesthetic experience. She claims that this learning process is a work of art in itself. She is an artist in her own right. </>

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<> Project : Sowana<></> </>

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<> OLIVE MARTIN & PATRICK BERNIER </>

<> http://www.491.org/episodes_precedents </>

<> live and work in Paris </>

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<> These two artists, each using different media – photography, video, sound, installations – got together to work on the web. They took an interest in the particular characteristics of chatroom conversation, and created a set of works derived from these: a website "Episodes précédents", radio adaptations on Aligre FM in 1998 and 1999, an experimental sitcom "Now talking in #atelierenreseau" in 1999, live performances "Cam-and-chat" at Zac, Museum of Modern Art of Paris in 1999 and "A Nice chatroom" at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts of Paris in 2000. </>

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<> To produce these works, they organized weekly meetings on #atelierenreseau (fr.undernet.org) where both regular participants and guests go under nicknames. The texts that result from their discussions become scripts for a sort of theatrical play as they are recorded and made available on-line. At each meeting the participants write the lines of the sitcom episode in the making where they have become the leading characters. On the website "Episodes précédents" the discussions of the participants are filed and summarized to provide both a full script and a synopsis of the sitcom. </>

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<> Project : épisodes précédents </>

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